

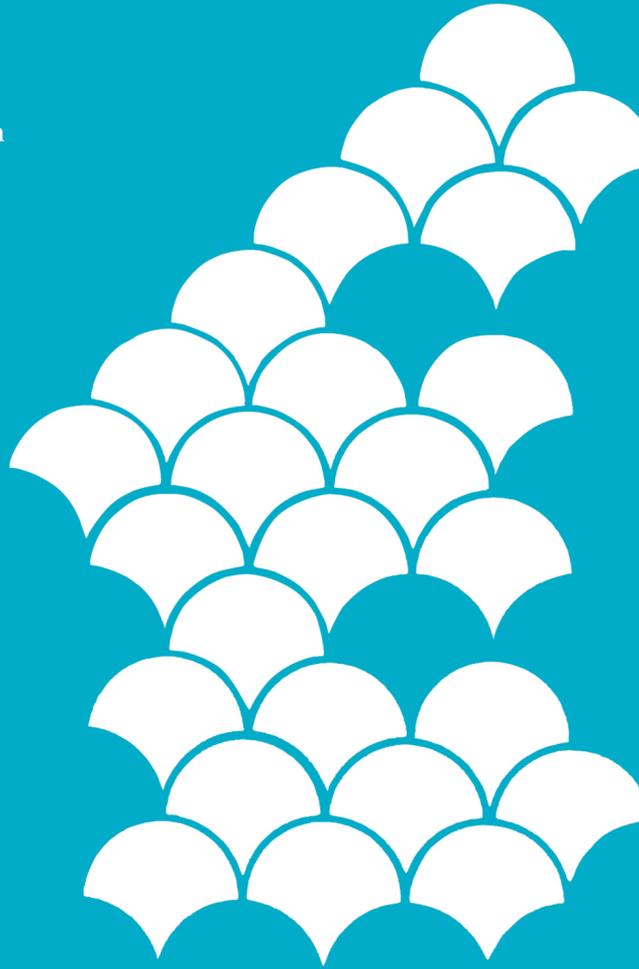
Learn Languages, Explore Cultures, Transform Lives

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Lucianne Maimone
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Clara Burgo
Elizabeth Harsma



2015 Report of the
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Learn Languages, Explore Cultures, Transform Lives

**Selected Papers from the 2015
Central States Conference on the Teaching of
Foreign Languages**

Aleidine J. Moeller, Editor
University of Nebraska–Lincoln

**2015 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that the article (1) be published in its current form, (2) be published after specific revisions have been made, or (3) not be published.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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Aleidine Moeller, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Preface

Learn Languages, Explore Cultures, Transform Lives

The 2015 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota together with the Minnesota Council on the Teaching of Languages and Cultures, who served as local host. This year's theme underscores the transformative nature of learning a foreign language. As language teachers we have a great responsibility to provide our students with opportunities to learn and explore languages and cultures in ways that foster intercultural communicative competence. The 2015 conference highlighted strategies, practices, and approaches that world language educators can use to help students develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary to interact with others in our global community.

The 2015 Keynote speaker was Dr. Tove I. Dahl, a Professor in the Department of Psychology at UiT, the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø, Norway. She also serves as the dean of Skogfjorden, the Concordia Language Villages' Norwegian language program. In Dr. Dahl's address "Why Foreign Languages? It's Personal" she shared how her work has shaped her own answers to the question "Why foreign languages?" Dr. Dahl also presented two sessions entitled "Composing Compelling Answers to Simple Questions About Why Foreign Languages Matter," and "Find It, Sing It, Pass It On: Mindful Music Instruction."

The CSCTFL 2015 conference featured 35 workshops and more than 200 sessions. Nine of the 16 Central States were represented by "Best of" sessions. 21 sessions from the 2014 conference were presented again at the 2015 conference as "All-Stars." The session and workshop topics represented at the 2015 conference included technology in the classroom, intercultural competence, assessment, advocacy, best practices, and the use of literature, art, and music in language classes.

The authors whose articles are included in the 2015 CSCTFL *Report* addressed the 2015 conference theme, "Learn Languages Explore Cultures Transform Lives" by focusing on those elements that transform foreign language teaching and learning. The articles in the 2015 *Report* are divided into four sections:

- Transforming Lives by Transforming Classrooms: Alternatives to Traditional Learning Environments
- Transforming Lives by Transforming Perspectives: Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence,
- Transforming Lives by Transforming Access: Using Technology to Explore Language and Culture
- Transforming Lives by Transforming Approaches; Exploring New Solutions to Foreign Language Challenges.

These articles provide the reader with innovative ideas and approaches for world language instruction that will assist teachers in transforming their classrooms to meet the needs of the 21st century learners.

Kerisa Baedke
2015 CSCTFL Program Chair

Learn Languages, Explore Cultures, Transform Lives

Aleidine J. Moeller

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

This volume entitled, *Learn Languages, Explore Cultures, Transform Lives*, focuses on those elements of language teaching and learning aimed at transforming world language teaching and learning to meet the needs of the 21st century learner. Transforming the traditional language classroom involves a rethinking of the role of the teacher and the learner as well as language mediation tools, resources and media that will connect the classroom with the authentic lived lives of the learners.

The first section of this volume, *Transforming Lives by Transforming Classrooms: Alternatives to Traditional Learning Environments*, provides readers with models and research-based approaches that describe how to transform traditional classrooms into more engaging, student centered environments where learners are actively involved in the learning process. Wilkinson, Calkins and Dinesen offer an approach for making intercultural learning the focus of language classes while recasting grammar and vocabulary in a supporting role. Using the products-practices-perspectives model of culture, these authors illustrate how to use language even at the most novice levels through intercultural discovery tasks. Theresa Bell investigates student and teacher attitudes and beliefs about learning a foreign language in terms of traditional and flipped learning approaches. Results indicate that both students and teachers were pleased with the results of student learning based on the flipped classroom model. Diane Ceo-Francesco describes a standards based approach to integrating language and culture in a natural, authentic context through a virtual conversation program. She offers an overview of the program and provides strategies for organizing and delivering such a program.

The second section of this volume, *Transforming Lives by Transforming Perspectives: Developing Intercultural Communicative Competence*, provides readers with an understanding of how to foster global competence within the context of the language classroom. Orozco-Domoe discusses how language teachers are uniquely positioned to become leaders in developing global competence in their students by creating opportunities for student interaction with native speakers in natural contexts. Chism surveyed first-year high school French students regarding their perceptions of culture and found that there was a need to further develop a sense of cultural discovery and analytical thinking among students. She encourages employing dialogue as a sociocultural tool to facilitate the construction of the perspectives aspect of cultural knowledge in congruence with products and practices. McKeeman and Oviedo stress the importance of implementing Web 2.0 tools to produce authentic, meaningful and engaging learning environments.

In order to determine if a particular technology supports the intended learning outcomes and instructional goals needed to facilitate students developing cultural competencies, the authors offer an evaluative tool designed to assist teachers in aligning their instructional design with Web 2.0 tools.

The third section of this volume, *Transforming Lives by Transforming Access: Using Technology to Explore Language and Culture* offers readers a wealth of technology tools and alternatives to enhance student motivation, creativity and learning. Koubek and Bedward provide a multitude of examples of cloud-based technologies for teaching and learning language. Carruthers studied alternative approaches to traditional language laboratory experiences in order to improve communication and practice of oral language skills among college language learners. She compares a virtual language learning environment through Second Life with face-to-face conversation hours. Her study reveals that instructors of the courses agreed that the laboratory experience of hosting conversation hours and the designed activities that focus on oral proficiency were a great improvement to the previous practice of isolation in the language laboratory. She concludes that virtual environments can provide more opportunities for students to receive equivalent language benefits to those in a face-to-face setting. Jolley and Maimone conducted a survey on the use of and attitudes, perceptions and beliefs about Google Translate tools by students and instructors in university Spanish programs. Based on the results of the survey the authors propose a framework for developing best practices for addressing free online machine translation tools for use in foreign language learning contexts.

The fourth and final section, *Transforming Lives by Transforming Approaches: Exploring New Solutions to Foreign Language Challenges* focuses on innovative and research based approaches to enhance student achievement and proficiency among language learners. Neary-Sundquist offers corpus-based exercises designed for lower-level language classes that are paper-based that offer students the opportunity to explore vocabulary as well as culture through authentic materials. This approach provides an important venue for integration of authentic materials at lower levels of language instruction. Burgo explores the unique challenges facing heritage speakers in the foreign language classroom and provides three approaches that hold promise in enhancing grammar acquisition. Harsma details the design of an online intermediate Spanish composition and conversation course and provides results of a descriptive study indicating that the online course maintained pedagogical rigor and provided an immersive, interactive and competency-based learning environment online.

In all of these articles, the authors underscore the important role of the language professional as a change agent in helping students meet the critical skills delineated in the World Language American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages P21 Skills Map (www.wp21.org) that argues for “bridging the gap between how students live and how they learn” (2011, p. 4). These critical skills include communication, collaboration, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-

cultural skill, productivity and accountability and leadership and responsibility. This volume foregrounds how the language professional can address and promote these skills through classroom research, learning approaches, innovative media and alternative delivery formats.

**Transforming Lives by
Transforming Classrooms:**

**Alternatives to Traditional
Learning Environments**

1

Creating a Culture-driven Classroom One Activity at a Time

Sharon Wilkinson
Patricia Calkins
Tracy Dinesen
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Abstract

Despite the calls for a professional paradigm shift from a grammar-driven to a culture-driven curriculum (e.g., Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007), we continue to organize our teaching around the grammatical sequence of the textbook. Points of cultural interest are infused as culture notes, photos, interludes, research projects, and other such add-on pieces, but are essentially optional in the sequencing of the course material and thus enter our classrooms as time permits. This article offers an approach for making intercultural learning the focus of our classes while recasting grammar and vocabulary in a supporting role. Specifically we explore the potential of the products-practices-perspectives model of culture (NSFLEP, 2014) for allowing learners at even the most novice levels to use language at the service of intercultural discovery and understanding. Through example activities from French, German, and Spanish, we argue that the seemingly monumental task of shifting the paradigm from grammar-focused to culture-centered can happen if we work on it one activity at a time.

Introduction

The language major should be structured to produce a specific outcome: educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence. Advanced language training often seeks to replicate the competence of an educated native speaker, a goal that post-adolescent learners rarely reach. The idea of translingual and transcultural competence, in contrast, places value on the ability to operate between languages. Students are educated to function as informed and capable interlocutors with educated native speakers in the target language. They are also trained to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of another language and culture. They learn to comprehend speakers of the target language as members of foreign societies and to grasp themselves as Americans--that is, as members of a society that is foreign to others. They also learn to relate to fellow members of their own society who speak languages other than English. (Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages, 2007, pp. 3-4)

Who can argue against the value of the Modern Language Association's 2007 vision for language instruction? Yet, current classroom practices are not leading our students toward "translingual and transcultural competence." At both secondary and postsecondary levels, the vast majority of beginning and intermediate language classes simply follow a textbook, which, itself, is structured according to a sequence of grammatical forms embedded into thematic chapters. While the treatment of culture in these instructional materials has become more intentional, more colorful, more interesting, more authentic, and more nuanced in recent years, the fact remains that it continues to be optional. If an instructor chooses to skip a grammatical point or a set of vocabulary in a particular chapter due to time constraints, the students will be handicapped in subsequent chapters, unable to complete certain exercises because they do not have the requisite linguistic knowledge. However, if that same instructor opts not to include that chapter's cultural material, there will be no such ramifications as students progress through the course. Cultural content in most textbooks takes the form of contextual information for language activities, decorative photos, points of curiosity, native-speaker profiles, side notes, and optional readings and projects that are not sequenced and do not build on each other from chapter to chapter. It also focuses heavily on describing cultural products and practices with little attention given to helping students discover cultural perspectives and variation within cultures, both as they relate to the cultures under study and to the students' home culture(s). We cannot expect to lay the foundation for "deep translinguistic and transcultural competence" if cultural learning remains superficial and optional.

The Modern Language Association report calls for important changes to the undergraduate language major. While we wholeheartedly agree with the restructuring that is proposed, we are convinced that the paradigm shift to a culture-driven curriculum must begin with the most novice levels, as the vast majority of language students do not persist through years 3 and 4 in high school or through the minor or major in college. We must help novice learners begin to acquire some measure of translingual and transcultural competence while we have

them in our classes if we wish to make a dent in U.S. ethnocentrism. The question is “How?” How can we restructure our teaching so that language learning is at the service of cultural discovery and not the other way around, particularly given the language-dominated organization of our textbooks? In this chapter, we offer practical approaches and examples for chipping away at this monumental task one activity at a time.

Intercultural communicative competence

The professional conversation about cultural dimensions of language acquisition has been rich, ranging from theoretical discussions of intercultural communication (e.g., Byrnes, 2010; Kramsch, 2006) to cultural learning within a study abroad setting (e.g., Wilkinson, 2012) to implementation of the ACTFL Standards (Arens, 2009). Building on the view of language learners as social agents evidenced in the Common European Framework of Reference, Byram (2008) equates the term “intercultural speaker” with “intercultural mediator” (p. 68). Intercultural or transcultural speakers (two terms which we view as synonymous in this paper) mediate by “bringing into contact through their own self, two sets of values, beliefs, and behaviors,” or by applying “insights gained by one outcome of language learning: the ability to see how different cultures relate to each other—in terms of similarities and differences—and to act as a mediator between them” (p. 72). In order for this mediation to take place, Byram calls our attention to the importance of furthering learners’ “conscious awareness” of themselves as cultural beings who share at least some ideas and attitudes about other cultures with those in their own group and use these ideas as the basis for interacting with other cultures (p. 72).

Byram (1997, with additions in 2008) posits that development of such conscious awareness of oneself as a cultural being—and thus of intercultural communicative competence—is fostered if we develop our students’ competences in certain areas: attitudes [*savoir être*], knowledge [*savoir*], skills of interpreting and relating [*savoir comprendre*], skills of discovery and interaction [*savoir apprendre* and *savoir faire*], as well as the most important component of intercultural communicative competence, critical cultural awareness [*savoir s’engager*], defined as the ability to “evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria perspectives, practices and products in one’s own and other cultures and countries” (1997, p. 53). Byram suggests in his later work (2008) that foreign language education has an important role to play in preparing students for intercultural citizenship in a globalized world. He draws extensively on the idea of *politische Bildung* (political education), the concept of educating citizens to live in a democratic society (characterized by a plurality of languages, organizational forms, and approaches to solving difficult problems of human interaction). It is the explicit comparative aspect of language education, in which “comparison is both a means of understanding and an approach to critical analysis” (p. 181) that adds significantly to the idea of *politische Bildung*, in that comparison allows learners to reappraise and challenge the assumptions through which they approach both their own culture and another culture. By using a comparative methodology, language teachers can effectively

help learners extend their conceptions of their own and other cultures: “They can present a view of the familiar from the perspective of the other, ‘making the familiar strange.’ They can also present the unfamiliar from within the perspective of the other, ‘making the strange familiar’” (p. 182).

Exploration of the language-culture link helps learners understand how our cultures influence the formation of our own identities. Conscious comparison of the two language cultures can help our students progress towards an understanding of what Arens (2010) terms the “pragmatics of identity formation within the target C2 [nonnative culture]” (p. 322). The learner thus can learn “how to manage constructing an identity in two cultures” (p. 322), a lesson that is much more enduring than any language fluency they may achieve under our tutelage. Byram (2012) points out that there are two other identities that our students develop in the consideration of the language-culture relationship that also lead to greater cultural awareness: “their own personal ‘German as a foreign language’ identity—i.e., their own feelings about being a German speaker—and their social identity as foreign speakers of German—i.e., how other people perceive them when they speak German” (p. 8). Thus, the language-learning process entails developing insider and outsider identities in both home and target cultures.

Approaches for transforming activities

Within a theoretical framework of intercultural communicative competence, our work in the classroom must undergo a fundamental shift from focusing on language as a set of forms and norms to be acquired to focusing on language as a vehicle for communicating cultural identity and situatedness (Arens, 2010). The teacher’s role in this model is then to help students (a) discover their own native-language (L1) and second-language (L2) identities within both native-culture (C1) and second-culture (C2) contexts and (b) develop the skills to mediate between these realms. It sounds like a tall order, but with a step-by-step approach, we can make significant inroads by starting from the most novice level, by focusing our activities on cultural comparison, and by looking for opportunities within the curriculum to connect and recycle cultural learning. Examples of each of these strategies are discussed in the subsections that follow.

Start from the beginning

There is no time like Day 1 for introducing students to the concept of cultural perspectives and cultural variation, and what better example than greetings? On the first day of class, as soon as a group of students has entered the room for their first-semester German class, the teacher enters also and greets students in a way that is typical of group greetings in German culture but not in Midwestern U.S. culture: by giving each student a firm handshake and a steady look in the eye. The teacher also says the appropriate greeting for the time of day and states her last name, implicitly inviting each student to respond with his last name as well. Thus, in the first minute of class, students are asked to participate in a typical conversational exchange that occurs when an individual enters a group setting in Germany.

The lesson then continues with a presentation focusing on two images for German culture and two images for Midwestern U.S. culture: for Germany, a picture of eyes and a photo of a handshake; for the Midwestern U.S., an image of a smile and a picture of a head nod. Through the use of cognates, elaborate gestures, and the introduction of the vocabulary for “yes” and “no,” students are helped to compare two different kinds of greeting behaviors, the German version they just experienced and the Midwestern model in which each person met is greeted at least with a smile if not with a head nod as well. Group greeting behavior in the Midwestern U.S., namely a wave to an entire group, is also modeled and contrasted to the greeting at the beginning of the class period.

In subsequent class periods students are introduced to the products-practices-perspectives model of culture study (ACTFL, 2006): products are the images of eyes, handshakes, smiles, and head nods, practices are the behaviors the class has discussed already, and initial perspectives are “it is important to greet everyone you meet” for the Midwestern U.S. and “if you choose to greet someone, you should have physical contact with them” for Germany. While an initial discussion and application of the model needs to be carried out in the students’ native language, L2 discussions applying the model in which the teacher provides most of the comprehensible input can begin in the first and second week. For example, students can be introduced to the cognates *Produkte*, *Praktiken*, and *Perspektiven* and asked to categorize various cultural phenomena as one of these in the first few days of class. Similarly, when students begin to learn question words, the teacher should equate “products” with “what,” “practices” with “who, when, where, how, not who, not when, not where, not how” and “perspectives” with “why.” Subsequent use of the model throughout the semester can use these German terms to facilitate as much cultural discussion in the target language as possible.

After students have been introduced to the products-practices-perspectives model and have applied it to a number of simple situations, it is important to introduce the topic of cultural variation. A simple survey of class members about their utterances and behaviors in particular greeting and leave-taking situations in their own culture will begin to show that not only do we vary such utterances and behaviors according to context, but also that individuals might modify what they do in similar situations. For example, students can be shown images of many different kinds of handshakes with the question of where such handshakes might be used. Similarly, images of different persons can prompt students to suggest appropriate greetings: a pastor, a policeman in uniform, a funeral party, or football fans in full face paint and team attire. After making students aware of the variation within their own culture, the teacher can introduce variation within German culture, such as regional greeting forms, differences between urban and rural areas, and the importance of role expectations in greetings (or in the conscious decision not to greet someone, an important consideration in German culture).

Our first-semester German course assumes no previous experience with the language. Our course goals are not only to help students gain language skills at the first semester level, but also to orient them to the study of at least two cultures—their own and German culture—as phenomena that can be examined according

to the products-practices-perspectives model of culture. Like other units in the course, the greeting unit includes many aspects that are reminiscent of traditional beginning language classes, such as the teaching of typical expressions according to the time of day, role plays involving both the imitation of dialogs as well as the creation of new dialogs, and actions that may be performed during greeting, leave-taking and initial conversations. Students learn how to greet new acquaintances and old friends, how to give and ask for basic personal information, and how to talk about the weather. What is novel is that these structures are not taught simply to allow students to conjugate basic verbs or practice pronunciation or even to help them become more interested in the language (although they do all of these), but rather they are designed to help students begin to see the value of studying cultural perspectives and cultural variation.

Focus on comparison

Just as in the case of cultural perspectives underlying greetings, many cultural topics presented in textbooks can be moved from the sidelines as culture “notes” into a role of central importance if we use the students’ own culture as a point of departure to introduce needed vocabulary, grammar, and cultural concepts. Starting with a familiar context to introduce new language allows students then to tackle the new culture with now recycled forms and concepts (Allen, 2014). For example, in a second-semester Spanish class, students study food vocabulary in the context of open-air markets. Rather than beginning from the Mexican market presented in the text, the instructor starts with a visual of a farmers’ market in the U.S. as a familiar context in which to learn the new vocabulary. Students indicate their own families’ practices with respect to grocery shopping by participating in a questionnaire in Spanish asking them where they buy particular food items on a list. They also answer simple information questions in Spanish about their background knowledge of farmers’ markets (e.g., Does your hometown have a farmers’ market? Have you ever shopped at a farmers’ market? Where? What products did you buy? etc.). Students also indicate the perceived advantages and disadvantages of shopping at farmers’ markets by classifying answers from a list in Spanish (quality, cost, location, health considerations, economic considerations, social opportunities, bartering, etc.). The instructor then proceeds to a picture of a U.S. flea market, which is a related cultural product from C1. After doing a parallel analysis of the flea market, students are able to compare and contrast the products, practices and perspectives of the two cultural phenomena in C1. By focusing on the differing practices between the two markets (for example, bartering is expected at the flea market but not expected or generally accepted at local the farmers’ market), students are able to see the cultural variation in C1 and understand their own culture before studying C2.

Next, students explore the C2 product of a Mexican *Mercado* (open air market). Because they have already done the analysis twice, they are better able to manipulate requisite vocabulary and grammatical structures, as well as being better prepared to recognize cultural variation and to compare C1 and C2 in an objective manner.

Based on this analysis, the instructor then guides students to create simple survey questions in Spanish that they subsequently e-mail to native-speaking contacts of the instructor. Many of these questions will be ones that the students have already answered (e.g., Is there an open-air market in your town? How often do you go to the market? What do you buy there? Do you negotiate prices? Do you also shop at the supermarket? What do you buy there? Do people negotiate prices at the supermarket? etc.). These questions target cultural practices related to the *mercado*, and the native speakers' answers help students notice cultural variation and begin to hypothesize about cultural perspectives. These hypotheses become the second part of the e-mail exchange, in which students state in Spanish what they have noticed in the survey responses and ask the native speakers to provide feedback on their analysis (e.g., Nine out of ten people surveyed buy farm products at a local market instead of in a supermarket. We wonder why. Is the cost less expensive? Is the quality of the food better? Is it to benefit the local economy? Is it more stylish to shop at the market than at the supermarket? Are there other explanations?). Through the native speakers' input, students gain insight into C2 perspectives and can begin to hypothesize about their own C1 perspectives in comparison. By putting language forms at the service of gathering and analyzing cultural data—first from C1 and then from C2—students are challenged to recast “the familiar [as] strange... and the strange [as] familiar” (Byram, 2008, p. 182). Through a reflective writing assignment in English about the experience of communicating with native speakers and their own developing persona as a nonnative speaker of Spanish, students also add another building block to the construction of their C1 and C2 identities (Arens, 2010). Repeatedly structuring lessons in this way reinforces and develops students' intercultural communicative competence, while actualizing the shift from a language-centered to a culture-focused curriculum, activity by activity, chapter by chapter.

Connect and recycle

Once we begin to focus our cultural learning goals on C1 and C2 identity construction rather than on mastery of factual information, underlying cultural perspectives become central to our mission, and we soon discover that these fundamental cultural values are easily recycled across a wide variety of themes. For example, in a second-semester French class that addresses both food and clothing at separate points in the course, students are able to make connections between the values underlying *la haute cuisine* (gourmet cooking) and those underlying *la haute couture* (high fashion). In both units, students read relevant chapters from *Bringing Up Bébé* (Druckerman, 2012) and *Almost French* (Turnbull, 2002), two books that compare Anglo-Saxon and French cultures. They complete Internet assignments to learn more about gastronomy and designer fashion. They participate in interviews with native speakers from France to learn about actual experiences and real viewpoints. In the first unit on food, they are led to discover that French society takes great pride in its cuisine, specifically in (1) producing and using ingredients of high quality, (2) respecting the expertise and creativity of

highly trained professionals, (3) enjoying the pleasure of artistic presentation and carefully planned tastes and textures. With this background, students can then take a much more active role in analyzing the cultural values related to fashion, since they are essentially the same: quality, expertise, and the pleasure of esthetics and artistry. Many of the students in the course who started in first-semester French will remember some of these same themes from the unit on school. Quality, precision, and esthetics are emphasized in the importance placed on handwriting, for example. Trust in the expertise of faculty is a key French perspective that helps answer the question U.S. students invariably ask about why their French counterparts do not have the option to choose their own classes. Capitalizing on opportunities such as these to connect and recycle cultural themes allows us to sequence cultural learning, building upon students' prior knowledge and expecting more sophisticated analyses with each iteration. It also helps students discover coherence with cultures, which in turn building their intercultural competence and their own understanding of themselves within each culture.

Challenges of shifting the paradigm

While teaching "subjective culture" (such as cultural values, priorities, and identities) is essential for reaching goals of intercultural communicative competence, it certainly presents greater challenges than focusing on "objective culture." Bennett, Bennett, and Allen (2003) provide a long list of factors that discourage teachers from focusing on subjective culture, the most influential of which, from our perspective, relate to time and expertise. As both preparation time and instructional time are limited, teachers worry that moving to a culture-driven classroom will require an unrealistic commitment to lesson planning and will eclipse the time needed for language learning. To be sure, changing not only the way we teach, but also the way we think about teaching requires more preparation time than maintaining the status quo. However, the status quo is not leading our students toward the critical cultural awareness (Byram, 2008) that U.S. Americans so desperately need. While it is not realistic to transform an entire curriculum from one year to the next, it is doable to work on one or two activities per semester and, over a period of several years, make significant progress on the transition. Teachers can be as ambitious or as cautious in their time line as they need to be to fit their own particular situation. Teamwork can also be beneficial. If two or three colleagues (whether in the same school or across the country) collaborate and share lessons and materials, the pace of change can increase dramatically.

With regard to limits of instructional time, the key for us has been to teach language for cultural discovery rather than language and cultural discovery. Our students still learn the same kinds of language forms that they did when language accuracy was our end goal. Now, though, they learn them by using them to analyze their own and another culture, as well as to understand themselves as both native and nonnative cultural participants. Language acquisition is thus at the service of cultural learning, making more efficient use of instructional time than was the case in our language-driven classrooms. We are also able to focus directly on the development of intercultural skills that we believe to be of utmost importance.

One important question that relates to the integration of linguistic and cultural elements is that of language choice. Do we use the students' first language or the target language to analyze cultural products, practices, and perspectives? Clearly, using the target language is in keeping with the aim of integrating linguistic and cultural learning. However, as discussed in the example of German greetings, at very beginning of a novice-level course, students must be introduced to the products-practices-perspectives model in English and taught the terminology in the target language. Beyond the introduction, though, in languages that share many cognates with the learners' L1, much can be accomplished in the target language. Input-based formats (such as classifying cultural practices as C1, C2, or both, matching products and practices with perspectives, or answering yes-no questions) allow novice learners to begin analyzing cultural phenomena in the target language within the first few weeks of the course. Given our curricular time constraints, we prioritize using L2 to analyze both C1 and C2.

In addition to time, the second major area of concern for teachers is that of expertise. Even native-speaking instructors may be limited in their knowledge of target cultures beyond their own, and the cultural knowledge of teachers who have been living outside of their home country for a number of years may also be dated. For nonnative instructors, these problems are often compounded, particularly for those without a lengthy target-culture immersion experience. Our approach to this problem has been to involve native speakers as much as possible in our classes. While we are fortunate to have native-speaking teaching assistants on campus each year through the Fulbright program, we also seek the participation of other target-culture natives through personal and professional connections. Even one contact in a target-culture country can make a substantial difference in the cultural and linguistic authenticity of a lesson. Websites designed to match-make conversation partners, tandem learners, teachers seeking partner classes, and students seeking e-pals provide an option for teachers who do not have personal connections in other countries. Professional organizations (state and regional language teacher associations, AATs, ACTFL) also allow for networking among teachers, native-speakers and nonnative-speakers, alike. We find that involving native speakers in our lessons (through Skype interactions, face-to-face guest speakers, e-mail exchanges, shared blogs, etc.) allows the instructor to learn along with the students. These interactions become a real exchange of novel information for everyone involved, especially if the students are also encouraged to share information about their C1 with the native interlocutor.

Related to the challenge of expertise is the potential for unintentionally promoting cultural stereotyping through analyses that make cultures seem monolithic, particularly if we focus too narrowly on one person's narrative or too broadly on national identities. The antidote to this pitfall for us has been the integration of cultural variation into the design of our activities. Beginning with C1, students are prompted to identify variations in their own cultural practices. For example, the initial questionnaire about the local U.S. farmers' market in the Spanish class allows students to realize that even among their classmates, there is variation in practices and perspectives regarding open-air markets. Some students

may come from families that frequent the local farmers' market; others may find the market inconvenient or chaotic or too expensive; still others may have no experience with markets. Once students recognize the potential for cultural variation in their own culture, they are primed to notice the same phenomenon in the second culture. Thus, when there is variation within the e-mail responses they receive from native speakers, they tend to be more guarded about stereotyping and more apt to attend to cultural complexity. It is helpful to recognize that cultural variation occurs most frequently within cultural practices. Cultural products tend to be similar (the market, itself, for example), and cultural perspectives, particularly deeply held values, tend to hold wide agreement across members of the culture. Realizing that certain aspects of culture are more stable and predictable than others can help teachers focus their efforts more strategically in the quest for greater cultural expertise.

While issues of time and expertise have created hurdles on our way to a culture-driven classroom, they have also pushed us to seek creative solutions, which, in the end, have turned out to be beneficial for faculty and students alike. Our classroom time is used more efficiently and effectively to target both linguistic and cultural learning, while prioritizing the development of needed intercultural awareness and understanding. Our work with native speakers has motivated both authentic intercultural communication for students and professional development for faculty. Under such circumstances, we find the extra commitment needed to change our curricular paradigm to be a worthwhile investment with significant returns.

Assessment

Curricular reform must include compatible assessment methods if the transition is to take root. As leaders in the field of intercultural communicative competence all stress (e.g., Allen, 2009, 2014; Fantini, 2009, 2013), assessment of intercultural learning should be integrated into the design of the series of activities targeting its development. Since intercultural communicative competence is not limited to the mastery and application of a series of facts but rather expands with each intercultural encounter, evaluative tools need to assess not only language skills and cultural knowledge but also intercultural skills and attitudes within the context of lifelong learning. While certain aspects of intercultural communicative competence might lend themselves to discrete-point testing, open-ended, performance-based assessments are often better suited to gauging the students' level of intercultural communicative competence with its many nuances. Some of the assessments may require the use of L1 by both the teacher and the student; others may require L2 input on the part of the teacher but not on the part of the student; still others may be possible in L2 by both the teacher and the student. Regardless of language choice, in this section we offer examples of four different assessment types used in beginning-level classes to gauge students' progress in their development of intercultural communicative competence: products-practices-perspectives analyses, explanation of critical incidents, application projects, and reflection assignments.

Products-practices-perspectives analyses

Perhaps the most basic and obvious way to assess students' work with the products-practices-perspectives (PPP) model is to have them classify items into the categories of the three Ps. Students who have more experience with the model can compare two related concepts, such as haute cuisine and haute couture from the French example above. This assessment might take the form of a checklist where students decide whether each cultural statement applies to gastronomy, fashion, neither, or both (e.g., People are willing to pay more for quality. Service is discreet. Esthetics are an essential value.) Alternatively, students might classify statements as reflective of French products, practices, and perspectives or U.S. American ones or both (e.g., Comfort is a key factor in deciding what to wear. People consider what is pleasing to others when making clothing choices. Most restaurants offer children's menus.). These types of assessments are well suited to the novice level where learners are still adapting to the concept of analyzing cultures. Not only do checklists reinforce this approach to analysis, they also give insight into students' developing critical cultural awareness.

Explanation of critical incidents

A second option for assessing learners' progress towards critical cultural awareness is to ask learners to explain a critical incident that they have not already analyzed in class (i.e., an incident in which issues of C1 and C2 are at odds). If the teacher has the expertise, critical incidents can be constructed specifically for the purpose of the assessment, but they are also available on a number of websites, in professional literature, and, most easily, in the experiences of colleagues, family members, and friends. For example, students in the first-semester German course mentioned above are asked after finishing the unit on greetings to respond to questions on the following critical incident taken from the teacher's personal experience:

Not long after a group of students from a small Midwestern college had arrived in a German city for a semester-long study abroad program, three of them began an experiment. They would go through the main shopping area and town square and smile at everyone who came their way, hoping that someone would smile back. On the second afternoon of the experiment, one student arrived in class after lunch and announced happily, "Someone smiled back at me. I finally found a friendly German!" This was greeted by high fives from the two other students conducting the experiment, and much relief all around. Friendly Germans actually exist!

Questions about the critical incident ask students to address various aspects of the intercultural interaction, and can be modified to meet particular teaching goals. A focus on differences between C1 and C2 ("What specific cultural differences might have led the American students to conduct this experiment?") can help students identify products, practices, and perspectives. Questions of motivation for particular behaviors ("In what way(s) was this smile experiment

culturally inappropriate? In what way(s) was this smile experiment completely understandable?") target attitudes and situational factors. The incident can also be used to help students better understand cultural mediation ("You are the students' professor and find out that they are conducting this experiment. What is it that the students don't completely understand? Since the students will be living in Germany for the next four months, what would you say to these students to help them understand it and adapt to German culture?"). Critical incidents make ideal assessment instruments, since it is easy to find or construct examples that target the same underlying mismatch of cultural perspectives. While reusing an identical incident from class on an assessment would privilege memorization, providing a novel example requires students to have assimilated the concepts.

Application projects

Designing projects that require students to apply intercultural mediation skills similarly has the benefit of solidifying their understanding of C1 and C2, while revealing how well they have assimilated the cultural work they have done in class. In the case of the French *haute cuisine* example, the students are asked to imagine that the owner of a gourmet restaurant in France has decided to open a second restaurant in a small U.S. city near their campus. Their job is to redesign the menu, which is available online, for a U.S. clientele, and then explain their redesign to the French restaurant owner. Students work in teams and present their redesign to the class, as well as to a native-French guest playing the role of the restaurant owner. The same activity can be organized the other way around, in which an American restaurant owner wishes to open a second restaurant in France. The students work in teams to choose an appropriate location for the restaurant in France and to redesign the menu for a French clientele. Again, they must explain their plan to the class, using the cultural skills and knowledge they have acquired in the unit. Such application projects require learners to transform familiar cultural products and practices to comply with C2 perspectives, thus "making the familiar strange... and making the strange familiar" (Byram, 2008, p. 182).

Reflection assignments

As Byram (1997, 2008) emphasizes, the components of intercultural communicative competence include attitudes, knowledge, skills of discovery and interacting, skills of interpreting and relating, and critical cultural awareness. Reflective writing assignments following interaction with native speakers, as was mentioned in the *mercado* example, can help teachers gain an overall picture of these hard-to-measure characteristics. Questions such as "What advice would you give to a friend who has no experience talking to a person from another culture?" or "How was learning from a native speaker different than interacting with your classmates or learning from a book?" can prompt learners to reveal their attitudes about interaction with a nonnative culture. The issue of knowledge of both cultures can be addressed in a retelling of their knowledge to a third party ("What would you tell a friend who is going to study abroad about the *mercado*

and its cultural practices?”). Skills of discovery and interaction can be evaluated in addressing student preparation for the encounter (“What did you do to prepare for the interview with the native speaker?”), while evidence of the skills of interpreting and relating can be addressed through questions such as “What strategies helped you successfully evaluate information provided by your native-speaking contact?” or “To what extent did your native-speaking contact agree with your description of the *mercado* and shopping behaviors in Mexico?” Finally, the development of critical cultural awareness can be reflected in answers to questions such as “What cultural differences did you take into account in creating the interview questions for the native speaker?” and “What will you do to improve your communication the next time based on these cultural differences?” Such reflective assessments cannot provide pinpoint positioning of our students in their progression towards intercultural communicative competence, but used in succession over the course of several units can not only track students’ overall development but help them to boost their learning from each intercultural interaction.

Conclusion

The question is no longer “should we shift the paradigm from language-focused to culture-driven?” We must change our priorities if we wish to remain relevant to the 21st century needs of our learners. The question is “how?” In this article, we have offered the following recommendations:

1. Start from existing lesson plans and materials. Taking inspiration from what we already do (greetings, food vocabulary, cuisine, fashion, etc.) provides a practical and doable starting point for moving culture to a central role. We do not have to reinvent the whole wheel; we just need to redesign the hub.

2. Add a C1 component before moving to C2. As Allen (2014) argues, using the familiar context of C1 to introduce new language forms lets students focus on one set of novel information at a time: new language forms with familiar culture, followed by new cultural concepts using recycled language forms. This approach also allows for needed repetition and practice of language without competing with intercultural communication goals.

3. Research and discuss cultural perspectives with colleagues and native-speaking friends. In French, there are a surprising number of resources that compare Anglo-Saxon and French cultures (e.g., Druckerman, 2012; Nandea & Barlow, 2003; Platt, 2003; Turnbull, 2003), making it possible to gain useful information about cultural perspectives through research. Fewer such analyses have been published in English about Spanish-speaking and German-speaking cultures, but some possible sources include Crouch (2004), comparing Mexican and U.S. cultures, Hooper (2006), analyzing Spanish culture, and Schmidt (2007), discussing U.S. and German business cultures. An excellent German-language resource is Hansen (2007). Discussions with native speakers and other language teachers can also lead to fruitful insights about underlying cultural views. Our experience has been that the more we “dig” into our experiences and the experiences of others, the more developed our own critical cultural awareness becomes, which in turn, enriches our students’ intercultural communicative competence. The side

benefit of such discussions is, of course, the collaboration among colleagues who can then share the work of changing the curriculum.

4. Make ample use of case studies of cultural misunderstandings. The research and discussions mentioned above can often provide needed examples of critical incidents. Case studies are often more effective than other forms of data analysis because they serve as concrete illustrations of abstract perspectives. Their narrative format and real-life settings are also more accessible and engaging. Starting a collection of multiple critical incident stories on a particular theme allows teachers to draw on them for in-class activities, homework assignments, and assessment items.

5. Work on one unit at a time but keep the full curriculum in mind. Given teachers' busy lives, the only realistic way to reorient the curricular paradigm is to approach the task one activity and one theme at a time. However, we must guard against tunnel vision, or we will miss opportunities to organize and sequence students' cultural learning across units. Intercultural communicative competence is built through cyclical intervention that spirals upward in its complexity and level of nuance. We can only reach this goal if we are attentive to the ways in which the parts contribute to the whole.

In sum, moving culture to the center of our classrooms launches both our students and ourselves into a lifelong journey of cultural discovery, involving new understandings of our multiple cultural identities as we build our intercultural communicative competence. Not only is this paradigm shift necessary, it is also a much more interesting and gratifying way to teach and learn. In our experience, providing 21st century learners with the tools and frameworks they need to analyze their own and other cultures has the power to captivate their curiosity and motivate them in ways that language-driven curricula no longer do. They can readily see practical, professional applications of the cultural mediation skills they are acquiring. The majority of students also find cultural comparison inherently fascinating, and thus salient and memorable. Likewise, if the authors' experience is any indication, culture-driven teaching also piques the teacher's curiosity and motivation, driving us to dig deeper into our C1 and C2(s) for the sheer pleasure of learning and bringing that discovery to the classroom. We keep our language skills sharp and our cultural knowledge current by involving native speakers in our quest. When curricular reform inspires professional renewal, everyone benefits, as students and teachers alike deepen their ability "to reflect on the world and themselves through the lens of [more than one] language and culture" (Modern Language Association Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Language Education, 2007, p. 4) and "act as a mediator between [cultural groups]" (Bryam, 2008, p. 72). While daunting, the challenge of this vital curricular realignment is surmountable and sustainable if we tackle it together one lesson at a time.

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2

The Flipped German Classroom

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Abstract

Over the past decade practitioners in many disciplines have sought to increase student learning by employing the flipped classroom approach to learning. Many practitioners have seen an immense increase in student learning by requiring students to have their first exposure to a new concept away from the classroom. With advances in technology, many online resources are used so students are able to access course materials at any time and in any place. This study investigates student and teacher attitudes and beliefs about learning German in terms of traditional and flipped learning approaches. Data was collected by means of questionnaires—students and teachers completed questionnaires at the beginning and end of the semester. Results indicate that students and teachers were overwhelmingly pleased with the results of student learning at the end of the semester based on the flipped classroom model.

The Flipped German Classroom

Based on recent research in education and language learning, the focus of beginning German courses at a large western university has recently changed from teacher-centered grammar explanations in class to student-centered, self-paced online grammar video tutorials outside of class. This paper presents the results of a one-semester empirical study where students in beginning German classes at Brigham Young University spent time traditionally spent completed homework outside of class taking mastery grammar quizzes, reviewing grammar and

vocabulary using online resources provided by the instructor, and watching online video tutorials similar to those made for math and science by Khan (2012) and for German by Stigter (2014) rather than completing regularly assigned homework. Because class time is no longer used for lengthy grammar explanations, class time is now spent assisting students in reaching language learning goals related to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (SFL) (NSFLP, 2006) through activities, assignments, and projects (Witten, 2013). For this study, teacher and student attitudes were measured by questionnaire responses at the beginning and end of the semester. Results indicate that making grammar explanations and practice learner-centered by allowing students to work outside class at their own pace promoted student confidence and comfort when participating in classroom activities.

Because people learn at different rates and according to different methods, lessons should be paced to the individual student's learning needs. Khan (2012) suggests that face time with a teacher in class should be a completely separate experience from a student's first exposure to new concepts. In fact, Khan also suggests that a student's first exposure to a new concept should be visually free of a teacher and that the classroom should be a workshop where the teacher can help students apply concepts and principles rather than a lecture where students sit passively and may or may not gain knowledge they will be able to apply later to their own language learning. By moving lengthy grammar explanations outside the classroom, class time can be used as a language production workshop.

Review of the Literature

The flipped classroom is a form of blended learning of any subject that makes use of technology to influence classroom learning with the hope that the teacher will be able to spend more time interacting with students rather than lecturing. This is most frequently done using teacher- or publisher-created videos that students are required to view outside of class as assigned homework. These videos are often accompanied with comprehension questions to ensure that students pay attention to the recorded lectures. In flipped teaching, the student first studies the topic alone, using readings designated by the instructor, recorded lectures, and online tutorials. Then in the classroom the student is guided by the teacher to apply the knowledge gained outside class by solving problems and using the acquired knowledge in real-life situations. The role of the classroom teacher is to assist and mentor students when they need help applying what they have learned rather than to provide students with information for the first time and require students to apply the information without guidance. With the attention flipping the classroom at all levels and in all subjects of education, the Flipped Learning Network (2014) provides a definition of flipped learning for newcomers to the approach to teaching:

a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is

transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.

At Brigham Young University, teachers of beginning German courses have begun implementing principles of the flipped classroom along with online grammar mastery quizzes. To provide a context and rationale for this change, this section will provide a review of the literature regarding three key topics relevant to this study: (1) the flipped classroom in general, (2) the flipped classroom in language learning, and (3) the role of mastery in becoming proficient in a foreign language (FL).

The Flipped Classroom in Education

The concept of the flipped classroom is not new. It has been around for decades. The concept of the flipped classroom using technological advances, however, is new and has been gaining popularity over the past decade. Regarding the recent implementation of the flipped classroom in teaching and learning, Garrison and Kanuka (2004) write that the flipped classroom approach “is an integration of face-to-face and online learning experiences—not a layering of one on top of the other” (p. 99). Classroom time should complement exercises and readings done outside of class as assigned homework. The self-guided grammar tutorials and quizzes should be the basis for the engaging and real-world applications that teachers help students make during class time. Reynard (2007) recommends that:

face to face class meetings should be a method of scaffolding learning rather than the central instructional arena as in conventional courses. . . . Class time should be an important piece of the learning process for students and should provide dialog, group work. . . or demonstrations of practice. . . an effective and dynamic learning environment should provide heightened interaction for the learner. (pp. 3-4)

Because students focus on grammar and vocabulary learning outside class, teachers are able to spend class time guiding group and pair work, games, and task-based activities and helping students apply what they learn outside class to real-life situations. The skills presented in the online modules of the course are brought to life in the classroom through problem-solving tasks. The online flipped format and face-to-face time complement one another so that the students reap the benefits of both experiences because, in the words of Knowles (1998), “If we know why we are learning and if the reason fits our needs as we perceive them, we will learn quickly and deeply.”

In support of the flipped classroom concept, Khan (2012) argues that “[f]ormal education. . . needs to be brought into closer alignment with the world as it actually is; into closer harmony with the way human beings actually learn and thrive” (p. 11). He continues his explanation by pointing out that people learn at different rates. Some students pick things up very quickly, while others need a lot more time to process and apply what they are being taught. Khan notes that

[q]uicker isn't necessarily smarter and slower definitely isn't dumber. Further, catching on quickly isn't the same as understanding thoroughly. So the pace of

learning is a question of style, not relative intelligence. The tortoise may very well end up with more knowledge—more useful, lasting knowledge—than the hare. (p. 20)

One of Khan's main points is that whether there are eight or fifty students in a class, each student will be at a different level of comprehension of a concept at any given time. The challenge here is that when the time comes for the exam and to move on, not all students have learned what they needed to learn to move on to the next concept. "[S]tudents could probably figure things out eventually—but that's exactly the problem. The standard classroom model doesn't really allow for eventual understanding. The class—of whatever size—has moved on (p. 21)." For these reasons, Khan recommends that lessons should be paced to individual student's needs and that basic concepts must be "deeply understood" before students will be able to master more advanced concepts (p. 21).

Online lessons allow teachers and students to work together during valuable class time that would otherwise be spent on lectures. But if the students have completed the lessons before class, students have knowledge to work with during class time so they can turn what they learned at home into deep knowledge. Khan (2012) notes that there are some people who are concerned that computer-based instruction will ultimately replace teachers. That is not the case. "Teachers become more important once students have the initial exposure to a concept online" (p. 35).

Khan (2012) insists that in learning a new subject, "no subject is ever finished. No concept is sealed off from other concepts. Knowledge is continuous; ideas flow" (p. 51). He suggests that learners should be supported to take on an active position to their own learning. "They shouldn't just take things in; they should figure things out" (p. 56). Active learning is "owned learning" (p. 56) and begins with allowing students to determine where and when they learn best. With the Internet and personal computers, students can learn adjective endings in German at 2:00 A.M. in their dorm room or at 9:00 P.M. in a coffee shop or at 6:00 A.M. on an exercise bike. Some learn better in the morning, others learn better during the day, and still others learn better at night. We also know that there are different learning styles, and with self-paced learning, the pace is right for every student because it is determined by the students themselves. One student might need two hours to complete a learning module on adjective endings in German while another might only need 20 minutes. If the module is online, a student who might need more time is able to take as much time as needed to grasp a concept without slowing an entire class down or being embarrassed to ask the teacher for help.

Anecdotal Evidence and Practical Application

Recently, Professor Earl K. Stice (2014), PriceWaterhouseCoopers Professor of Accounting at Brigham Young University's School of Management, spoke to new faculty about the success he has had by flipping his accounting classes. He employs the techniques of guided learning outside class, small in-class discussion groups, and frequent online assessments so that he can bond with 700+ students in just one class. He requires students to study individually first outside of class and to come to an understanding of the material before applying it to in-class case studies

and discussions. His small in-class group discussions are carefully tailored so that all students in each group must participate, students apply theories and concepts they have studied at home to real-life situations, and to justify the cost of gathering 700 people for 75 minutes of classroom instruction. In order to bond with his 700+ students, he sends frequent schedule-related e-mails and chatty personal notes.

Stice points out that the universal dilemma for teaching an introductory accounting course is being able to accommodate the students who master the material very quickly and easily and the students who struggle to master the material (see Khan, 2012).

Students do not necessarily need to hear everything from their teacher's mouth. In fact, Middendorf and Kalish (1996) determined that students need a three- to five-minute period of warming up period at the beginning of a class which is followed by only ten to 18 minutes of prime focus time. Following this relative short period of focus, no matter how entertaining the teacher or exciting the subject matter, students start to tune out. Student focus usually shortly resumes near the end of class, but only for about three minutes.

Even though students do not need to hear new material directly from the professor in a classroom setting, they do need to receive specific guidance on what they need to learn on their own. Their learning can easily be assessed online, outside of class, without taking anything away from valuable class time. Further, online assessments can often provide immediate feedback.

The instructor's role in the flipped classroom is that of motivator rather than as the source of all knowledge on a given subject. According to Stice, the difficult beginning of flipping his classroom was to examine his course content and decide what material can be effectively learned by students outside of class with his specific guidance and what material would be better covered in the classroom under his personal supervision. In a typical week of Accounting 200, students first have directed individual study assignments on Monday, may attend an optional question/answer session on Tuesday, complete an online quiz by Tuesday evening, complete assigned readings and homework in preparation for in-class discussion on Wednesday, complete an online quiz by Wednesday evening, meet in class on Thursday in assigned groups to complete application activities, and complete an online post-class quiz by Friday evening. The study materials and readings are provided to students online (electronic readings, videos, etc.) or as part of their assigned textbook. The instructor gives very specific and detailed instructions on what and how to study. For example, instead of directing students to "read Chapter 3," the instructor would direct students to "interpret all lines, slopes, and intercepts in a breakeven graph including the slope of the total cost line, the slope of the total revenue line, the intercept of the total cost line, and the intersection of the total cost and total revenue lines." Then the instructor directs students to take an online quiz to assess content mastery. By doing this, Professor Stice is able to reduce variance in understanding when students arrive in class. By employing well-designed in-class group activities, instructors can keep students more engaged in classroom discussion rather than listening to the instructor lecture. Although teaching and learning languages is not the same as teaching and learning accounting, the main

principles employed by Professor Stice for his flipped accounting classroom can also be applied to flipping German language classrooms.

The Flipped Classroom in Language Learning

Language teachers all over the United States are seeing positive results after implementing the flipped classroom into their language teaching (Ducate, Lomicka, & Lord, 2012; Rubio & Thoms, 2012; Scullen, 2014; Stigter, 2014; Tecedor, 2014; Witten, 2013). Stigter (2014) provides a clear and succinct explanation of the flipped language classroom:

When the concept of the 'flipped classroom' is applied, the language course can be transformed. This approach enables the instructor to focus almost exclusively on input and output, while grammar is taught outside of face-to-face time via short video explanations and coordinating exercises. Although students must remain in the same chapter, they are able to review and repeat content as often as they wish at their own pace. (p. 6)

She continues by explaining that students are made responsible for their own learning and for advocating for assistance when they need it.

Scullen (2014) explains three key reasons the French program at the University of Maryland started using the flipped classroom approach in 2012. First, students are required to do more learning outside of class. At the beginning of every class, students take a five-question quiz to demonstrate that they learned what was assigned and to provide feedback to the teacher about what the students have learned. Second, teaching time is limited. In most beginning courses in large university language programs, students are responsible for teaching one or two courses each semester. Even though training is provided at the beginning of the semester and ongoing training takes place throughout the semester, student instructors are still not very experienced language teachers. By requiring students to work on grammar and vocabulary outside of class, student instructors can more easily facilitate language practice. In addition, explicit instruction by teacher tends to be more valuable after students engage with the material outside of class. Students read about a grammar topic and work on exercises using the grammar topic outside of class. Then if they still have questions or need explanations, they are more open to the grammar concept. Third, teachers can provide more in-class interaction and engagement for students, thus making class time essential for student language learning.

Ducate, Lomicka & Lord (2012) describe what the flipped classroom makes possible for students teachers to accomplish during class time: "Advances in technologies, such as those already described, have enabled us to reach a point in which students can accomplish a great deal by working independently, thus reserving class time for F2F (face to face) communication and interactive learning" (p. 70).

After flipping her beginning Spanish class, Witten (2013) described that now that grammar explanations take place outside the classroom, class time is

spent differently: “We can spend the time in class practicing their new skills and vocabulary with skits, conversations, presentations, and projects which really spark the students’ interest” (p. 266).

The hope in the FL classroom is that because students have read about and practiced new grammar concepts and have been exposed to new vocabulary outside of class, they will be able to apply what they have learned in class with assistance from the teacher and classmates to create meaningful language use that will lead to deep understanding of what they learned outside class. Teachers should continue to assist students in reaching language learning goals related to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (SFL) (NSFLP, 2006) through activities, assignments, presentations, and projects.

The Role of Mastery in Language Learning

For as long as languages have been taught and learned, teachers and learners have expected learners to master grammar concepts of the language. Even in 1993, just seven years after the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 2012) were first introduced in 1986, DeMado (1993) explains the way he perceived the difference between mastery and proficiency in language learning: “Proficiency supports language study as a life skill; something to which all interested...have a right to gain access. Viewed purely as an academic area and using intellect as the qualifying criteria, mastery rigorously limits candidacy to a privileged few” (p. 31). DeMado’s view of mastery in language learning has recently been called into question (1993).

In 2012, almost two decades after DeMado’s publication, Khan explains his understanding of the role of mastery in learning: Mastery takes place when students “adequately comprehend a given concept before being expected to understand a more advanced one” (p. 37). Along these lines, noted neuroscientist Kandel writes: “For a memory to persist, the incoming information must be thoroughly and deeply processed. This is accomplished by attending to the information and associating it meaningfully and systematically with knowledge already well established in memory” (2006, pp. 123-124).

In a recent chapter on practical strategies for flipping the classroom, Bennett (2013) admits that mastery learning is difficult to describe. For him, mastery learning is “giving the students an opportunity to both direct and defend their learning” (p. 8). He explains that the way each student is able to do this might look different. One student might take a traditional exam, another might give a presentation to the class, another might teach a classmate the concept, and yet another might demonstrate mastery through writing or some other medium. The main reason he has shifted to mastery learning is because students take information in and write it down on a test without deeply learning the information. Most students were not able to remember the information they had memorized for a test even the day following the test! In order to solidify learning, Khan (2012) suggests that once learners reach a certain level of mastery in a field of learning, they should

teach the concept to other students so that they develop a deeper understanding of the concept. This re-teaching could easily take place during regular class time.

Based on these recent guidelines by Khan (2012), Kandel (2006), and Bennett (2013), mastery of grammar principles seems to be an important and necessary part of language learning. Without mastering and deeply understanding grammar principles, language learners are not prepared to move on to learning grammar principles that build on previously taught grammar principles. Also, for students to be able to reach the Superior level on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking, they must “be able to communicate with accuracy and fluency...and demonstrate no pattern of error in the use of basic structures” (ACTFL, 2012). If students do not master grammar principles in beginning courses, they will likely never move beyond the Intermediate level.

Method

Participants

At Brigham Young University, 137 students participated in this study. 104 students are female, and 33 students are male. Their ages range from 18-23. Twenty-two students had been to a German-speaking country. Thirty-one students are engineering majors, 73 are humanities majors, six are business majors, five are science majors, 19 were education majors, two are advertising majors, and one was a math major. One hundred thirty-five are native speakers of American English, and two are native Spanish speakers. By the end of German 101, the first semester course, the department goal is for at least 75% of our students to reach the Novice High level on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Scale. By the end of German 102, the second semester course, the department goal is for at least 75% of our students to reach the Intermediate Low level.

Seven student instructors participated in this study. Four are male, and three are female. Their ages range from 21-25. All seven have lived in a German-speaking country for a minimum of 18 months. Four are German teaching majors, one is music teaching major with a German teaching minor, and two are engineering majors. Two are native speakers of German, three are Superior speakers of German, one is an Advanced High speaker, and one is Advanced Mid.

Research Design

All students and teachers completed a questionnaire at the beginning of the course (see Appendices A and B) and at the end of the course (see Appendices C and D) online using Qualtrics online data collection software. Qualtrics made it easy for students and teachers to complete the questionnaire quickly online and type comments about questionnaire items to include with their questionnaire. The questionnaire items were chosen based on recent research on flipped teaching in FL classrooms (Scullen, 2014; Tecedor, 2014; Stigter, 2014; Witten, 2013). IRB approval was secured prior to the administration of the questionnaire.

Results

Student questionnaire at the beginning of the semester

On the first day of class before the flipped classroom model was introduced, student completed an online questionnaire. They were instructed to answer as honestly as possible and were told that their responses would be kept anonymous, that instructor would never see their responses, and that their grade would in no way be affected by their responses. There were 137 students who completed the questionnaire. Given students familiarization with technology and frequent use of smart phones, tablets, and computers, the result that the majority of students (73%) agreed that online resources are helpful in learning German is not surprising. Also not surprising are the overwhelming results that most students agreed that knowledge of German grammar (93%) and knowledge of vocabulary (94%) are both important to their overall learning of German.

What is surprising, however, is that even though 48% agree that online grammar quizzes that provided immediately feedback would be helpful to their overall learning of German, more than half of all students (52%) were uncertain whether these online grammar quizzes would be helpful. Another result of interest is that 51% of students agreed that the best way to learn German grammar is to have their teacher lecture on it in class, while 21% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 28% disagreed.

Teacher questionnaire at the beginning of the semester

The results of the teacher questionnaire at the beginning of the semester also yielded interesting results. Teachers completed the questionnaire before teaching the first day of the new semester. Even after the training they had received on the flipped classroom model, 57% neither agreed nor disagreed that online resources are helpful to their students in learning German, 43% agreed, and none of the teachers disagreed. These exact same responses were given when asked if online grammar video tutorials were helpful to their students in learning German. One written teacher response to these questions was from a teacher who had been teaching for three semesters who wrote: "Some online resources can be difficult for students in the target language. Students can get overwhelmed and discouraged when they don't understand anything at all on a website."

Surprisingly, only one teacher agreed that online grammar quizzes that provided immediate feedback could be helpful in learning German, while three teachers neither agreed nor disagreed, and three teachers disagreed. When asked to explain their response, one teacher wrote: "I can see that immediate feedback could be helpful, but if there's no teacher there to explain why something is wrong, a student might not benefit from it." Another surprising result is that all teachers agree that the best way for students to learn grammar is to have their teacher lecture on it in class. One teacher explained: "Students can read about grammar at home in the textbook, but sometimes they don't do it. It seems easiest for me as the teacher to just prepare presentations about grammar to use in class. Sometimes students still don't get the grammar, even when I teach it!"

Not surprisingly, all teachers agree that knowledge of German grammar and vocabulary is important to students' overall learning of German. One teacher wrote: "Even though we are focusing on proficiency in teaching, without grammar and vocabulary, students can never progress from one sub-level to another. Grammar and vocabulary are the basis of all successful communication in learning another language."

Student questionnaire at the end of the semester

During the last week of the semester, students received a link in an e-mail to the questionnaire for them to complete at the end of their flipped learning German course. The results were reassuringly and overwhelmingly positive. All students agreed on the following items:

- The quality of my communication skills in German has improved.
- I felt more engaged in this class than in other classes I have taken.
- If given the choice, I would continue learning German with the flipped classroom model.
- The flipped classroom model helped me feel more comfortable speaking German during class.
- I feel confident participating in basic conversations in German.
- Online resources are helpful in learning German.
- Online video tutorials on grammar are important in learning German.
- Online grammar quizzes that allow me to receive immediate feedback are helpful in learning German.
- Knowledge of German grammar is important to my overall learning of German.
- Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my overall learning of German.

Regarding the flipped learning approach to learning German, one student commented: "I wasn't sure how well I could do in a class where so much was online and was to be done outside of class as homework. I was pleasantly surprised to see how quickly I came to like working on grammar exercises online whenever I wanted and wherever I wanted." Another student wrote: "I really liked the online grammar quizzes. I liked the immediate feedback and explanation if I got a wrong answer. I could retake the quiz as many times as I wanted. This helped me feel confident in my grammar abilities." And another student stated: "The online grammar tutorials saved me. I was worried they would be really boring and hard to understand, but they were easy to understand and kind of fun. I liked that I could watch them as many times as I needed."

Students also agreed that the following contributed to their learning of German that semester:

- Reading grammar explanations online before class in *Deutsch im Blick*.
- The grammar video tutorials.
- The online grammar quizzes.
- Completing grammar exercises online before class.
- Completing vocabulary exercises online before class.
- Speaking only German in class.

All students were also in agreement that the best way to learn grammar is not for the teacher to lecture on it in class. These results are comforting and encouraging. Making the decision to flip all of the beginning German classes at a time was difficult to make. Some teachers (Stigter, 2014; Witten, 2013) strongly suggest flipping just one class at a time or just one component of one class. With departmental proficiency goals in mind, professors at Brigham Young University strive to keep up-to-date on current research and best practices for teaching languages. With overwhelmingly positive results from teachers and students, we are confident to go forward with flipped learning in our beginning German courses.

Teacher questionnaire at the end of the semester

During the last week of the semester, teachers were asked to complete another online questionnaire to rate how they felt the semester went using the flipped classroom model. All teachers agreed on the following questionnaire items:

- The quality of students' communication skills in German has improved
- Students were more engaged in this class than in previous German classes I have taught.
- Classroom time was used more effectively than in previous German classes I have taught.
- The flipped classroom model helped my students feel more comfortable speaking German during class than in previous German classes I have taught.
- Students seem more confident participating in basic conversations in German than in previous German classes I have taught.
- If given the choice, I would continue to teach German using the flipped class model.
- Online resources are helpful for my students in learning German.
- Online video tutorials on grammar are helpful for my students in learning German.
- Online grammar quizzes that allow students to receive immediate feedback are helpful for my students in learning German.
- Knowledge of German grammar is important to my students' overall learning of German.
- Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my students' overall learning of German.

All teachers were also in agreement that the best way to learn grammar is not for the teacher to lecture on it in class. These results are reassuring, especially when compared to their responses at the beginning of the semester when all teachers agreed that the best way to learn grammar is for the teacher to lecture on it in class. At the beginning of the semester, not all teachers agreed that online grammar quizzes with immediate feedback could be helpful to students, and the majority were uncertain whether online resources and video tutorials could be helpful to students learning German. One teacher wrote:

At the beginning of the semester, I was convinced that I was the best resource for students to learn German grammar. I have lived in Germany, and my German is Superior. The beginning students know very little

German and need all the help they can get. I now believe very strongly that by having students watch video tutorials to introduce grammar concepts then work on exercises to help them practice the grammar concepts at home, they are better prepared to use the grammar in class.

Another teacher wrote: “My students loved the online grammar quizzes! They were able to take them as many times as they wanted. The immediate feedback they received was really helpful for them.” For the first time in years, all teachers agree on how beginning German should be taught at Brigham Young University. Teachers commented that they were able to follow the curriculum easily and found it easier to work on helping students become proficient in speaking and writing during class time.

Discussion

A one-semester empirical study where students enrolled in beginning German classes at Brigham Young University used homework time outside of class learning and reviewing grammar and vocabulary using online resources so that class time could be spent assisting students in reaching language learning and language proficiency goals based yielded positive results. Student and teacher attitudes toward flipped learning were measured by questionnaire responses at the beginning and end of the semester. Results of both student and teacher questionnaires at the beginning of the semester indicate that some students and teachers were uncertain about implementing the flipped learning environment to learning German, a discipline that has traditionally been taught using at least some teacher-centered grammar explanations. Also, in learning languages at the university-level, in the past many students have relied heavily on their teacher as their sole source of knowledge about German language, history, culture, etc. Students also have not been encouraged to communicate with their teacher, or classmates when they need assistance beyond classroom instruction.

As indicated in results of the questionnaire students and teachers completed at the end of the semester, with the flipped classroom, students are able to take the time they need outside of class to work on grammar and vocabulary they will need to succeed in classroom activities that are designed to improve their overall proficiency of the German language. The classroom tasks and activities students participate in focus on ensuring students have a solid grasp of functions, contexts, and text type while also focusing on the three modes of communication for the Novice High level, which also includes activities that push them to produce language at the Intermediate level. These activities include the following: information gap activities in pairs, role plays, guided short reading and listening assignments, scaffolded and non-scaffolded short writing assignments, interviews, Student-led Oral Proficiency Interviews (Bryan, 2014), prepared formal presentations, small group discussions, and problem-solving activities.

By the end of the semester, all teachers and students agreed that online resources could help students learn German and that teacher grammar lectures were not the best way to learn grammar. All students reported feeling comfortable and confident about their ability to speak German in class. This is something that

many students do not develop until after they have been learning German for a year, or longer.

Conclusion

By the end of the first semester of the flipped German classroom, teachers and students overwhelmingly agreed that the flipped classroom model was a positive influence on German teaching and learning in beginning German classes. These results are in line with recent research on the flipped classroom in general (Bennett, 2013; Gleason, 2013; Khan, 2012) and on the flipped classroom in language learning specifically (Ducate, Lomicka, & Lord, 2012; Rubio & Thoms, 2012; Scullen, 2014; Shrager, 2014; Stigter, 2014; Tecedor, 2014; Witten, 2013). Further, because the teaching and practice of grammar and vocabulary takes place outside of the classroom, students and teachers are able to focus on using grammar and vocabulary to become proficient in producing German in speech and writing. As questions arise about how to use grammar and vocabulary in practiced and spontaneous communication during class, the teacher is able to answer student questions, provide correct models, and assist students in creating with the language. With the goal of proficiency in mind, about 75% of all students reach the Novice High level at the end of German 101 (first semester) on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Scale, and about 75% of all students reach the Intermediate Low level by the end of German 102 (second semester German).

Implications for Future Research

Future research studies could investigate the effect of flipped learning on different languages. This study only focused on German, and it would be beneficial to find out if teachers and students of Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, etc. find the flipped classroom approach to language learning as effective as German students do. Additionally, this study only focused on beginning learners of German. It would be advantageous to find out if teachers and students at the intermediate and advanced levels of German and other languages find the flipped classroom approach to intermediate and advanced language learning to be valuable.

Another facet that would be beneficial to explore would be to administer ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interviews at the beginning and end of the semester to see if the flipped classroom model actually promotes proficiency and successful language learning.

Limitations of This Study

The main limitation of this study is the population from which the sample of participants was taken. Participants were all students enrolled in beginning German classes at Brigham Young University who were willing to participate. All students taken beginning German were in sections of German that employed the flipped classroom approach to learning German. There were no treatment and control groups in this study. Likewise, the teachers who participated were all student instructors at Brigham Young University and were willing to participate.

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Appendix A**Results of the Beginning-of-the-Semester Questionnaire (Students)**

Total responses out of 137 students and total percentages for each questionnaire item.

	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (neither agree nor disagree)	4 (agree)	5 (strongly agree)
1. Online resources are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	1/0.7%	36/26%	77/56%	23/17%
2. Online video tutorials on grammar are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	62/45%	67/49%	8/6%
3. Online grammar quizzes that allow me to receive immediate feedback are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	71/52%	52/38%	14/10%
4. Knowledge of German grammar is important to my overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	10/7%	39/29%	88/64%
5. Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	9/7%	31/23%	97/71%
6. The best way to learn grammar is to have my teacher lecture on it in class.	17/12%	22/16%	28/21%	26/19%	44/32%

Appendix B

Results of the Beginning-of-the-Semester Questionnaire (Teachers)

Total responses out of 7 teachers and total percentages for each questionnaire item.

	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (neither agree nor disagree)	4 (agree)	5 (strongly agree)
1. Online resources are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	4/57%	2/29%	1/14%
2. Online video tutorials on grammar are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	4/57%	2/29%	1/14%
3. Online grammar quizzes that allow students to receive immediate feedback are helpful in learning German.	1/14%	2/29%	3/43%	1/14%	0/0%
4. Knowledge of German grammar is important to students' overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	2/29%	5/71%
5. Knowledge of vocabulary is important to students' overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	2/29%	5/71%
6. The best way for students to learn grammar is to have their teacher lecture on it in class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	3/43%	4/57%

Appendix C**End-of-the-Semester Questionnaire (Students)**

Total responses out of 137 students and total percentages for each questionnaire item.

Part A.	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (neither agree nor disagree)	4 (agree)	5 (strongly agree)
1. The quality of my communication skills in German has improved.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	49/36%	88/64%
2. I felt more engaged in this class than in other classes I have taken.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	46/34%	91/66%
3. Classroom time was used effectively.	0/0%	0/0%	23/17%	63/54%	51/37%
4. If given the choice, I would continue learning German with the flipped classroom model.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	16/12%	121/88%
5. The flipped classroom model helped me feel more comfortable speaking German during class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	117/85%	20/15%
6. I feel confident participating in basic conversations in German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	8/6%	129/94%
7. Online resources are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	98/71%	39/29%
8. Online video tutorials on grammar are important in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	101/74%	36/26%

9. Online grammar quizzes that allow me to receive immediate feedback are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	41/30%	96/70%
10. Knowledge of German grammar is important to my overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	15/11%	122/89%
11. Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	9/7%	128/93%
12. The best way to learn grammar is to have my teacher lecture on it in class.	0/0%	0/0%	43/31%	66/48%	28/21%

Part B. How much do you think each of the following contributed to your learning of German this semester?	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (neither agree nor disagree)	4 (agree)	5 (strongly agree)
1. Reading grammar explanations online before class in <i>Deutsch im Blick</i> .	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	86/63%	51/37%
2. The grammar video tutorials.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	46/34%	91/66%
3. The online grammar quizzes.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	33/24%	104/76%
4. Completing grammar exercises online before class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	45/33%	92/67%
5. Completing vocabulary exercises online before class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	48/35%	89/65%
6. Speaking German in class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	32/23%	105/77%
7. Teacher explanations in class.			0/0%	0/0%	0/0%

Appendix D**Results of the End-of-the-Semester Questionnaire (Teachers)**

Total responses out of 137 students and total percentages for each questionnaire item.

Part A.	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (neither agree nor disagree)	4 (agree)	5 (strongly agree)
1. The quality of my students' communication skills in German has improved.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
2. Students were more engaged in this class than in previous German classes I have taught.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
3. Classroom time was used more effectively than in previous German classes I have taught.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
4. If given the choice, I would continue teaching German with the flipped classroom model.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
5. The flipped classroom model helped my students feel more comfortable speaking German during class than in previous German classes I have taught.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%

6. Students seem more confident participating in basic conversations in German than in previous German classes I have taught.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
7. Online resources are helpful for my students in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	3/43%	4/57%
8. Online video tutorials on grammar are helpful for my students in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
9. Online grammar quizzes that allow students to receive immediate feedback are helpful for my students in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	2/29%	5/71%
10. Knowledge of German grammar is important to my students' overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
11. Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my students' overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
12. The best way to learn grammar is for me as the teacher lecture on it in class.	6/86%	1/14%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%

Part B. How much do you think each of the following contributed to your students' learning of German this semester?	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (neither agree nor disagree)	4 (agree)	5 (strongly agree)
1. Reading grammar explanations online before class in <i>Deutsch im Blick</i> .	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
2. The grammar video tutorials.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
3. The online grammar quizzes.	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	1/14%	5/71%
4. Completing grammar exercises online before class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
5. Completing vocabulary exercises online before class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
6. Speaking only German in class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
7. Teacher explanations of grammar in class.	5/71%	2/29%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%

3

Engaging Learners in Culturally Authentic Virtual Interactions

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Abstract

The new spaces and new realities of networked technologies provide learning opportunities that can engage and personalize the learning experience well beyond what traditional electronic learning content can offer. Language students can now engage in real-world conversations with native speakers in real time, enabling students to connect the learning content of the classroom to meaningful, applied experiences. This article describes a standards based approach to integrating language and culture in a natural, authentic context. It includes a rationale for establishing a virtual conversation program, a review of available technology tools, an overview of an existing program as well as a discussion of strategies for organizing and executing a successful program.

Introduction

According to a theory of second language acquisition purported by Long (1991), Firth and Wagner (2007) and Pica, Kanagy and Falodun (1993) among others, languages are learned through social interaction. Interaction has become a common-place format for engaging students in world language classroom activities, increasing the amount of potential output of each student. It is through this interaction with others that students express thoughts, opinions and feelings and negotiate meaning with their peers and with native speakers (Pica, 1994; Long, 1981; Gass, 1997, Gass & Varonia 1994; Doughty 1998; Blake 2000, 2005).

When students are asked to communicate in a real-world situation in which they must negotiate meaning, they test new linguistic forms and terms, notice what they do not yet know how to express, and examine cultural nuances that can cause misinterpretations, especially when engaging with a native speaker (Blake 2013; Swain, 1985, 1995, 2000; Swain & Lapkin 1998). Learners have much to gain by engaging in target language interaction, both inside and outside the classroom, in order to increase production and improve proficiency.

In a perfect world, all world language students would be exposed to the target language and culture in an immersive experience with native speakers, preferably while studying abroad. However, although many study abroad programs exist, the reality is that few students can enroll in long or short term study abroad, often for financial issues, work responsibilities, family commitments, among other reasons (Institute of International Education, 2013).

The good news is that in today's technology-driven world, the means of communicating with others are becoming more sophisticated every day, facilitating virtual face-to-face interaction among individuals and groups. In fact, technology has moved well beyond traditional electronic course content in order to meet student demands for authentic interactive linguistic and cultural experiences. The new spaces and new realities of networked communication can provide interactive communication opportunities for students to engage in personalized and transformative learning experiences. For language learners, this means engagement in real-world conversations with native speakers in real time, connecting the learning content of the classroom to meaningful, applied experiences that encourage an examination of multiple realities. The benefits of students' interactions in virtual, synchronous communication have been cited by such researchers as Pellettieri (2000), Blake (2000), O'Dowd & Waire (2009) and Schenker (2014). According to Blake (2013), such virtual interactions have "...an enormous contribution to make to the L2 curriculum if teachers will become familiar enough with the technology to be able to incorporate it into the students' out-of-class assignments" (p. 17). This article describes a standards-based approach to synchronous face-to-face interaction, integrating language and culture in a natural, authentic context. It includes a rationale for establishing a virtual interactive program, a review of available technology tools, an overview of an existing program, and a discussion of strategies for planning and executing a successful program. The transformative potential for students and instructors will also be discussed.

Program Rationale

The average student in the United States begins world language studies as an adolescent or adult learner (ACTFL, 2008) when the stakes are higher for the time intensive goals of proficiency. The Foreign Service Institute estimated in 1994 that between 700-1320 hours of intense instruction are required to reach a high level of fluency in a second language (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994). However, the average college student studying a Romance language spends approximately three hours a week in class for 30 weeks for a total of 90 hours per academic year studying

a second language (Heining-Boynnton, 2010). Even for some students who begin their language studies in high school and continue at the university level, any advantage is often lost, as students are placed in lower or intermediate level courses which typically do little more than review the content of their high school studies. In addition, these courses may utilize the same or very similar teaching materials, such as publisher prepared textbook and online workbook materials. While some universities grapple with the questions of how to place students and motivate them to continue in world language programs, the fact remains that the time factor continues to work against educators in the quest for meeting proficiency objectives. Disillusioned students may voice the all-too-common concern that they have studied a language for a specific number of years and still cannot communicate.

Faced with such a situation, what alternatives exist for world language educators to enhance learning, boost proficiency and speed up the rate of acquisition? In addition to taking into account SLA theory and applying best practices promoted by state and national organizations for world language education, world language instructors can leverage technology to provide the necessary interaction to enhance student proficiency through contact with native speakers of the target language. A virtual, synchronous interactive program can integrate the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (NSFLEP, 2014) in deliberate and meaningful ways. The five goal areas of the standards serve as the guiding principles of curriculum and course design: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities. The communication standard is clearly addressed through the virtual, interactive environment, due to the fact that synchronous interaction provides an authentic setting in which students communicate in the target language. The cultures standard can be integrated if opportunities are provided for conversation pertaining to products and practices. In class follow-up discussion could focus on the perspectives behind these cultural norms. In addition, students can be guided to make comparisons of their own culture to the culture of their virtual partner in order to address the comparisons standard. The digital environment creates global interaction that can potentially utilize other disciplines as the context for discussions and interactive tasks, thus addressing the connections standard. The communities standard, the culmination of language learning goals, is clearly addressed by giving students the opportunity to use the language outside the classroom setting. Thus, students are encouraged to make the connection between what they do in the language classroom and what they want to do outside of class, professionally and personally. Students can be trained to apply technology and to utilize their second language competence in virtual environments for personal enrichment or professional activities in the future.

Current best practices point to the integration of culture in target language activities and tasks in order to provide a context and a real-life purpose for language learning (Allen, 2014; Clementi & Terrill, 2013). World language educators strive to prepare students as global citizens in an ever-changing, multi-cultural society, recognizing that it is through language study that students begin to examine

their world through another culture's perspective (ACTFL, 2014; Andrew, 2013; Sinicrope, C., Norris, J. & Watanabe, Y., 2007). Allen (2014) has referred to the term intercultural competence as it relates to language learning, defined as "...the ability to interact with others, to understand other perspectives and perceptions of the world, to mediate between different perspectives and to be conscious of one's own and others' evaluations of difference" (p.27). Michael Byram (1997) took this concept one step further when he coined the term intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Students with intercultural communicative competence are:

...able to interact with people from another country and culture in a foreign language. They are able to negotiate a mode of communication and interaction which is satisfactory to themselves and the other and they are able to act as mediator between people of different cultural origins. Their knowledge of another culture is linked to their language competence through their ability to use language appropriately--sociolinguistic and discourse competence--and their awareness of the specific meanings, values and connotations of the language. They also have a basis for acquiring new languages and cultural understandings as a consequence of the skills they have acquired in the first. (p. 71)

Course content that directly connects students to the language and culture in the world outside the classroom addresses goals of intercultural communicative competence. As world language educators contend with how to provide such experiences in a real life context, the digital world offers opportunities that traditionally could only be possible through a study abroad program with deliberately planned experiences to interact with native speakers.

Increasing the opportunities for student interaction is a common goal in today's world language classrooms (Hall, 1995, 2001; Muldrow, 2014; Phillips, 2009). According to Kern and Warschauer (2000), "The focus of instruction has broadened from the teaching of discrete grammatical structures to the fostering of communicative ability. Negotiation of meaning has come to take precedence over structural drill practice" (p. 1). Although proficiency is modeled, teacher-fronted class sessions offer limited opportunities for students to speak in the target language. For instance, if a class meets two to three times a week for 50 minutes, with 20-30 students enrolled in the class, the teacher could at best provide the average student one to two opportunities to respond in the target language during each class session. The topic of the exchange and the context are generalized for the entire class. Cultural information is presented by the instructor and through course materials. Student-to-student interaction is a common activity design in today's world language classrooms. Although the output of students during partner interaction increases overall production, student partners are typically both novice to intermediate speakers, so there is no interaction with a native speaker and little to no cultural information is exchanged. Finally, virtual conversations with native speakers offer increased output per session, the opportunity to model native speaker proficiency, and the exchange of authentic cultural information.

Program Options

Several virtual conversation service options which particularly align with academic settings are currently available. The instructor and program coordinator have numerous issues to consider when exploring options for specific programs, courses and student populations, such as cost, time differences, calendar of classes, type of linguistic experience, type of facilitators, setting, student population, ease of organization, accountability and required equipment. Table 1 on the next page describes the advantages and disadvantages of five available service options.

Language Twin

Language Twin offers a platform for university students of Spanish or English to conduct conversations with native speaker peers outside of class, anytime and anyplace where Internet is available. To commence a session, students login to the company website where they can search the list of peers or 'twins' currently available and online. 'Twins' are listed by name, with additional information posted including country of origin, age, university, photo, and interests and pastimes. Students can choose to initiate a conversation with one of the 'twins' currently online by clicking on the name of the person and inviting him/her to talk in a chat box. If the twin accepts the invitation, students add the twin to their contacts. The twin clicks accept and they are connected. Students can also contact a peer through a list of contacts, similar to other online video software. Another option for connecting with a peer is through quick chat. Students click the quick chat button and the software searches for a twin according to language specifications previously defined in an initial questionnaire for each student. The software will then alert the student when a match has been found. The student has the option to reject or accept a pairing. Students can then choose a language and click record. The software only allows students to record sessions of their own language of study. To switch languages, the student stops recording and asks his/her twin to begin recording. Students choose the length and number of conversations. The software also contains 600 icebreaker questions in case students need assistance with topics to discuss. Students can complete assignments from instructors that have been previously uploaded through the instructor's account page. Instructors have the option to check their page to track student participation and to view students' recorded sessions. Students need a computer, webcam, microphone and Internet connection.

Talk Abroad

Real time conversations of 30 minutes in length are offered in Spanish, French, English and Chinese through this online company. Conversation partners are trained and supervised through the company and utilize video conferencing software as the interface for the conversations. Students need a computer, web access, a headset and microphone. Learners read about the partners and choose one based on interests or a course assignment. They can coordinate and schedule their sessions according to individual circumstances. Both students and instructors

Table 1. Options for Virtual Interaction

Name of Service	Cost	Type of program	Languages offered	Integration of course content	Student population	Accountability	Number of sessions per week
Language Twin	Individual license: \$35 per term, \$55 per year; sliding scale for bulk licenses	Dual immersion, student to student	Spanish, English	Instructor uploads assignment to website	University level only	Students can record their sessions. Software tracks dates and length of each session.	unlimited
Talk Abroad	Per conversation cost for students: 1 = \$15 2 = \$30 3 = \$40 4 = \$45 5+ = \$10 per conversation	Immersion with Trained and supervised conversation partners	Spanish, French, English and Chinese	Instructor provides instructions to conversation partner	High School and University level	Sessions are recorded for instructors and students to listen to entire recording if desired.	One 30 minute session per week; number of sessions depends upon price paid.
LinguaMeeting	University students: 6 sessions=\$30 12 sessions=\$52 per semester High school students: 15 sessions=\$79 per academic year	Immersion with a trained language coach	Spanish, French	Coaches provide conversational practice in small groups.	High School and University level	Sessions are recorded for instructors. Students are graded each week on attendance and participation. This includes a short performance description.	One 30 minute session per week for 6 or 12 weeks.
WeSpeke	Free	Dual immersion, student to student	103 languages	Teachers may set up exchange sessions. Lesson plans are provided.	Individual, middle, high school and university		Unlimited access
Independent	Free	Dual immersion, student to student	Any language	Instructors define format, usually 2:1 student peers	High School and University Level	Sessions could be recorded using digital media software.	According to course assignments and/or instructor arrangements

may listen to a recording of each conversation. Talk Abroad also possesses a social mission which aims to provide fair wages and work that is flexible and reliable for trained conversation employees in over 15 developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Linguameeting

Linguameeting offers virtual conversational practice with a native speaker language coach. Students participate via virtual meeting software in small 30-minute group sessions related to the material covered in their Spanish courses. Students need a webcam, microphone, internet connection and a computer to participate. Sessions are tracked and recorded, and students receive a grade for attendance and participation effort from their language coach. Language coaches reinforce material from class sessions while offering opportunities to communicate in Spanish or French. Coaches are primarily from Guatemala, Spain and France.

WeSpeke

WeSpeke is an online social network communication platform offering free access to individuals or school groups to engage in one on one interactive language practice. Communication takes place via text, audio or video, allowing interaction anytime and anyplace. Currently the company offers practice in 103 languages in 160 countries. Students create a profile and the software can display partner matches based on interests, language, and age. Students can see which matches are online and use a chat function to invite potential partners to converse. Learners can choose audio and video buttons to interact further or a disconnect button to end an unwanted interaction. For users' safety, the company offers community guidelines, a means to report abuse, and age appropriate pairings for students under age 18. WeSpeke encourages students to get the edge in preparation for study abroad experiences and job opportunities by communicating with native speakers prior to their travel and internships. Built-in language tools offer learner support and teachers may utilize the lesson plans on the website to integrate conversations into school curriculum.

Independent Partnerships

World language educators may arrange a partnership with a colleague abroad in order to offer interaction opportunities to their students. Several online resources offer educators a portal for arranging participation in native and target language exchanges. The advantages of one-on-one partnerships involve the freedom to negotiate the parameters of the exchange, including objectives, student preparation, guidelines and assessment. The disadvantages may include maneuvering the time differences, technology platforms and basic structure without the support of independent service providers for students and educators.

Program Implementation

The remainder of this article describes program implementation utilizing *Linguameeting* at one Midwestern university. Specifically, the reader will find a

complete overview of the program and a description of its components, including the purpose of the language coach, syllabus design and student preparation, the three modes of communication and communicative tasks, cultural integration, and assessment. Finally, a review of student perspectives will shed light on the transformative potential of implementing a similar program, both for students and instructors. Although *Linguameeting* was utilized for the program described in this article, it is expected that a similar implementation process would take place with any of the synchronous video options outlined previously, in accordance with the particular idiosyncrasies of each option. *Linguameeting* was selected based on the structure of the program, the manner in which the language coaches integrate and reinforce course content and the provisions for student accountability. *Linguameeting* offers language coaching to beginning and intermediate level students, utilizing well-known virtual meeting software to conduct sessions with a maximum of 3-4 students.

What is a language coach?

A language coach is not a tutor, but rather a guide or trainer who makes decisions about how the player or student performs. These decisions drive instructional activities and strategies utilized by the coach. A language coach does not explain grammar or conduct mechanical practice with the students. Instead, a context is introduced based on course calendar and content. Culture becomes a part of the context as the coach relates course content to the practices, products and perspectives of his/her country. Students answer questions posed by the language coach, ask each other questions as directed by the coach, and interact in a positive, non-threatening environment. Beginning students are not expected to communicate online solely with another student. They have the support of the language coach, who acts as the expert, guiding them in their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) as they attempt to communicate in the target language.

Syllabus Design and Student Preparation for Sessions

The *Linguameeting* coaching program was implemented first with two sections of Spanish 101 as a pilot project to determine ease of functionality and level of success for students. Following the pilot, the coaching program was added to the Spanish 102 course during the next semester and to Spanish 201 Intermediate I the third semester. The project coordinator revised the course syllabi to integrate the coaching program into the course calendar of activities, while continuing to follow the organization of the beginning textbook utilized in a multi-section program. This integration was deemed an essential component of the organizational process in order that students consider the additional coaching requirement to be an important element of the course and not just an add-on. Therefore, the schedule and assignments to prepare for each session were built in and part of the overall course syllabus. A sample of the syllabus can be viewed in Table 2.

Table 2. Sample Partial Syllabus

SEMANA 6	<p style="text-align: center;">Clase</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CAPÍTULO TRES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Así es mi familia: la familia, los parientes y los amigos.</i> - <i>Tener y tener... años.</i> - <i>Descriptive adjectives with ser: los opuestos.</i> 	<p>Coaching </p> <p><i>Prepárate:</i></p> <p><i>Para comenzar y Resumen de gramática</i></p> <p>Materiales: Fotos de tu familia</p>
SEMANA 7	<p style="text-align: center;">CAPÍTULO TRES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Relaciones personales.</i> - <i>Possessive adjectives and possession with de</i> - <i>Estar + location and condition: ¿Dónde están?/¿Cómo están?</i> - <i>Cultura: la familia hispana</i> 	<p><i>Prepárate:</i> </p> <p><i>La lengua en vivo</i></p> <p>Materiales: Fotos de tu familia</p>
SEMANA 8	<p>Repaso Capítulos 1-3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CAPÍTULO CUATRO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>¡A la mesa! Vocabulario.</i> - <i>The verb gustar.</i> 	<p><i>Prepárate:</i> </p> <p><i>La cultura en vivo: págs. 99 A, B</i></p> <p><i>Repasar Capítulos 1-3</i></p>

In order to orient students to the logistical aspects of the program, they received an online memo regarding the steps to register for the 12 sessions of language coaching. Instructors reviewed registration steps with students during the first week of classes. After logging into the website and purchasing the code, students created a profile. Students chose a day and time that fit their schedule in order to begin coaching during the second week of classes. *Linguameeting* sent reminders to students prior to each coaching session with a link that led them directly to their session at the arranged day and time. Once students created a profile, they could use their username and password to manage their profile, change coaching days and times according to their weekly schedule, update their password and check on their attendance and progress.

The program coordinator and instructors utilized numerous techniques to prepare students for their first coaching sessions. Before the first coaching session, instructors showed a short video with the coach introducing herself and posted the coach's photo and biography on the learning management system so that students could feel less intimidated by becoming more familiar with their coach. Prior to the commencement of the program, the coordinator and the head coach developed the following session guidelines for students during coaching sessions. (See Table 3 on the next page.)

Table 3. Session Guidelines

Session Guidelines:	
1.	Make sure to use your headset/earphones during sessions, as this reduces feedback and echoes.
2.	Be punctual, as repeated tardiness will be reported and it may affect your final grade.
3.	Be prepared for your session. For instance, if you are to provide a photo to discuss, be sure it is on your computer and ready to share.
4.	No cell phone use during the sessions.
5.	Do not wear hats, as it is important for your language coach to see your facial expressions.
6.	Choose a place that is quiet and does not have too many distractions, such as roommates, children and pets. If you are on campus, perhaps a study cubicle or room would work well.
7.	Relax, drink a cup of coffee or your favorite beverage and have fun! We want you to enjoy your sessions.

In addition, instructors reviewed the technology requirements with students, specific to their university. Students viewed a how-to video, which explained the steps to test equipment and login to their session at the appointed time. Instructors explained that students should review any content from previous class sessions prior to the coaching for optimal results. Instructors also emphasized the benefits of participating in additional practice with a trained coach and the positive potential outcome. They placed emphasis on the increased abilities to communicate in the language and the attendance requirement. Students practiced with their instructors a simulated coaching session as a class communication activity during the first week of classes.

Incorporating the Three Modes of Communication

Maximizing communication opportunities by instituting the coaching program into course content required deliberate integration of the three modes of communication (Phillips, 2008). Tasks and activities conducted during coaching and in class as follow-up activities incorporate interpersonal, interpretive and presentational modes of communication.

Communication Tasks and Activities

During coaching sessions, students utilized a table to compile information based on coach and peer responses. Each table pertained to a chapter theme of the textbook, such as shopping, food, favorite pastimes, university life and health. (See Table 4 for an example.) Instructors conducted in class follow-up activities based on the table. Students could be paired to discuss their findings with a partner. By projecting the table onto a screen during class, the instructor could then ask target language follow-up questions that were open-ended, such as *¿Qué aprendiste de tu guía de conversación*

esta semana? [What did you learn from your coach this week?] *¿Qué dice tu guía de conversación sobre _____ en Guatemala?* [What does your coach say about _____ in Guatemala?] *¿Qué dicen tus compañeros/as?* [What do your peers say?] These open ended questions required students to create their own output, and were void of specific linguistic information necessary for students to create their responses. Students who experienced instructor follow-up during class regarding coaching session content were more likely to have high attendance records for both class and coaching sessions.

Table 4. Coaching Session Sample *La comida*

	Yo [I]	El/la instructor/a [Instructor]	Mi compañero/a [Classmate]	Mi compañero/a [Classmate]
<i>Desayuno típico</i> [Typical Breakfast]				
<i>Horario de las tres comidas</i> [Schedule of Three Basic Meals]				
<i>Alimentos típicos</i> [Typical Foods]				
<i>Las compras</i> [Shopping]				
<i>Cena típica</i> [Typical Dinner]				
<i>Restaurante preferido</i> [Preferred Restaurant]				

Once beginning students learned how to formulate questions of their own, instructors included an investigative task that involved preparing questions to pose to their language coach. Instructor follow-up was a crucial part of this activity, which required students to share with a partner their findings regarding their language coach and report to the class. This report inevitably led to a brief discussion regarding comparisons of common practices and products. The example below is one such investigative task.

Una conversación con Ingrid

Nombre: *Ingrid Rocío Méndez Yancoba* **Edad:** 20 años (Photo of Ingrid here)

Sus características personales son: *una persona amigable y alegre, le gusta conocer a nuevos amigos y lugares de interés, bailar, cantar, jugar, hablar de temas agradables, entre otras cosas.*

Sus aspiraciones son: *Tener una formación académica universitaria, especializada en educación y enseñanza del idioma español. Con este deseo tener una mejor oportunidad de vida en la sociedad, me gustaría conocer lugares bonitos donde se encuentre mucha naturaleza y lugares históricos.*

Motivaciones: *Formarme como Maestra de Español y ser parte del programa.*

Preguntas para Ingrid:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

[A conversation with Ingrid

Name: Ingrid Rocío Méndez Yancoba Age: 20 years old (Photo of Ingrid here)

Her characteristics are: a friendly, happy person who likes to meet new friends, get to know new places, dance, sing, play, talk about nice themes, among other things.

Her aspirations are: Obtain university academic preparation, specializing in second language education. With this wish to have the best opportunity of life in society, I would like to see new and beautiful places where one can encounter a lot of natural and historical places.

Motivations: Become a Spanish teacher and be part of the program.

Questions for Ingrid:]

An additional activity involved written reflection. Students were required to keep a writing journal in the target language by responding to guided reflection questions. Questions facilitated an examination of products and practices, as well as the perspectives underlying each (Tang, 2006). For instance, questions prompted students to reflect upon and write about their university life experience and university life in the country of their language coach.

La vida universitaria en los Estados Unidos y en el país de tu guía de conversación
¿Cuántos estudiantes hay en una clase típica en tu universidad? ¿Es importante la participación en clase? ¿El/la profesor/a habla mucho en clase? ¿Cómo es la interacción entre profesor/a y estudiantes? ¿Es formal o informal? ¿Dónde viven los estudiantes? ¿Hay residencias en la universidad? ¿Los estudiantes seleccionan sus clases? Comenta sobre tu situación y la vida universitaria en el país de tu guía de conversación.

[University Life in the United States and in the Country of Your Language Coach

How many students are in a typical class at your university? Is class participation important? Does the professor talk a lot? What is the interaction like between professor and students? Is it formal or informal? Where do university students live? Are there dorms at your university? Do students choose their own classes? Comment on the situation at your university and at universities in the country of your language coach.]

Students made comparisons regarding cultural products, practices and perspectives. Although the student's responses are linguistically simple, cultural reflection is essential to complete the task. Task design, organization and structure are critical, given the potential transformative nature of virtual interactions, both in the areas of linguistic development and intercultural awareness (O'Dowd & Waire, 2009).

Cultural Integration

Language educators today agree that embedding culture into their language teaching is important (Byram, 2008; Byram, Nicholas & Stevens, 2001; Kramsch, 1993; Levy, 2007). In the coaching program, the coaches chose both still photos and live video as creative digital means of encouraging an examination of culture in the context of each session. Photos of their local surroundings were often utilized to present practices and products while simultaneously facilitating conversation. For example, a language coach uploaded a photo of a typical, colorful bus in Guatemala in order to prompt a discussion of the location of objects on and around the bus. In so doing she also highlighted the name, the colors, and overall appearance of the bus. The same coach uploaded a second photo of a motorcycle taxi typical of her town in Guatemala. She asked students simple questions to compare the type of taxis in their city in the United States with these small taxis in Guatemala, all while describing the location of people and items in the photo. A second coach invited students on a digital tour of her patio, achieved with the assistance of her laptop and webcam. Students met the coach's mother and toured her patio. They also experienced the contextualization of the grammar distinction of the verbs 'to know' in Spanish. A third group of students toured a Guatemalan outdoor market while their coach took her laptop along to do her local food shopping.

Assessment strategies

Formative assessment occurred throughout the semester as students received weekly attendance and participation grades and comments from their coaches. In addition, students participated in three recorded *charlas*, or live paired conversations, which were evaluated by their instructor utilizing a performance rubric. Students also participated in a final live paired interview at the end of the semester, evaluated based on the same performance rubric. This interview plus the three *charlas* forced language production and real-life language application to a higher level of importance for students, due to the implementation of these

evaluation tools. Additional assessments included a 5-minute presentation on a cultural comparison related to their coaching sessions and a written description of students' coach and peers from coaching sessions. Students viewed and evaluated their performance by watching recordings of coaching sessions. Finally, students prepared an audio or video speech sample of 1-2 minutes presenting interview results on a specific topic related to course content.

Student Comments

At the end of the semester, students completed an online survey regarding the coaching program. Their ratings were generally positive, as 77% of the 231 students who responded rated the program as satisfactory or very satisfactory, and 55.4% rated their coaching sessions as positively contributing to their overall speaking abilities in Spanish. Sample comments regarding the program include the following:

"I thought that the experience was very good in helping me to apply Spanish to my everyday life and not just school related topics."

"My coach kept the sessions fun and exciting. I looked forward to coming to the sessions!"

"It's been very helpful to me because we can actually speak in a setting that you don't necessarily have to be right about what you are saying. much more interactive because it's 4:1 (student to teacher). i'm glad i actually did it [sic]."

"Great program! It is very unique, and it helps a lot with building your Spanish communication skills."

"Very good and easy way to continue to talk with a Spanish [sic] native speaker, greatly helps understand and talk in class."

"It was an interesting experience and I enjoyed the different atmosphere of being able to talk to a native Spanish speaker."

"I think this program is a good experience for students to know more about the hispanic [sic] culture and practice with communication."

"It helped me develop my speaking and comprehension skills a lot because in class we do a lot of memorization and learning of terms and grammar, so I get to put that to use in the coaching program."

Some of the issues that the students raised as shortcomings of the program were connectivity, size of coaching groups, cost and need for further integration of coaching sessions into course content. Sample comments from students along these lines include the following:

“It is a good program just a few things that need to improve on like the connection.”

“I really enjoy this program over all, I just was not happy with internet connect flaws

But I am glad I got the experience!”

“The technology broke many times. Things froze and were not fixed. 4 people plus a language coach is too many people in a group.”

“I really enjoyed coaching. I do wish that we would refrence [sic] what we learned in the sessions in class more.”

“I enjoyed the process of doing online coaching for the semester. The University’s internet connection isn’t the best so that was the only hassle.”

“Overall, this program was okay. I did not like the cost of it. However, it did help my speaking”

“The price for the program is a bit high. If you could cut the costs, it would be much better.”

Each of these areas of improvement outlined by the students can be addressed to enhance the experience for the learners in order to ensure continued positive outcomes. Instructors and program coordinators interested in creating a virtual interactive program can take note of these student observations as they begin the planning process.

Instructors’ Perspectives

Implementing the language coaching program called for some unexpected professional development in several areas of methodology and best practices. The nature of the language coaching as an immersion program transformed instructors in significant ways, as it prompted some to update techniques and to increase their use of the target language in the classroom. Instructors held discussions regarding techniques and strategies for utilizing 90%+ of each class session in the target language, as well as appropriate tasks for fostering both student production and interaction in the target language (Ceo-DiFrancesco, 2014). The program coordinator showed sample recordings of pairs of students in order for instructors to understand the difference between a rehearsed and a more spontaneous, open-ended conversation. Instructors updated a rubric in order to assess student performance on two recorded student conversations during the semester. They also shared best practices for conducting contextualized communication tasks and revised departmental exams and quizzes to reflect the increased focus on comprehensible input and output.

An interesting element of discussion among colleagues was the status of dialectal correctness and opinions regarding the importance of presenting and practicing only textbook vocabulary versus the occasional terminology variations

produced by language coaches. Colleagues were challenged to come to terms with their concept of correct Spanish and the use of expressions and vocabulary that may be considered acceptable Spanish in one country and unacceptable in another. Since students experienced a focus on communication in the coaching sessions, instructors with a more traditional grammar approach began to examine the role and importance they placed on language production and proficiency, as well as the effect of the content of class sessions on student performance or preparedness for coaching sessions.

Lessons Learned

The virtual coaching program forced modifications in existing curricula and materials to meet new demands of our student population. According to Carel (2001), "...the value of educational research lies in what lessons we learn and how we apply them" (p. 158). In an attempt to relate this program to future contexts, I include the following six main points to consider.

1. Set realistic expectations. Start small by beginning with a pilot program and expand only after working through issues and obstacles observed during the trial period.
2. Explore new applications of technology. Today's educators are challenged to create innovative formats, models and structures for developing proficiency in the world language classroom and beyond.
3. Equip schools with the necessary technology to innovate. In the age of economic inconsistencies, educational funding constraints and demands for new means of generating revenue, administrators need to place devices in the hands of learners in order to effectively enhance learning.
4. Train instructors in the format first. For instructor buy-in and collegial support, allow colleagues to experience the new application well ahead of student integration. Instructor enthusiasm for innovation or lack thereof transfers to students.
5. Listen to students. Student feedback is essential in developing new learning contexts. Learners must play an active role in the construction of their educational realities.
6. Provide adequate follow-up tasks and assessments during class sessions. Students need to realize the relevance of the required activity through in-class engagement and evaluation tools.

Conclusion

Considering the potential linguistic and cultural value, synchronous interactive programs present a new format for supporting the learner and enhancing language acquisition. The particular program reviewed in this article provides standards-based virtual communication practice in a small group setting with native speaker instructors. Students interact utilizing all three modes of communication in an authentic, contextualized environment. The implementation of such a program offers the opportunity to take language learning beyond the classroom setting and

provides a framework for experiential learning and intercultural interaction in a virtual environment. Implementing such a program also creates transformational opportunities for world language instructors, as they reexamine components of best practices within new instructional contexts.

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**Transforming Lives by
Transforming Perspectives:**

**Developing Intercultural
Communicative Competence**

4

Journey to Global Competence: Learning Languages, Exploring Cultures, Transforming Lives

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The future is something that is constantly taking place, and this constant “taking place” means that the future only exists to the extent that we change the present. It is by changing the present that we build the future; therefore history is possibility, not determinism.

—Paulo Freire

Pedagogy of the City (1993)

Abstract

This article reviews and summarizes the literature on global competence in order to begin to understand how to best foster global competence within the context of the world language classroom. Building on widely circulated definitions and models of global competence and analogous terms, this article provides examples of how teachers can foster global competence within the classroom. Because of the unique relationship between global competence and cultural understanding and the equally strong relationship between languages and cultures, world language educators are uniquely positioned to become

leaders in their organizations with respect to fostering global competence among students. Educators can foster global competence in their students by empowering them to learn languages in pragmatically correct ways, explore cultures with an emphasis on understanding cultural perspectives from product and practices, and by transforming lives by creating opportunities for students to take action and interact with speakers of their studied languages in natural contexts.

Introduction

Ask a few teachers why they do what they do, and they are not likely to speak of their passion for making sure students can take derivatives or diagram sentences. Ask teachers what they hope that students will remember from their course in 10 or 20 years and it is unlikely that any of them would have a specific piece of content in mind. Let's face it: Those learning targets may help to keep us focused on what we are teaching at the moment, but they are not what gets us out of bed in the morning. Most teachers have a vision of what it is that students should take away from the experience as a result of having taken the courses that they teach. These visions are the grandest of our essential questions and often they are the most human element of everything that we do. My vision for my students is global competence. I want them to speak the language and I want them to love it, but if they were to forget every last syllable I would hope they would at least retain the knowledge, dispositions, and skills necessary to communicate effectively in diverse environments. Personally, I have been reduced to tears while I asserted that despite the fact that many of my students may think that they are taking my class to fulfill a college admissions requirement, they will leave my classroom transformed. At least, that is the hope that gets me out of bed in the morning. Teaching is a political act (Freire, 1993). I teach world language to foster an appreciation for diversity—to make the seemingly foreign, familiar. I teach to eradicate racism. I teach to end discrimination. I teach to change the world. Yet, I do not believe that I alone have the power to make any changes in my classroom. I come armed with mere questions. I create the environment for inquiry within that semi-structured space; I believe that my students are charged with the task of inventing and reinventing the world. In this article, I attempt to summarize what I have learned through my review of literature on the subject. On my professional development journey, I have created an outline of practices that have been recognized as empowering students to increase their overall global competence which I share here. Each day in my classroom is an attempt to make the world a better place. Each day on the road to global competence we learn languages, and we explore cultures; and, in the end, I hope we transform lives.

Making the Case for Global Competence

The United States Department of Education (2012) released a report entitled, "Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement." The report is an indication the U.S. Department of Education realizes the need to galvanize students to be able to live and work in what Friedman (2007) termed a

“flat world”—a world of both global competition and global responsibility that is not merely metaphorically shrunk by technology but also leveled. In other words, in a flat world, individuals from all corners of the earth can be empowered to act globally and compete in ways that may have previously been thought impossible. The Department of Education’s report outlined four major objectives. The first of the four objectives was the major focus of this article: “Increase the global competencies of all U.S. students, including those from traditionally disadvantaged groups.” The report listed a variety of motivations within the national interests of the U.S. for increasing the emphasis on students’ development of global competencies in education. Among these motivations were the strengths and areas of opportunity that result from the diversity within the U.S.’ own borders; the language and cultural expertise necessary for effective international diplomacy and national security; the knowledge and expertise necessary to address global concerns that transcend national borders; and the requisite global skills necessary for transglobal communication and commerce. The role of languages in authentic communication and transmission of cultural understandings along with the role of direct intercultural experiences is central to the plan outlined by the Department of Education in this report.

Many in both the public and private sectors, within this nation and in the broader international community have recognized and touted the benefits of fostering global competence in the interest of peace and prosperity (Barker, 2000; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Parkinson, 2009; Cushner, K., & Brennan, 2007; Caligiuri & Di Santo, 2001; Vance, 2005) There are a number of trends present today that are causing leaders to look for opportunities to foster global competence as a key 21st century skill. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (n.d.) identified three trends that present new demands and opportunities for a global citizenry:

- *Significant and complex challenges.*
- *An increasingly international, interdependent and diverse world*
- *A tightly connected, digital world*

According to Partnership for 21st Century Skills, the challenges that we face locally, regionally, or nationally often transcend our borders and have long-lasting pros and cons for diverse groups of people. Today’s challenges include things like improving the living conditions of the people who are poor and destitute, achieving sustainable human-environment relationships, increasing fair and sustainable forms of global trade, addressing health epidemics and pandemics, and creating the conditions for lasting peace and global stability (Reimers, 2009). These types of global challenges require decisions to be made by an electorate that can make informed judgments by accessing accurate information, discerning the nuances of multiple points of view, and communicating their own perspectives to effect change (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, n.d.). Moreover, the way that the global citizenry of the 21st century must advocate for desired civic actions require the use of tools that didn’t exist even a few years ago or that haven’t been imagined yet (The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, n.d.). These 21st century realities are what many have been used to begin to make the case for global competence.

Global competence is a sought after skill in many professions. Parkinson (2009) explained why the globally competent individuals are in demand in the engineering field. He described how converging trends occurring over the past two decades have led to this demand. Among those trends are advances in telecommunication technologies, the opening up of formerly closed societies, the adoption of free-trade, economic policies and the expansion of multi-national corporations. As our world has become increasing global though these political and economic changes, so has our travel. Changes in the travel habits of the global citizenry have led to changes in health care. Many nursing programs are now making the case for global health as a vital curricular area. Peeks (2014) argues to this end by stating that healthcare is becoming globalized due to factors like travel and epidemics that transcend national borders, but also mentions human rights concerns and an increased awareness in the healthcare community of global disparities. These professionals note a need for a field specific version of global competency that they refer to in the literature as global health competencies (Peek, 2014; Frenk et al., 2010, Houpt, Pearson, & Hall, 2007). Houpt, Pearson, and Hall (2007) discuss competency in global health education in terms of three domains: Global disease, travelers' medicine, and immigrant health. .

The domain of global health competency concerned with immigrant health, reveals an important understanding that global competency is as important at home as it is abroad (Houpt, Pearson, & Hall, 2007). In fields where workers may be interacting solely with local clientele global competence (sometimes referred to in nuanced variations as intercultural competence, cross-cultural competence, and multi-cultural competence) is still touted as an important skill. The field of Clinical Psychology is one such example. Katz and Hoyt (2014) described the role of global, multicultural competence in the field of clinical psychology with respect to addressing the needs of traditionally underserved populations. They examined the level of prejudice of therapists and their awareness of these attitudes in relationship to their counseling practices. They concluded that more research in this area needs to be conducted and that more needs to be done to build therapists awareness of potential prejudice in order to serve the global community better. Other researchers have focused on more specific elements of culture. For example, Yarhouse and Fisher (2002) examined the relationship of therapist knowledge and beliefs about religion on their professional practice. In recent decades, many researchers have made projections regarding demographic changes that may occur within the U.S. According to the U.S. Census (2011), by the year 2050, children of color are expected to make up more than half of all children in the United States. As the United States continues to change demographically, individuals in service professions, like mental health, will need to invest in strengthening their abilities to serve culturally diverse clients.

How exactly teachers may best foster their own global competencies and support students in the development of the knowledge, dispositions, and skills, demands immediate exploration if these goals are to be achieved. In this article, this author compiles strategies for incorporating world language classroom practices that foster global competence. While in every content area, content should be taught

in a global context whenever possible (Fischer, 2014), world language teachers—as leaders in language and cultural brokering—may be in a central position to transform education (Kean, Grady, & Sandrock, 2001; Clementi, & Pierce, 2010). Because of their specific understandings about the inner-workings of language and culture and because of their international experiences, world language teachers may be able to more readily create activities aimed at developing students’ levels of global competence than teachers without these understandings and experiences. The Department of Education’s report may come as no surprise to world language educators as they have been increasingly focusing their professional development and literature on themes related to global competence or parallel ideas.

What is Global Competence?

The language around the concept of global competence has been in flux. Many analogous terms have been introduced in recent years like cross-cultural competence, intercultural communicative competence, intercultural and socio-pragmatic competence, and interculturality. Likewise, there is no single definition of global competence in the literature; rather, there are many parallel definitions. For example, the Global Competence Task Force (as cited by Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011) refers to global competence as, “the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance.” While in many language classrooms, global competence can be explained as “Knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom (ACTFL et al., n.d.)” The Global Competence Aptitude Assessment (GCAA)[®] uses Hunter’s Global

Competence Model[™] (2006) and definition of

global competence (2004), “Having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, and leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one’s environment.” Hunter’s comprehensive worldwide research agenda sought to develop a universally accepted consensus definition and framework for global competence, and it resulted in the creation of the Global Competence Model[™]. (See Figure 1).



Figure 1. Global Competence Model[™], outcome of worldwide global competence research, and upon which the GCAA[®] is based. (Hunter et al, 2006). Used with permission from Global Competence Consulting, LLC / Global Leadership Excellence, LLC

Upon further examination of this model, one notes that the authors suggest a movement outward from self-awareness, to include attitudes, global knowledge, and people skills, which includes the specific dimension of intercultural capability. Close examination yields differences between the inner circles and the outer circles. The two inner circles represent the Internal Readiness dimensions of global competence and the two outer circles, the External Readiness dimensions. In order for someone to have global competence they need to have both Internal Readiness and External Readiness. Global competence is the sum of all the uniquely different dimensions in the model. The Global Competence Model™ and its preceding definition are consistent with other models and definitions that explain the construct of global competence as a set of knowledge, skills and dispositions that leads to the abilities of individuals to transition through different cultural contexts easily communicating with and relating to other people. For example, Larson, Ott, and Miles (2010) conducted a qualitative descriptive study of the impact of a cultural immersion experience in Guatemala on the intercultural competencies of baccalaureate nursing students. For the purpose of their study they defined cultural competence as having five components including cultural desire, awareness, skill, knowledge and encounter. The overlap between the terms used by Larson, Ott, and Miles and those used by the Global Competence Model™ is evident.

Considering the number of terms for global competence that have been used interchangeably, one might wonder how definitions of those terms in the literature compare with Hunter's Model. Deardorff (2006) defined intercultural competence as "The ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills and attitudes." She also developed models to illustrate her definition. Consider her pyramid model of intercultural competence (See Figure 2 on the following page).

In Deardorff's (2006; 2009) Model, she posits that intercultural competence, a desired external outcome is possible only when the other components including the requisite attitudes of respect, openness, and curiosity, the prerequisite knowledge and skills, along with the desired internal outcomes are present. In both Deardorff's and Hunter's models there are internal and external components. Likewise, in both models there are necessary dispositions that are considered foundational. Both mention self-awareness and appear to have a hierarchical structure outlining the order in which these aspects of global competence can be developed. While there are similarities, differences also exist. For instance, intercultural competence is a smaller portion of global competence as referenced in Hunter's Global Competence Model™, where intercultural capability is one of the eight dimensions. Additionally, intercultural competence implies the ability to interact appropriately with another culture, while the scope of global competence is far greater, such that an individual has breadth of knowledge and skills to interact effectively with cultures across the entire world.

The Global Competence Task Force, an educator led initiative to improve assessments for 21st century skills, has identified five key areas that are essential for students' skill development for college and careers. Those areas are writing, global competence, creativity, problem solving and analyzing information (Boix

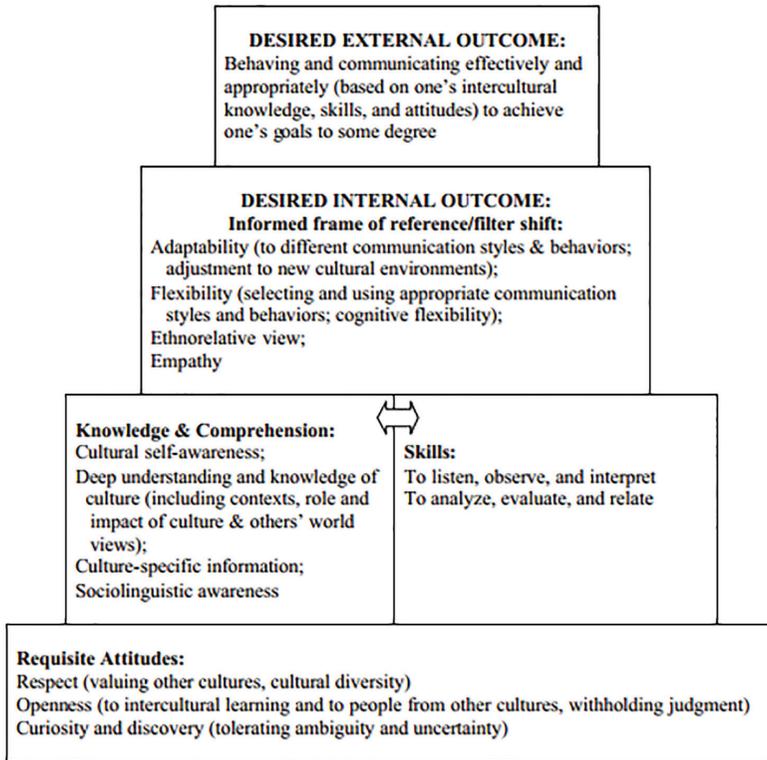
Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006, 2009):

Figure 2. Deardorff's (2006; 2009) pyramid model of intercultural competence. Used with permission.

Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). All of these areas can be addressed in every curricular area and all are important for the 21st century. The task force has also identified six curricular areas and has created global competence matrices for each area: The arts, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and world languages. The matrices are instrumental in defining what global competence education looks like in each curricular area by aligning the goals to content already included in each of those curricular areas. Each matrix includes the same basic framework dividing goals into the following four major categories:

- Investigate the world
- Recognize perspectives
- Communicate ideas
- Take action

Investigating the world requires students to explore the world beyond their immediate environments. Truly globally competent people operate from a broad knowledge base. They are generalists rather than specialists. Recognizing

perspectives requires students to have developed an understanding of their own viewpoints and to be receptive to the viewpoints of others. They must learn to adopt an anthropologist's mindset and focus on understanding rather than judgment. Communicating ideas encompasses the three modes of communication. In the interpretive mode, globally competent people can interpret a text while applying their knowledge of a people(s) history and cultural values. In the interpersonal mode, they are not only grammatically correct but pragmatically correct. Their correct use of pragmatics extends not only to their word choice but also to their non-verbal cues. In the presentational mode, globally competent people are able to present to diverse audiences for a variety of purposes. Some would argue that the last section of the rubric, take action, transcends the scope of global competence and moves into global citizenship. While most K-16 students, may not be able to go abroad to work on social action projects, globally competent people arguably make decisions informed by multiple perspectives. They act locally, regionally, and globally on issues of significance. People without well-developed global competence, act from limited perspectives.

In sum, Deardorff (2006, 2009) defined and explained intercultural competence. Intercultural competence describes an ability to interact appropriately within another culture. Hunter (2004) sought to define global competence of which intercultural competence is a part. Global competence implies an ability to interact appropriately across nearly any cultural context. The Global Competence Matrix articulates how global competence can be developed in a classroom context (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011), but elements of the matrix transcend the idea of global competence and could be deemed global citizenship. In world language contexts, we focus on the interaction between people of different cultures and refer to that successful interaction as interculturality. All of these terms are related but not as interchangeable as they are often used. Still, when world language teachers talk about global competence we are likely talking about all of it: Intercultural competence, global competence, global citizenship and interculturality. The following model is this author's attempt to combine the important elements of these analogous terms (See Figure 3 on the next page).

In the above model of global interculturality, certain internal attitudes and dispositions are prerequisite to its development. As people with those prerequisite attitudes and dispositions work to investigate the world, they gain socio-linguistic knowledge, historical perspective, and geographical awareness. As people do this they become globally aware. With global awareness internalized, these individuals can work to recognize perspectives. As they do so they begin to gain culture specific knowledge but also learn generalities about the nature of culture, they become more cognitively flexible, and develop a sense of empathy and ethno-relativity. As these skills develop, the individuals internalize an appreciation for cultural diversity. As individuals collaborate and share ideas with diverse groups of people, they become active listeners and develop communication skills. An ability to speak the language of the target culture enhances these skills. The emphasis on communication and linguistic skills with-in this model, provides the added

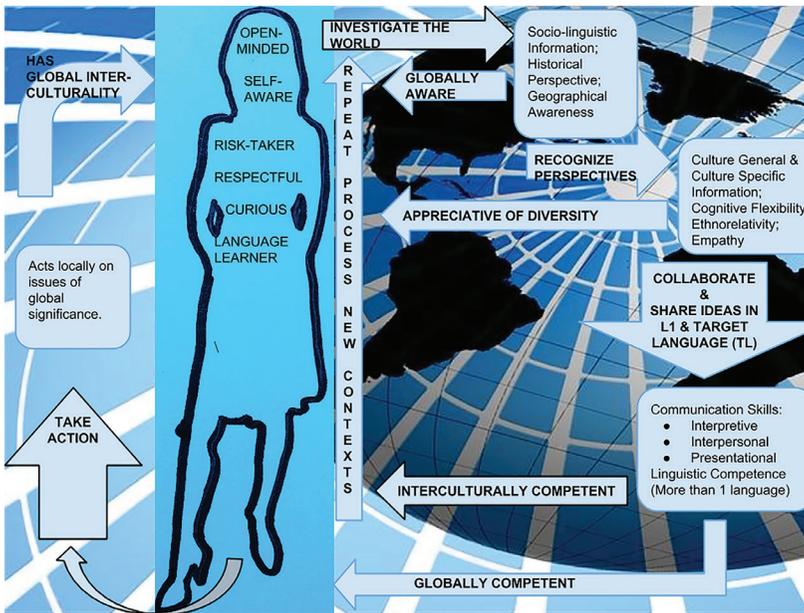


Figure 3. A Model of Global Interculturality.

element of interculturality. As a result of the sum of their experiences, knowledge, and attitudes, these individuals at this point fit the definition of interculturally competent. As individuals interact with additional cultures repeating the above process—they are able to extend their understandings and strengthen each of the above skills. As these skills are strengthened and the cultural contexts are broadened, these individuals develop global competence. As globally competent individuals, they apply their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to take action on issues of global significance. As they do this, they become global citizens and to develop global interculturality. Again, this model is an attempt at broadening the definition of global competence by encompassing analogous terms.

Global Competence in a K-16 Education

As previously stated, global competence can be defined as “Having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, and leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one’s environment (Hunter, 2004 as cited in Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006, p. 6).” Regardless of which definition of global competence one prefers, Trilling’s (2010) list of the seven Cs for the 21st century contains 3 elements directly related to global competence of cross cultural understanding, communication, and collaboration. The inclusion of these 3 C’s suggests that we must work to nurture global competence in our students. Thus, global competence is not a single characteristic, but rather a composite of knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Baumgratz, 1995; Egginton & Alsup, 2005; Johnson,

Boyer, & Brown, 2011). As globalization changes the way that we live and work, university leaders are responding to the demands of business and government leaders by increasing their involvement in global studies, multicultural education, and internationalization (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006; Baumgratz, 1995; Egginton and Asup, 2005). The idea of global competence is powerful; in fact, it can be considered a vehicle to harness soft power (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006). Soft power, a term coined by Nyes in the 1980s, is a force of attraction that co-opts rather than coerces others to share values, ideas, and ideals. Those interested in fostering peace prefer to harness soft power rather than hard power which consists of incentives and/or threats (Nyes, 2004). Hereby, if universities through their curriculum, internationalization, language requirements, and study abroad opportunities are able to foster global competence in their students, then they will have affected their values, ideas and ideals about people in the world and transitively changed the way that individuals interact with one another on a personal level (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006).

That transformative curriculum is present at most four-year universities, but according to the 2010 U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011) only 19.5% of the people over 25 living in the U.S. are graduates of a four-year institution. Although the percentages of young people attempting college have been increasing, the fact that an overwhelming majority of Americans will not complete a college education, suggests that global competence cannot be addressed solely at the university-level, but must be present throughout an integrated K-16 educational system. Educators of compulsory levels need to think globally as 21st century skills go beyond the traditional three Rs (Trilling, 2010).

What do Teachers Need to Know about Global Competence?

First and foremost, global competence is an imperative (United States Department of Education, 2012). When students are not globally competent, they are ineffective communicators particularly with people different than themselves. Looking at Hunter's model of global competence, one notes that not possessing global competence could be due to an external deficit that is easily corrected through a few additional experiences versus internal deficits that require much more work to develop. Global competence is not a mere content—rather it is a balanced package of interdisciplinary knowledge, dispositions, and skills. If students are not aware of their own cultural identities then they cannot be globally competent people. Being globally competent means being able to identify home culture. In order to accomplish this end, teachers must do mental battle against an “ethnic aisle” attitude towards culture in which only those considered “other” are considered ethnic—We are all ethnic (Muirhead, 2014).

There is a natural progression from our own personal, cultural self-awareness to global competence. Since many of our students may be unaware of their ethnic-selves, educators who are serious about fostering global competence must first find ways to connect with learners as meta-cognitive, cultural-beings. AFS (“AFS Educational Goals. AFS-USA,” n.d.) uses a pyramid illustration to explain the goals of their program. The base of the pyramid is personal knowledge or understanding. Moving up the pyramid respectively are interpersonal [communication], cultural

[understanding] , and global [competence]. The trajectory along the side of the pyramid is consonant with development of global competence. One can clearly see the trajectory from self-knowledge to interaction with individuals of a target culture (presumably best accomplished in a target language) to awareness of a particular “other” culture to a larger, global understanding of how communication and cultures intersect. World language educators, particularly through our work with cultures and communities standards—are uniquely situated to empower students to develop their global competencies along this trajectory.

Teaching with a Transformative Mindset

Not only are world language educators uniquely situated to develop students’ global competencies, but they arguably have a moral imperative to do so. Most educators when asked about why they teach would not likely share a burning desire to impart their understanding of the pluperfect tense to students, but would rather indicate their passion for the language they speak and the cultures that speak the language. They would likely talk about human understandings, open-mindedness towards other cultures, and an ability to see an issue from more than one side.

Teachers who want these results must adopt a transformative mindset. They are not teaching to eradicate poor grammar, rather, they are teaching to inspire their students to be the best versions of themselves that they can be. They do this for their students, but ultimately they hope that their students will be able to take action on issues of global significance. For these reasons, teachers need to be both culturally responsive and daring. Controversial issues like violence, hunger, international terrorism, inflation, and inequality must be addressed. Community-based learning, inquiry, dialogue and multiple perspectives must be part of classroom practices bringing the world into the classroom.

Stop Preparing and Start Doing

The 21st century is now. This statement may seem obvious, but how many mission statements talk about preparing students to be globally competent or to possess 21st Century skills, for the future. Our students are in the world now and they have potential to impact the world now with the choices that they make. Our curriculum should not be meant solely to prepare students for the future. In this era of assessment and data, educators sometimes feel so much pressure for students to be successful on high stakes assessments that they can forget to relinquish control and let the students create with language. When it comes to developing global competence, the time is now. Whether educators teach Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) or Advanced Placement (AP) level classes, there are opportunities within those levels to foster global competence.

One example.

Consider a high school level 1 Spanish course in which students have been talking about likes and dislikes and descriptive adjectives. The unit was previously based on a chapter in a textbook and had a geographical theme with a tourist

approach to culture. Nothing about that unit served to develop students' global competencies particularly well. How could you make it better? There are many ways to do so; yet, the words, "Level 1," intimidate many educators away from doing very much with culture. In my classroom, I use this unit to address my number one pet-peeve: There has existed a prejudice among many of my students over the years towards Spanish-speakers. Many of my students have professional or economic motives for enrolling in this course, but harbor an image of Spanish-speakers as abject immigrants. Native-speakers of Spanish to some of my learners of Spanish are seen as outsiders who do not contribute to this country. They are somehow other and separate in their minds. I know that they have thought these things, because they have told me. They have no qualms about sharing their opinions on the matter.

So for me, this unit which focuses on biographical information is a great opportunity to expose students to the reality that there are many native Spanish-speakers doing remarkable, even heroic things and contributing to the United States. Many great Hispanic-Americans are highlighted throughout the unit and heroes are discussed in terms of celebrities, family, and military personnel. In one lesson, students work together to interpret headlines in Spanish about larger issues of discrimination faced by heroes. One such headline included, "*Obama condecora a 17 veteranos hispanos que no habían recibido distinción por discriminación—Obama decorates 17 Hispanic Veterans that hadn't received distinction because of discrimination.* (Redacción MundoFOX, 2014)." They also watched a video clip of a news broadcast in which Spanish-speaking veterans were being honored at a war memorial. In the one minute and forty-eight second clip, they saw a WWII veteran, several Korean and Vietnam War veterans and one family with 3 generations of war veterans—all Spanish-speakers. After listing the key words that they picked out from the clip, students were directed to a formal assessment in which they wrote letters to veterans. I had contacted a veteran's organization with ability to distribute letters to Spanish-speaking veterans. Students used their first names and the return address of the school c/o the teacher. Many students commented to me that they related to this section of the unit, because they knew veterans in their own lives, or had relatives currently serving in the military. Those students were able to make a personal connection to the veterans that they saw in the photos and the videos, and they had already felt a connection with the veterans whom they imagined would receive their letters. A template was provided with some pleasantries that they hadn't yet learned, but students were asked to complete the letters with content from their unit. One critical cultural consideration was register. I stressed that students needed to ask at least 3 questions of the veterans to whom they were writing. This task would require use of *usted*—the formal you—and its corresponding forms and formal language. This task requires a significant shift in thinking for many of my students. Through completing these culturally themed activities, students learned valuable cultural lessons and solidified their learning in a way that preparation just cannot accomplish.

Classroom Practices that Foster Global Competence

Learn Languages

From a purely communicative standpoint, global competence can be explained as “Knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom (ACTFL et al., n.d.)” At the core of language learning is authenticity. Teachers can do a self-audit of their current unit and lesson plans by using the “Check MATE” strategy. To do this, they look over their units for authentic Materials, authentic Audiences, authentic Tasks, and authentic Evidence; all of which are prerequisite to creating engaging, culturally valid units that can meet and exceed common core standards (Sandrock, 2014). Materials used should emanate from real sources originally created in the Target Language (TL) whenever possible. Tasks should reflect those things that people would actually do in the course of their real life. The authenticity of the task requires knowledge of the student population. A 2nd grade student would have a different list of authentic tasks, than would a high school junior; and that high school junior would have different authentic tasks than a real estate agent. Having an authentic audience and authentic evidence means that any products produced can have real world uses like furthering a cause, or solving a problem in the target language. All of this authenticity is the means to an end. Using these authenticity principles is meant to embed the language encountered in a course in a cultural context. Language and culture are seen to be inseparable.

Jiang (2000) offered several metaphors to explain the relationship between language and culture after exploring a comparison between the word associations of Chinese native speakers and English native speakers. She referred to language as flesh and culture as blood stating that without culture, language dies and without language culture has no shape. She also likened communication to swimming saying that language is to swimming skill as culture is to water. It’s the combination between language and culture that equals communication just as it is the combination of swimming skill and water that equals swimming. Following that analogy, one swims swiftly and easily through familiar waters or communicates well in a familiar cultural context, but in unfamiliar contexts precedes cautiously, swims more slowly, communicates less effectively. Even with the right words in a grammatically correct utterance, if the speaker is devoid of cultural knowledge and skill an utterance could be pragmatically incorrect.

This current view of the married nature of language, culture and thought is inherently in line with Bakhtinian philosophy. Bakhtin viewed “[language] as comprising dynamic constellations of sociocultural resources that are fundamentally tied to their social and historical contexts” (Hall, Vitanova, & Marchenkova, 2004, p. 2). Language according to Bakhtin is dialogic, or part of a larger process of social re-accentuation of the ideas of others--interactions through which ideas are transmitted and values are shared. While those following a monologist world view might seem to deny our essences as social beings, dialogism requires exactly that. Arguably, Bakhtin saw dialogism as the heart of our existence stating that,

Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life: with his eyes, lips, hands, soul, spirit, with his whole body and deeds. He invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium (Bakhtin & Emerson, 1984, p. 293).

This dialogic view of language has several significant implications for present-day understandings of world language learning. Foremost, language is a living tool—both structured and emergent. Through language one sees the genesis of culture. We mold our cultural worlds into existence with words, maintaining them, and shaping them for our own purposes (Hall, Vitanova, & Marchenkova, 2004). Additionally, since learning for Bakhtin is present in social interaction rather than inside a black box in the learner’s head, learning language does not mean collecting forms or structures divorced from context and culture but rather entering into ways of communicating that are defined by these forces (Holquist, 1990).

In the context of a world language classroom, language learners interact with one another and with classroom materials not from a fixed identity point but from many facets of their identities simultaneously. Bakhtin was by all accounts an advocate for the strength offered by diversity. Of Bakhtin, Emerson (1997, 223-224) wrote,

Any instinctive clustering of like with like threatens to reduce my “I” and its potential languages to a miserable dot. Those who surround themselves with “insider”--in heritage, experience, appearance, tastes and attitudes toward the world--are on a rigidifying and impoverishing road. In contrast, the personality that welcomes provisional finalization by a huge and diversified array of “authors” will command optimal literacy. It feels at home in a variety of zones; it has many languages at its disposal and can learn new ones without trauma. From its perspective, the world appears an invitingly open, flexible, unthreatening and unfinalized place.

For Bakhtin, communication was the pinnacle of human existence. “To be means to communicate. Absolute death (not being) is the state of being unheard, unrecognized, unremembered (Bakhtin & Emerson, 1984, p.287).” One’s orientation in the world is actively constructed through the use of speech genres to position themselves in their relationships and interactions. For Bakhtin, one is never complete in absence of the elucidating presence of the Other (Vitanova, 2004). Bakhtin argued:

In the realm of culture, outsidersness is a most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of another culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly ... A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning; they engage in a kind of dialogue which surmounts the closedness and one-sidedness of these particular meanings, these

cultures. We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones that it did not raise for itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it; and the foreign culture responds to us by revealing to us its new aspects and new semantic depths (Bakhtin, Holquist, McGee, & Emerson, 1986, p. 7).

Bakhtin understood culture as a verb idealized in the dynamics of cultural identities and cultural practices. The dialogical nature of interaction within and between cultures spotlights those interactions that occur between the self and the Other or between cultural–semiotic spaces.

The opposite of the dialogism is monologism. For Bakhtin,

Monologism, at its extreme, denies the existence outside itself of another consciousness with equal rights and equal responsibilities, another I with equal rights (thou). With a monologic approach (in its extreme pure form) another person remains wholly and merely an object of consciousness, and not another consciousness. No response is expected from it that could change anything in the world of my consciousness. Monologue is finalized and deaf to other's response, does not expect it and does not acknowledge in it any force. Monologue manages without the other, and therefore to some degree materializes all reality. Monologue pretends to be the ultimate word. It closes down the represented world and represented persons (Bakhtin & Emerson, 1984, p. 292-293).

Bakhtin saw monologism as a way of silencing the others rather than recognizing them. Monologism suppresses the voices of those that could be active participants in a conversation. The conversation suffers as a result. By contrast, new texts, meanings, and identities are constructed in the production of Thirdness that results from interactive, dialogic processes (Kostogriz, 2004).

This cultural learning is exactly what can occur in a world language classroom when educators structure curriculum, instruction and assessment to include deep cultural knowledge and skills. When educators present culture with depth and breadth, they are able to foster multi-faceted, positive dispositions toward the target culture(s) and its people. Through cultural comparison, students begin to see their home culture through the perspective of the other. When the exploration of the cultures is authentic, the comparisons/dialogue that students imagine between themselves and the target culture(s) are powerful. Not unlike the one-sided conversation that Bakhtin imagined in which the second speaker was present invisibly, saying, “His words are not there, but deep traces left by these words have a determining effect on the present and visible worlds of the first speaker. We sense that this is a conversation...of the most intense kind, for each present uttered word responds and reacts with its every fiber to the invisible speaker...(Bakhtin & Emerson, 1984, p. 197)” Apart from discussions on culture as the sum of phenomena are those which focus on cultural totality (Bakhtin et. al., 1986). In world language classrooms, concerned with cultural authenticity and competency, educators often employ authentic texts as a part of their teaching of culture grounded in language.

Certainly “[l]iterature is an inseparable part of the totality of culture and cannot be studied outside the total cultural context...The literary process is a part of the cultural process and cannot be torn away from it. (Bakhtin, et. al. 1986, p. 140)” Perhaps, this is what Justice Sonia Sotomayor was referring to when she described her experience as an avid mystery reader of novels set in foreign countries. In her interview with NPR she stated that she loved reading these novels in particular, because she would learn about those cultures saying, “So I read mysteries about South Africa, and I really understood apartheid not from the history books I was reading in college but learning about the impact of it on people from the descriptors in these series of books (Totenberg, 2013).” If one broadens the definition of literature in the same way that many have broadened the definition of texts and then considers Bakhtin’s words regarding literature and the totality of culture, one may consider how cultural products like currency, flags, music and signage could be sources of deep cultural knowledge accessible to language learners at even the novice levels. When educators consider these types of texts they create opportunities for students to explore small “c” culture in context, thus comparing their everyday experiences with that of the target culture(s). While educators could never hope to know everything about a culture, providing students with these glimpses into the target culture(s) and modeling desirable behaviors and attitudes towards the target culture(s) and culture learning, they can hope to empower their students to begin their own explorations of the boundless universe of literature and culture. Despite the natural relationship of language, culture, thought and literature, language educators do not automatically intertwine them in their pedagogies. For cultural learning to be forefront in the world language classroom an integration of culture goals into the materials, audiences, tasks, and evidence used in classroom practices is essential (Robinson, 1981).

Another example.

In revamping a “*Mercado*” (shopping) themed unit in which students had learned to bargain in a market place, a colleague of mine located video clips on YouTube including one that proved incredibly valuable because it showcased authentic interactions in a marketplace in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Previously, teachers, who were not native Spanish speakers, had taught this unit by modeling vocabulary and then providing a list of terms and expressions to students from a textbook with a related unit theme. After providing this input, students were asked to create marketplace skits. This time teachers worked collaboratively to dissect the video clips and pull out useful, true to life expressions. Additionally, teachers called on their own experiences and added other useful expressions. These expressions were taught through input using TPR, TPRS, SMART Board activities, presentation slides, and props. Teachers applied the three notions of design, so that students could create patterns of meaning from the multi-literacies around them. The first notion of design is available design. Available design refers to the use of a source/model text from which information, ideas, and patterns of language can be derived. The teachers provided available designs that included

the grammars of language, various semiotic systems, and film, photography and gesture (Sánchez, 2014). The videos served as available designs and held a central role in these lessons. This time when students created their skits they were able to draw on these available designs to design. Design is the second notion of design and describes the process of using the existing to create the new. The finished products or the redesigned were skits that sounded true to life and were not only grammatically correct, but pragmatically correct as well. The skits were followed by interpersonal assessments that were equally impressive and by the end of this unit it was clear that students knew how, when, and why to say what to whom in the context of a *Mercado*.

Explore Cultures

We must understand that we are all unique cultural beings and that we are all ethnic. “Culture is a fluctuating embodiment of a group’s products, practices and perspectives. Inseparable from language, culture is also impacted by issues of power as it can be used to marginalize or privilege (Muirhead, 2009).” Over the last 75 years, many researchers have worked to identify cultural dimensions to explain the ways that cultures differ (Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Hofstede, 1981; Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Triandis, 1995) Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) devised a list of six cultural dimensions:

1. The nature of people (good, bad, or mixed)
2. The person’s relationship to nature (dominant, in harmony, or subjugated)
3. The person’s relationship to others (lineal, collateral, or individualist)
4. The modality of human activity (doing, being, or containing)
5. The temporal focus of human activity (future, present, or past)
6. The conception of space (private, public, or mixed).

Edward T. Hall (1976) first discussed one particular dimension in his seminal work, *Beyond Culture*. He articulated a spectrum of cultures ranking them from high-context to low-context. His work illustrated how communication in high context cultures is implied and allusive. Communication is tailored for those within the culture. Much meaning can be conveyed with only a few words, because those inside the culture share experiences and expectations which they rely on to make meaning. Japanese culture is one such example. The communication style in Japan is merely hinting to outsiders who may not have enough shared cultural experience to decode all that is implied in a conversation by the context; whereas, the communication style in low-context cultures, like the German Swiss culture is explicit and straightforward. Single words hold less significance in low context cultures and outsiders have little trouble understanding what is being communicated because the language used is usually unequivocal and precise. Hofstede (1984) studied IBM employees in 53 countries, identifying four original dimensions of culture: individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty tolerance avoidance, and masculinity-femininity. Later, Hofstede and Bond (1984) collaborated to add another dimension that they called Confucian dynamism, which primarily was concerned with the conflict between long-term orientation

(persistence, value placed on status) and short-term orientation (personal stability, high regard for truth). Many educators, professional trainers, and authors have created lists of cultural values that make it easier to compare cultures (Beamer & Valentine, 2000). Some researchers have critiqued Hofstede's work. Indeed, whenever one makes generalizations about cultural dimensions/perspectives, there needs to be recognition that—although cultural differences may appear to be enormous, there is a common basic culture of all humanity throughout history (Allik, 2005). This cultural unity is partially founded on the psychic unity of all people. From culture to culture, people show remarkably similar distributions of personality types (Allik, 2005). In addition, the recognition that not all individuals follow all cultural patterns of a larger group and the distinction between a cultural generalization and a stereotype are an important part of a discussion of cultural norms and perspectives. Educators and students must be careful not to apply these cultural values too broadly. In our global society, characterizing people in a given country as being a certain way has become increasingly complex (Livermore, 2013). Nevertheless, using cultural dimensions can provide a useful framework for educators to discuss those perspectives (Livermore, 2013).

Building CQ.

In his discussion of Cultural Intelligence (CQ), David Livermore (2013) explains how common sense and social intelligence may be a wonderful aid in many cross-cultural situations, but when stressed these attributes alone are not enough to navigate cultural differences. Livermore describes recurring characteristics and skills that the “culturally intelligent” possess. CQ or global competence is something that anyone can develop and improve (Livermore, 2013, need page number).

In order to build CQ, Livermore (2013) suggests assessing and working to improve each of the following CQ capabilities: **Drive**, knowledge, strategy, and action. One may note the similarities to Hunter's model of Global Competence and Deardorff's model of Intercultural Competence. Like Hunter and Deardorff, Livermore includes both internal and external aspects of global competence; the internal in the case of CQ capabilities being drive, knowledge, and strategy, and the external being action. Individuals with high CQ drive are highly motivated to adapt interculturally. An individual can have a high CQ drive but lack understanding about how cultures are similar and different. This second capability of CQ is referred to as CQ knowledge. Even with the proper knowledge, individuals with high levels of CQ or Global Competence will be metacognitively aware of their multicultural interactions—this capability is referred to as CQ Strategy. Lastly, CQ Action refers to the degree to which individuals can draw upon a repertoire of behaviors and skills by adapting their verbal and nonverbal actions (knowing when and how to say what to whom). If the ordering of these capabilities seems intuitive, there is a natural explanation. Both Deardorff (2011) and Livermore (2013) refer to similar lists of capabilities as processes developed in this specific order. Both educators and students may need to self-assess how developed they

are on each of these 4 CQ capabilities in order to identify an area in which to focus their attentions to building their CQ, or overall level of global competence.

Re-examining cultural perspectives.

In addition to measuring development of CQ capabilities, Livermore (2013) also suggests that individuals assess their own personal orientations on ten cultural dimensions. Those same dimensions can be helpful in framing discussions on cultural perspectives in the classroom. Also, if students are aware of their own personal orientation on these cultural value dimensions, they will note that there will always be students in the room who have different personal orientations than that of the culture(s) to which they belong. Being aware of this within home culture(s) can help students to avoid stereotyping when discussing generalizations about the target culture's perspectives. Consider each of the 10 cultural dimensions explained below. For several of them, examples of related products and practices are discussed (Note: This is a reverse process of what one would likely do in the classroom). The products and practices that are provided here are meant to show the relationships between the elements of the triad and illustrate the usefulness of these dimensions for understanding culture. In the classroom, teachers might ask, "What perspectives can be gained and products might exist from this practice?" or "What perspectives can be gained and what practices are associated with this product?"

1. Identity: Individualist versus Collectivist—the degree to which one's identity is defined in terms of individual characteristics versus collective characteristics. Where a culture falls on this continuum between individualism and collectivism is its cultural perspective. The United States has been noted as possibly the most individualist culture in the world (Livermore, 2013). Consider the following photo of a United States cultural product (see *Figure 4*).



Figure 4. Photo of a baby's room. (Horton, 2014)

What are the cultural practices associated with the baby's nursery in the United States? Among middle class families in the United States, baby nurseries are standard. In the above picture the room has been customized for the baby. The family from the U.S. has taken great care to create an individualized, separate space for their new child. The child's independence is established prior to his/her arrival (Carteret, 2013; Morelli, Rogoff, Oppenheim, & Goldsmith, 1992).

Now consider that the Chinese culture is considered to be the most collectivist in the world (Livermore, 2013). How would the cultural products and practices related to infant sleeping arrangements compare? In many collectivist cultures, co-sleeping is an unquestioned practice and having an infant sleep in another room is considered impractical culturally unacceptable (Carteret, 2013). The above picture would seem unthinkable to many from collectivist cultures.

2. Authority: Low versus high power distance—the degree to which members of a society are comfortable with inequality in power, influence, and wealth (Livermore, 2013).

Consider the cultural product of an e-mail from a principal to his staff. The e-mail reads:

I anticipate that about half of the north parking lot will be blocked off for the delivery of the new heating unit. We can also park in any open spaces at [the church across the street].

Thanks for your understanding.

Fred*

This cultural product reveals the cultural practice of bosses and employees referring to each other by first names. That practice reveals that the e-mail is from a culture with a low power distance. This e-mail is an actual exchange with equivalent substitutions made for identifying information from a school principal in the U.S. Although the United States has issues with discrimination and has large income disparities, acknowledging imbalances of power tends to make people from the U.S. uncomfortable (Livermore, 2013; Clearly Cultural, 2014). Whereas, in high power distance cultures like India or Mexico, differences in ranking are evident in dialogue between employers and employees. Calling a boss by a first name without a title and other linguistic markers of formal register would be unthinkable.

What happens when individuals from high and low power distance cultures interact if these differences are not known? Many different types of misunderstandings and awkward moments are possible. High power distance people in a low power distance cultures are likely to have a difficult time discerning how people relate to one another (Livermore, 2013). They may have trouble identifying who is in charge and may find the experience jarring. Likewise, low power distance people in high power distance cultures risk offending others by not following the rules of which they are unaware. They are also likely to find the systems blatantly unjust and rigid.

3. Risk: Low versus high uncertainty avoidance—is the degree to which most people within a culture tolerate risk when faced with uncertain, ambiguous circumstances (Livermore, 2013). The Japanese culture is said to be one of the most high uncertainty avoidance cultures on earth. Some have speculated that perhaps this avoidance may be due to the constant threat of natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, and volcano eruptions (The Hofstede Centre, n.d.). However, the preparedness of the Japanese goes far beyond natural disasters. Everything is coordinated and rehearsed for maximum predictability. From birth to death, life is full of ceremonies and rituals. For example, every year Japanese schools conduct opening and closing ceremonies conducted in almost the exact same way throughout the country (The Hofstede Centre, n.d.). A related product might be school uniforms. Singapore is on the other end of the uncertainty avoidance dimension.

4. Achievement: Cooperative versus competitive—Cooperative cultures prioritize nurturing, supportive relationships while competitive cultures focus on achievement, success, and results. Hofstede (1984) called the cooperative dimension femininity and the competitive dimension masculinity. While researchers often talk about national cultures when discussing cultural dimensions, some studies have focused on how balancing diversity within an organization can encourage collaboration among work groups (Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991). When looking at national cultures Thailand, Sweden, and Denmark are among the most cooperative Japan and the United States are among the most competitive cultures in the world (Livermore, 2013).

5. Time: Punctuality versus relationships—Cultures vary in their understandings of time. Some cultures are clock orientated (monochronic) and value punctuality and others are more relationally orientated (polychronic) and appear not to value punctuality. Consider the following cultural product (a birthday party invitation).



Figure 5. Birthday Invitation (2014)

The invitation is from a monochronic culture and there is considerable evidence within the text to support that. Note that the party has a start and end time listed in addition to the term, “RSVP.” The difference between the start and end times is an hour and a half. In polychronic cultures, these time constraints and the RSVP may be considered too rigid. While many traditionally polychronic cultures have become more monochronic in the business world with regard to social obligations, polychronic traditional values prevail (Livermore, 2013).

The cultural orientations to time can also be observed in language (Biswas-Diener, 2013). Proverbs and slang expressions make excellent cultural products for examination. For example, in the U.S., people often use expressions like time is money, time flies, and I don’t have time for this. Whereas, in many eastern African countries people will call out “pole kazi” which more or less means—“work slowly.” In Trinidad people commonly say “Any time is Trinidad time.”

(6) Communication: Direct versus indirect—low versus high context, in a low-context culture speakers explain everything explicitly and directly. Very little emphasis is placed on using the context to interpret the meaning. They are direct. Cultures with this dimension can be found in North America and much of Western Europe. In high context cultures, communication is indirect and implicit. High context cultures can be found in much of the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America. When people from high context cultures do business with people from low context cultures there can often be conflict because people from low context cultures often rely on explicit contracts. People from high context cultures often think this signifies a lack of trust.

7. Lifestyle: Being versus doing—Should time be spent primarily on being productive, or is it more liberally dispersed across various obligations in life? There are many cultures that have “being” orientations (Livermore, 2013). These cultures are often more concerned with family and hobbies than work. They may be very productive, but their school and work calendars show significantly less hours taken up by scholastic or vocational pursuits. Norwegian culture offers one example of a culture with an expanding economy that has a being orientation (Livermore, 2013). Other cultures have high doing orientations. People in doing cultures often log a significant amount of time at work or school. Career often takes precedence over other areas of life and leisure is often seen as a vice. Cultural products /practices that could be discussed around this dimension include smart phones, drive-through restaurants, awards and making introductions.

8. Rules: Particulist versus Universalist—the dilemma between obligation to rules and laws versus obligation to relationships. This dimension relates to how people judge human behavior (Livermore, 2013). Universalist cultures expect that the rules are uniform and apply equally to everyone; whereas, particulist cultures believe that the rules may need to change depending on specific circumstances. One common example of particulist culture at work is haggling/bargaining over an item at a market place. Oftentimes the price set for the tourist is different than the price set for the neighbor. People of particulist cultures do not view this

marketplace behavior as unfair, but people from universalist cultures are often offended when they learn that there are not fixed prices for merchandise.

9. Expressiveness: Neutral versus affective—is the way we express emotion—not whether we feel emotion (Livermore, 2013). Highly affective cultures include Poland, Italy, France, Spain, and countries in Latin America while more neutral cultures include the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany and most Asian cultures.

10. Social norms: Tight versus loose—According to Livermore (2013) two key components form the construct of tight versus loose: the strength of social norms and the strength of sanctioning (or the amount of tolerance for deviance from those norms). Tight cultures tend to be isolated and homogenous and value preserving their oneness. Diverse cultures tend to be loose and more accepting of differences. Tight cultures can have strict penalties for non-conformity. People in loose cultures often cannot understand why people in tight cultures feel as they do and can be outraged. Likewise people in tight cultures are often morally offended by the variations in behavior that loose cultures view as acceptable. Anglo cultures tend to be loose versus Japanese and Saudi Arabian cultures which are tight.

Transform Lives

Learning languages authentically by using materials, audiences, tasks, and evidence that are true to life and culturally valid creates many of the circumstances necessary for students to develop global competence. Given the process that global competence develops through improving pragmatics is not enough to label individuals globally competent. Globally competent individuals must not only adopt the mindset of linguists but also the mindset of anthropologists. They must be able to observe cultural products and practices and suspend judgment. Exploring cultures in the context of a language class is important. Culture should be the driving force of the curriculum. Articulating clearly how the triad of culture works and developing understandings of the cultural dimensions through which people can differ, provides a way to think and talk about culture. All of this instruction—all of these experiences—can foster global competence, but the true test of globally competent individuals relates to their intercultural behaviors. Transformative pedagogy is not transformative because of how it changes individual students; rather, transformative pedagogy is transformative because of how it empowers individuals to transform the circumstances that around them no matter where they find themselves.

Using the matrix.

The Global Competent Matrices have four clear objectives for students in each content area. Students should be able to investigate the world, recognize cultural perspectives, communicate ideas and take action (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). The first three of these objectives are easily accomplished in most language classes simply by doing a thorough job in creating units that address our standards. The

last of these, take action, is the particular part of the matrix that teachers may need to more carefully consider.

The overarching descriptor of take action reads, “Students translate their ideas and findings into appropriate actions to improve conditions (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 8).” In order for students to be able to accomplish this task our units must boldly address some of the most pressing issues of our time. We cannot be afraid to introduce contemporary world problems into our curriculum. The Matrix further articulates what this objective looks like in a world language classroom by listing 4 more specific ways to take action.

The first of these states, “Use their native and studied languages and culture to identify and create opportunities for personal or collaborative action to improve conditions.” Educators addressing this objective would be fully integrating the 5 C’s of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities in their planning. Requiring students to access articles from a variety of sources across languages to support their claims and explain their reasoning is important. The recognitions that important ideas are conveyed in languages other than English and that people from other cultures may think differently about an issue are central to being able to propose feasible solutions to world problems.

The second objective states, “Use linguistic and cultural knowledge to assess options and plan actions, taking into account previous approaches, varied perspectives, and potential consequences.” This objective is cross-curricular, students need to provide evidence that they can research the history of an issue from more than one cultural perspective, think critically, and make predictions about the ramifications of choosing one way over another.

The third objective reads, “Use their native and studies languages and cross-cultural knowledge to act personally and collaboratively, in creative and ethical ways to contribute to sustainable improvement and assess the impact of the action.” Ideally for this standard to become a reality, educators need to create opportunities for students to collaborate with other students in other classrooms around the world. There is a power dynamic that cannot be ignored (Freire, 1993). Our students need to believe that they are capable of contributing to solutions to big problems, but they need to believe this equally strongly about people from other cultures. Unfortunately there is a predominant sense of American dominance in world affairs and that combined with White privilege, provides many of our students with a false sense of their role as “savior” in world affairs (McIntosh, 1993). Perhaps, one of the most effective ways to combat this is to share the ideas of others from other cultural backgrounds in ways that highlight rather than mask from whom the ideas originated.

The fourth objective states “Reflect on how proficiency in more than one language contributes to their capacity to advocate for and contribute to improvement locally, regionally, or globally.” In this objective the communities’ standard is central. We want our students to use the language in its natural context. Only in doing so, will they have the experience of realizing how their studied language connects them to people and global concerns in a different way than their native language(s) do. Not all learning needs to happen in the classroom. Rethinking homework, so that students

have experiences outside the classroom that they could not have within it, may be one way to address this issue.

Conclusion

Global competence is a key to success in today's world. Nearly every profession has some literature devoted to how to better foster global competence within its professional community. Because of the unique relationship between global competence and cultural understanding and the equally strong relationship between languages and cultures, world language teachers are uniquely positioned to become leaders in their organizations with respect to fostering global competence among students. Teachers can foster global competence in their students by empowering them to learn languages in pragmatically correct ways, explore cultures with an emphasis on understanding cultural perspectives from product and practices, and by transforming lives by creating opportunities for students to take action and interact with speakers of their studied languages in natural contexts.

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5

Strangers in a Strange Land: Perceptions of Culture in a First-year French Class

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Abstract

This paper investigates perceptions of culture as expressed by first-year French students in a Midwestern high school based on information gleaned from a survey. The survey asked for students to write their perceptions of similarities and differences between French and American culture in terms of food, daily life, housing, shopping, sports and entertainment, music, transportation and school. The survey found that although the majority of students were naturally curious and receptive to these similarities and differences, others maintained stereotypes and distance. In order to further develop a sense of cultural discovery and analytical thinking, instructors are encouraged to employ dialogue as a sociocultural tool to facilitate the construction of the perspectives aspect of cultural knowledge in congruence with products and practice in order to provide an integrated and critical approach to culture and to encourage more active development of student learning.

Introduction

Why are their shopping carts so much smaller than ours?" This was a question posed by a first-year French student in a Midwestern high school upon inspection of the enlarged photograph projected on the screen at the front of the classroom. The photograph was of a shopping cart from a French grocery store and in the

basket were various food items, which the instructor intended to use as an opener for a vocabulary review. Instead, she was taken aback that the student's question had to do with the size of the cart and not its actual contents. She turned this into a teachable moment by explaining that the French typically shop for smaller quantities of food due to their practice of shopping daily for fresh ingredients. Because they shop for fewer items, they do not need as large of a cart. In addition, the size of the store itself tends to be smaller than the typical American superstore. The student seemed satisfied with this response, and the vocabulary review ensued.

This incident highlights the all-too-common disconnect between the intentions of the instructor and the conception of those intentions on the part of the students. In this instance, the instructor's intention was to provide a visual image of food in order to review vocabulary, not to initiate a dialogue about the size of grocery carts. Since intention is constructed rather than transferred, "the same basic task can be conceptualized differently by different people" (Coughlan & Duff, 1994, p. 185).

This incident prompted the issuance of a survey designed to ascertain these students' perceptions of the similarities and differences between the French and American cultures in terms of food, daily life, housing, shopping, sports and entertainment, music, transportation and school. Where were they in terms of their cultural competence? What did they perceive as having the most influence on these views: the teacher, the textbook, or other? What are some resulting implications for the teaching of culture? As Chavez wrote, "researchers and teachers appear to have very specific ideas about what learners understand by foreign language culture and how they value it in the language classrooms...students frequently fail to validate these perceptions" (2002, p. 131). This paper investigates these questions based on information gleaned from the survey and makes suggestions toward the further development of cultural awareness and critical thinking skills in the early levels of foreign language learning.

Review of the literature

The teaching of culture has long been stressed as a goal of foreign language instruction (Brooks, 1968; Heusinkveld, 1997; Kramsch, 1998; Moran, 2001; Nostrand, 1978; Omaggio Hadley, 2001; Seelye, 1993; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). According to *The Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (1999), knowledge of culture is critical to effective foreign language acquisition: "Through the study of other languages, students gain a knowledge and understanding of the cultures that use that language and, in fact, cannot truly master the language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language occurs" (p. 3). The national *Standards* created a much-needed framework for the teaching and study of culture, particularly by the focusing on the relationship between practices, products, and perspectives. Standard 2.1 emphasizes cultural practices and perspectives; Standard 2.2 emphasizes cultural products and perspectives, and Standard 4.2 emphasizes cultural comparisons. Practices typically describe daily living and are often referred to as "little" culture (little c). Products ("big" culture or Big C) consist of tangible representations of

culture, such as art, literature, and monuments (Herron et al., p. 519). Perspectives refer to the pattern of thoughts, beliefs, and values within a group which is reflected in the ways the group adapts to its environment (Peterson & Coltran, 2003). The *Standards* thus provide a means through which to examine the inextricable link between practices, products, and perspectives, forming the foundation for intercultural communication and comparison.

Even with the guidelines proposed by the national *Standards*, Garrett-Rucks (2013b) writes that, “fostering and assessing language learners’ cultural understanding is a daunting task, particularly at the early stages of language learning with target language instruction” (p. 1). Although the *Standards* emphasize the teaching of culture to include products, practices and perspectives, instructors often struggle with how to effectively integrate all of these into their foreign language program (Durocher, 2007. p. 144). Keeping these factors in mind, this paper investigates the responses of early language learners concerning their perceptions and construction of culture at the end of their first academic year of French and, based on the findings, proposes additional ways to foster the simultaneous integration of products, practices, and perspectives and deepen cultural understanding.

The Survey

With IRB approval, the researcher spent five days observing a first-year French class at a rural Midwestern high school during third period, three weeks before the end of the academic year. Twenty-five students were in the class--12 females and 13 males; the average age was 15.7 years. Thirteen of the students were freshmen; six were sophomores, and six were juniors. Two of the students had previously studied French in elementary or middle school; the rest were taking it for the first time.

The instructor, who at that point had been teaching at the school for four years, has an advanced degree in the French language and has spent significant time living and working in France. In an informal discussion with the instructor (B.M., personal communication, May 17, 2013), she described her cultural teaching style as one that encourages the integration of products, practices, and perspectives. She counts the textbook as her primary resource, supplemented with personal experience and education. Additionally, she readily consults with native speakers, colleagues, and the internet for continuous information. She believes in both explicit and implicit integration of authentic cultural materials. She uses the textbook *C'est à toi* (Fawbush et al., 2006) which, according to the textbook website, posits that “in-depth coverage of various francophone cultures gives students a solid understanding of and appreciation for the language within its multicultural, diverse context” (EMC Publishing, 2013). The observations took place during instruction on the chapter, *La santé*, or health. Like the instructor, the researcher also has an advanced degree in the French language and has spent time living in France.

At the beginning of each observed class period, the instructor provided the researcher a brief summary of what was to take place in class each day.

The unit's daily lesson plans were similar in structure and set-up: bell-ringer, homework return/collection, warm-up/review, introduction and explanation of topic, individual and group activities, review, and conclusion. The cultural topics during the observation period dealt with food, eating habits, and health in general. The researcher merely observed and took notes until the end of the class period. Other than the previously noted informal conversation where the instructor described her cultural teaching style, there was no other discussion or intervention. The researcher observed a total of five class periods, at the end of which she administered the survey in the form of a questionnaire (Appendix) to the students and collected the results. She then spent time answering questions from the students about her experiences in France. At the end of the observation period, the researcher reviewed her notes and collated the responses on the survey to look for any emergent or salient points.

Results and Discussion

The majority of students (90%) indicated that they took French because it was “different” and “interesting.”

None had previously traveled to France; however, all but four students expressed a desire to visit one day. Several indicated that they wanted to “speak French really well” and “that it would be cool to be bilingual.” Other reasons for taking the language included a family connection, college aspirations, and the avoidance of taking Spanish or Chinese. These results indicate that the vast majority of students had intrinsic motivation to study the language.

When asked to circle on the survey that which has had the most influence on their cultural knowledge, most cited “teacher” while a few selected “other.” They explained “other” as their own research or as prior study. One student wrote, “When I was in 2nd grade I took French and there are still some things in my brain.” Remarkably, only two students named the textbook as having had the most influence, although the instructor stated to the research that she relied on the textbook as a primary resource for cultural information. The survey then asked students to list similarities and differences in several cultural areas, including food, daily life, housing, shopping, sports and entertainment, music, transportation and school. The questions were open-ended and therefore were generated by the students themselves. The students answered the bulk of the questions on the surveys; their responses appeared to be genuine and thoughtful in nature.

Not surprisingly, the topic of food generated the most interest among the participants; one student wrote, “I am curious to try and experience the broad taste of flavors and exotic dishes!” When asked which food they associated with the French, the majority of the participants listed specific food items, some with more frequency than others. Eighty-four percent (84%) listed bread/baguette/croissant as the most common food item; twenty percent (20%) cited *crêpes*; sixteen percent (16%) mentioned cheese; another sixteen percent (16%) mentioned bouillabaisse, and twelve percent (12%) noted quiche. Some items received two mentions—crabs, fish, pastries, dessert, and *le hot-dog*, while other items only received one mention—*pâté*, snails, and mushrooms. Only two students mentioned wine. Twelve percent

(12%) saw French food as “fancy” or “gourmet” and said that they were likely to enjoy the food if they were to visit the country. Equally, twelve percent (12%) said that they would not enjoy the food, since French food seemed “strange,” and “nasty.” Others indicated they were more accepting of the fact that differences exist and viewed French cuisine as more of a preference: “I would much rather eat American food” and “I don’t think I would like the food, but that’s because I’m picky.” Interestingly enough, eighty percent (80%) were intrigued by the healthy eating habits of the French, taking note of the fresh fruits and vegetables and smaller portions. They viewed the French eating habits favorably when compared to those of the U.S.: “their food seems much more appetizing compared to our restaurants and fast food.” One person associated these eating habits with “a more laid-back, healthier way of life.” In this regard, the student clearly linked the product (food) to the practice (healthy eating) and the perspective (way of life).

This notion that the French live a more laid-back, healthier ways of life was reflected in the students’ views on daily life, seeing it as “more calm,” “healthier,” and involving “more time with family and friends” and “more leisure time.” When asked on the survey what aspects of French culture they were most interested in learning more about, an overwhelming majority (90%) wrote that they were very curious about the day-to-day life of the French, particularly of those in their age group.

About half (47%) indicated they felt the quotidian life of the French was “different” (vacations, mealtimes, etc.) but, as one student wrote, “I think I’d prefer their lifestyle.” Others imagined what life would be like; one wondered what it would be like to sit at a café “eating bread, cheese, and drinking coffee all day.” Another concluded, “I think they live kind of normally, like us.” The survey indicates that the students have a natural curiosity and motivation in knowing more about the daily existence of a typical French teen.

When asked about housing, a few (12%) believed that the housing was similar to the U.S.; but many (80%) saw the houses as “smaller,” closer together,” and “more crowded” and typically urban. Of note, one student wrote that in France there is no “in between” in housing; “it’s either small or huge, like a castle.” Twenty-four percent (24%) perceived the housing as “older” but with “newer insides” and “expensive.” A few of the students admitted to not knowing much about the housing; “we never looked at a normal house before, so I have no idea.” Another student imagined having “friendly neighbors” and another thought the French were “warm.” This was countered by others, one stating that he “would not enjoy some of the people,” another heard that they were “mean.” One believed that “they’re people just like you and I but they are more subtle than us.”

Shopping was an aspect of day-to-day life that attracted many students, as one put it, “shopping seems to be very big and popular there.” Several participants cited that they “would love to shop in France” at the “high-end” and “designer” stores. They felt that shopping in France was “kind of like” shopping in the U.S., but the French had much more to offer, such as “different brands, different stores, and many shops.” They perceived the French as being more “choosy and selective” compared to their American counterparts. The appeal of “luxurious” and “elegant”

stores also brought up a tinge of anxiety; sixty-four percent (64%) felt that it would be “expensive.” However, one participant resigned herself to this by stating: “I heard there are a lot of expensive clothing stores but since I love shopping I would probably just spend all my money.” It is possible that the rural background of the students may have had an influence on their perceptions of the expense and selection they associated with shopping in France.

While shopping constitutes a form of entertainment for some, so do sports. Almost half (45%) mentioned that they were aware that soccer is a major sport in France. However, twenty percent (20%) noted that the French have “less time for sport,” that “it is not much of a priority,” and that “sports don’t seem like a big deal.” Several were appalled by the fact that schools do not sponsor sport teams...one wrote, “I don’t know what I’d do if my school didn’t have sports.” Others acknowledged that the French still enjoy either playing or watching sports on weekends and saw this as “similar” to Americans but that Americans are “more competitive.” The only other sports mentioned by the participants were “bike riding” (by two students) and “fencing” (by one student). In addition to sports, several other entertainment activities emerged, including an eclectic array of “cinema and French movies,” “art and museums,” “famous landmarks and sightseeing,” “dancing and nightclubs,” “parades,” and “mimes.” A few specifically mentioned certain famous sites such as *The Arc de Triomphe*, *Notre Dame*, *The Eiffel Tower*, and *the Catacombs*. One speculated that, “Experiencing everything would be amazing and the cultural difference would be a beautiful much needed change.” However, another despaired that she didn’t think there was “much” to do in terms of entertainment. Yet another said, “I would enjoy everything; the only thing I wouldn’t enjoy would be the people talking to me in French...but I could adapt.”

Another form of entertainment surveyed was music. Sixteen percent (16%) claimed that they knew nothing about the music in France; another said it “wasn’t that good.” Some students had stereotypical notions of French music, describing it as “romantic music that you would listen to on a boat” or that it was like “old music.” One likened French music to that “in the movie *Ratatouille*.” The class was split in terms of whether or not French music was similar or different from American music. Some felt that “teenagers in France have such different taste in music” while others felt the music was the same “but in a different language.” Twelve percent (12%) identified classical music as French; while other genres such as reggae, jazz, pop, rhythm and blues, and hip-hop received honorable mentions. Oddly, one erroneously identified Justin Bieber as French (actually he is Canadian) while another wrote that he felt French music was “cleaner” than American music.

One aspect of French culture that students did not perceive as cleaner is the transportation. Some described the traffic patterns as “busy” and “crowded.” They were aware of the more varied modes of transportation, including cars, cabs, scooters, bicycles, busses, subways, trains, and planes; summed up by one student as “smaller and quicker.” Sixteen percent (16%) mentioned the prevalence of walking in France. Most were in favor of public transportation, one wrote, “I think a train would be more fun than a car” while many loved the idea of a scooter, “I

don't like that you can't get your [driving] license until you are 19 because I like having the freedom to drive around. It would be cool to have one of those scooters, though."

In addition to not liking the age of licensure, the students were not too keen on the secondary school system either. Forty-four percent (44%) mentioned that they perceive French school as "difficult," "hard," or "intense." Almost all (90%) were aware of the shortened days on Wednesdays and Saturdays and were divided on whether or not they would like that. In general, they indicated that the French focus more on academics and homework compared to their American peers. As echoed in the previous section on sports and entertainment, they could not easily imagine a school without the prevalence of sport teams or clubs: "I would not like that there are no sports every day; I need sports to get through the day." Another surmised, "I like their school schedule but have heard that European schools are a lot harder than American schools" before noting that "but it's good to be challenged."

Frequent adjectives used to describe French culture were "lovely" and "elegant." They see the French as having "good manners" and being "more polite" than Americans; one said he felt that Americans were "rude" compared to the French. Another commented that "we are both the same because we both have a democracy." They saw France as being rich in history and diversity, and cited its linguistic influence on English.

As previously mentioned, when asked what they would like to learn about French culture that they had not already learned, the majority wanted to know more about the everyday life of their peers. They wondered what they do when "they are not at school" and "what they do for fun." They wanted to know about both the good and bad aspects of life there. Another wondered if they have school dances and what their television shows are like. Still others mentioned history, art, music, war, famous people, and literature as areas of interest. Another was curious about life in France in earlier times and their heritage. A few wanted to go beyond the surface information; one wrote, "Why do they buy fresh food almost every day?" indicating an already present level of critical thinking.

In order to better understand these responses, the researcher reexamined the surveys using Hanvey's (1979) four stages of cross-cultural awareness. These are described as Level I, where information about the culture may consist of superficial stereotypes; learners see the culture as bizarre; and culture bearers may be considered rude and ignorant. Level II is where learners focus on expanded knowledge about the culture and contrast it with their own. They find the culture bearers' behavior irrational. Level III is demonstrated as learners begin to accept the culture at an intellectual level and can see things in terms of the target culture's frame of reference. Lastly, Level IV is considered the level of empathy that is achieved through living in and through the culture and where learners begin to see the culture as insiders. Based on the researcher's estimation, eight percent (8%) exhibited Level I awareness, as demonstrated by such comments as "I find their [food] strange," and "I heard they were mean," still viewing aspects of the culture as weird. Forty-seven (47%) percent of the group was deemed to be at

Level II, particularly when examining their comments concerning sports and school. That is, they noticed the differences, but did not understand them. Thirty-seven percent (37%) exhibited signs of Level III awareness in such statements as “I think I would prefer their lifestyle,” indicating the ability to place oneself in the frame of reference of the other culture. Lastly, although none of the students had travelled or lived in France, eight percent (8%) indicated an astute awareness more often associated with Level IV, evidenced by statements such as “they are just like us.” Based on these results, the majority of this particular first-year French class’ statements vacillate between Levels II and III. While these results are encouraging, it is important to consider ways to increase and maximize cultural awareness. The development of intercultural sensitivity is an “ongoing, dynamic process in which learners continually synthesize cultural inputs with their own past and present experience in order to create meaning” (Robinson, 1988, p. 11). It is tantamount that culture is presented as multi-layered, socially practiced, and ever dynamic. An investigation or analysis culture is never complete, nor is it one-dimensional. One way to ensure this is through discussion.

Maximizing Cultural Awareness

This survey indicates that the majority of the students are open and interested in learning about the French culture. Although they have some stereotypes, most expressed a balanced viewpoint, a natural curiosity, and an eagerness for more in-depth analysis. One way to facilitate this is through a sociocultural approach to culture. Based on the work of Vygotsky (2012), a sociocultural approach entails the use of language as a tool for the construction of meaning, suited for an in-depth dialogue about the products, practices, and perspectives inherent in cultural similarities and differences. By placing the construction of meaning in a socially supportive setting, the instructor (expert) engages the students (novices) as active participants rather than passive recipients of their own learning. As indicated by the survey, students see their instructor as having the most influence on their cultural knowledge; thus, it follows that instructors are in a unique position to foster critical thinking and intercultural competence through dialogue both in and out of the classroom. According to Drewelow (2013), instruction needs to be especially attentive to the interconnection between language and culture. The promotion of two-way discussions on perspectives, in tandem with practices and products, serves as an ideal forum for this to take place.

The first step toward this practice is to establish where the students are in their cultural competence and awareness; that is, their zone of actual development. This knowledge can be assessed in terms of Standard 2.1 cultural practices and perspectives; Standard 2.2 cultural products and perspectives, and Standard 4.2 cultural comparisons, or any other combination. One can also determine where they are in terms of Hanvey’s Levels. Surveys, pre-tests, questionnaires, etc. are some ways to establish this knowledge base. Once determined, the instructor can begin to see where students are individually and collectively and can begin to formulate ways to scaffold their understanding for growth within their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 2012). Since language provides the necessary

tool for this scaffolding to take place, guided discussion can be the means by which students build upon their prior knowledge toward deeper understanding. For instance, let's consider the teachable moment where the student posed the question about the size of the French grocery cart after seeing the projected image. The instructor immediately responded to the student according to her personal knowledge base and both the student and the instructor appeared satisfied with this exchange. However an alternative approach from a sociocultural perspective would have been for the instructor to turn the question around to the student and to the rest of the class, asking them why *they* thought the shopping carts were small before offering her response. By asking for the students to think about the question and to offer their estimations first, the instructor provides the opportunity for the students to verbalize their ways of approaching and analyzing cultural differences. By searching their own schema and scaffolding with others, they have the opportunity to experience higher levels of thinking and, through consistent and repetitive engagement, deepen and ultimately, internalize these skills. This negotiation can occur between the teacher and the students or within groups of students as a means of collective scaffolding (Donato, 1994). That is, students can together discuss in small groups why they think the shopping carts are small and then report their ideas back to the class as a whole. The instructor can then take the ideas posited by the groups, and continue to ask probing questions and/or guiding comments as a means to extend the discussion. In this way, the students are engaged dialogically with the question and its potential reasoning. This also encourages students to be responsible for their own learning as well as that of their peers. It allows for the instructor to witness the thought processes of the students and use her position to further guide, redirect, or scaffold their orientation, approach, or conclusions.

Other ways to encourage discussion include the drawing out of their opinions or other affective aspects. Appealing to students' interests can also serve as a motivator for cultural response and acceptance; for instance, one student wanted to know more about the "dirt bike scene" in France. Shopping and food both proved to be popular interests and offer many possibilities for thematic and interdisciplinary instruction. Literature and poetry can provide a unique window into cultural perspectives. Instructors should be mindful that they are fostering students' awareness of the link between products, practices, and particularly perspectives; thus, any materials used should be multi-layered and varied. Open and student-generated discussion of cultural viewpoints and topics allows them to pursue culture in a way that promotes discovery, negotiation, construction, modification, exchange, and reflection while forging deeper ownership of such knowledge.

It is also important for instructors to be mindful that there are multiple conscious and unconscious factors that shape a student's perceptions of culture. Inevitably they are influenced by a variety of sources, including prior background, media, books, advertisements, teaching materials as well as national, community, and personal belief systems. Stereotypes of foreign language cultures are typically the first body of knowledge that early language learners acquire and, despite

their negative association, constitute a valued part of the human information system. That is, stereotypes help to simplify and categorize information (Schulz & Haerle, 1995, p.30) and can also be used as a starting point for further discussion. For example, when considering the question of the smaller shopping cart, the instructor can ask students to brainstorm any stereotypes they associate with the image. This exploration of stereotypes can provide a basis for meta-cognition and meaningful exploration. Ideally, instructors can use this information as a springboard to deeper discussions of practices, products, and perspectives and as a basis for comparative analysis between the students' culture and the target culture. A probing of stereotypes helps students to be able to compare and contrast similarities and differences in an objective manner and can also provide instructors with insight into their students' underlying associations and belief systems concerning the target culture. It goes without saying that the instructors themselves should also be mindful of their own stereotypes and belief systems and how they present or shape the information.

Dialogue prompts can guide students toward meaningful conversation and can be a means for them to explain their understanding of a cultural concept vis-à-vis products, practices, and perspectives. Not only can one use images or student-generated responses to initiate discussion, one can also use true/false statements, debates, or information gap activities. Discussion can be extended by asking students for their responses through initiation, response, and feedback (Shrum & Glisan, p.82). Additionally with the availability of the internet and computer mediated communication systems, these discussions can occur via various online venues, such as message boards, chat rooms, etc. (Garrett-Rucks, 2013b). Post-discussion assessments in the form of internet-mediated projects (Abrams, 2002), web-based inquiry (Altstaedter & Jones, 2009), or portfolios, (2007) can serve as a means to measure growth when considering the links between practices, products, and perspectives and whether a student has reached his or her zone of proximal development. Assessments given at various points in the semester can highlight where students are in their understanding and can demonstrate progression of thought and understanding. Jourdain (1998) supports a student-centered approach to cultural connections by advocating projects and activities where students collect, analyze, and present culturally relevant information; thus, fostering independent thinking and personal responsibility. Such projects can be also be used as a dialogic springboard (Barnes-Karol & Broner, 2010).

Instructors may be hesitant to use this approach for several reasons. First, they may be concerned about more extensive teaching of culture at early language levels due to the learner's lack of proficiency in the target language. However, allowing for limited discussion in the L1 sets the foundation for students to develop their orientation toward culture and develop critical thinking skills. As their language proficiency increases, so will their ability to have these discussions in the L2. Additionally, instructors may be concerned with a lack of classroom time to cover culture in this way (Omaggio Hadley, 2001). However, these discussions can be adapted and interwoven in a variety of formats and settings or can be addressed

as they emerge, as long as the environment supports the setting for such dialogues to take place.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Study

The study was limited in several ways. First, since the survey was open-ended and allowed for multiple responses, it was challenging to apply any type of statistical analysis beyond percentages; a more quantifiably structured survey could be more readily evaluated. In addition, the observations only took place over a five-day period; a longer observation period could yield more substantive results. A lengthier observation period could also more directly investigate the teacher's role. A longitudinal study of students over the course of their study of French could track the progression and/or transformation in perceptions of culture from the first years to later years. Pre- and post-surveys could illuminate the construction of culture on the part of the students over time. More extensive interviews with the teacher and the students could also expand upon the connection between the teacher's intentions and students' perceptions as well as the ontogenesis of certain stereotypes.

Different surveys could provide additional information, such as insights on other related aspects, such as cultural sensitivity (Durocher, 2007), acculturation attitudes (Culhane, 2004), or ethno-lingual relativity (Citron, 1995). The particular survey used in this study focused on practices more than on products or perspectives; a more inclusive survey could shed light on how students view those aspects as well. A discourse or other type of analysis of the survey responses could also yield more results. A transcription of the dialogue in the classroom could provide informative insights into the nature of student-talk versus teacher-talk, expressions of private speech, and whether such opportunities exist.

Conclusion

The results of the survey provide a unique opportunity into how early language learners perceive and express French culture. In sum, when considering the similarities and differences between the two cultures, many were actually open, accepting, and flexible toward the differences that were acknowledged but not judged. They saw culture as multidimensional and were primed to process the information on a deeper level. For example, many were willing to try the food, and if not, they were sure to characterize it as a result of their personal preference and not a commentary on the culture. Only very few were resistant. Most appreciated the smaller portions, healthier eating, and lack of junk food." One said, "I would enjoy their food and all the different types and where they come from." They were fascinated by daily life, and wanted to experience it for themselves. Another noted, "Their lifestyle is healthier, more laid back; they seem to take time and appreciate things." And, "I would like to know more about the daily life; they do things differently and I would like to know how and why."

In terms of housing, their perceptions seemed a bit limited and/or stereotypical, but in general there was no negativity associated with the differences. They said

they would like to know more about housing; perhaps the survey helped them to realize this. They perceived both housing and shopping as “expensive,” but again, this was stated as matter-of-fact. They also were matter-of-fact when it came to modes of transportation; although many were envious of the teens riding scooters. Generally, their knowledge of music was rather limited and stereotypical; however, they did seem to acknowledge that their music is “just like ours, but in a different language.” They were convinced that school was much harder than what they are accustomed to, but one noted that that was not necessarily a bad thing. The only area that seemed to carry some negative judgment was sports. They seemed to struggle with and ultimately resist the fact that sports are not as big a part of daily school life as it is for them.

The instructor found the results of the survey to be simultaneously confirming and conflicting. While she was encouraged by their receptivity to learning more about the French culture, she was also daunted by some clear misrepresentations. Instructors do have a considerable amount of influence to ultimately guide students toward the learning of languages, the exploration of cultures, and the transformation of lives. This survey provides a sampling of the ways that students are conceptualizing cultural concepts in the classroom. As one student put it: “I really like learning about different cultures; they are so far away and we are the same but different.” By striving to link practices, products, and perspectives through student dialogue, instructors can ultimately help to shape these beliefs away from those of “strangers in a strange land” toward higher levels of understanding and acceptance.

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Appendix
Survey

Gender _____
Age _____
Grade level _____
Length of study of French _____

Background

1. Why did you decide to study French?
2. Do you have any French relatives or acquaintances? Please circle YES or NO

YES NO

If YES, please explain.

3. Have you ever traveled to France? Please circle YES or NO

YES NO

If YES, please explain length of trip and purpose.

If NO, would you like to travel to France someday?

YES NO

4. What do you think of when you think of French culture and the following:

Food:

Music:

Daily Life:

Sports and Entertainment:

Transportation:

School:

Shopping:

Housing:

5. In what ways are the French similar to us? Different from us? Please explain.

6. Circle that which has MOST influenced your knowledge:

Teacher

Textbook

Other

If other, please explain.

7. If you were to go to France and spend time there, what are some cultural aspects you would enjoy? Would not enjoy?

8. Has the study of French culture motivated you to learn more French? Circle YES or NO

YES

NO

If YES, please explain.

9. What would you like to learn about French culture that you haven't already learned?

10. Any additional comments?

6

21st Century World Language Classrooms: Technology to Support Cultural Competence

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Abstract

Technology is creating opportunities in the language classroom for cultural competence to be highlighted and communication facilitated. Implementation of instruction via Web 2.0 tools produces authentic, meaningful and engaging learning environments. In order to determine if a particular technology supports the intended learning outcomes and instructional goals needed to facilitate students developing cultural competencies, the Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence (Products, Perspectives, and Practices) (TERCC-P³) was developed. This evaluative tool is designed to aid teachers in aligning their instructional design with the many available technology Web 2.0 tools.

Introduction

Culture is why many students decide they want to learn another language. They are fascinated with the culture of a country; they desire to explore someplace new,

and to be able to communicate (Rodriguez-Perez, 2012). Cultural celebrations, cultural traditions and cultural nuances captivate our students. During these discussions students are more likely to remain engaged and motivated. All too often, however, culture is treated in world language classrooms as an add-on or sidebar (Evans & Gunn, 2011; Galloway, 1985; and Lange, 1999). The reality is that culture and language are interconnected. The integration of cultural elements in language instruction adds a distinctive ambience to the classroom. It allows a student's mind to be instantaneously transported to different geographical locations while raising awareness from different perspectives in the arts, politics, education, music, and cuisine. Students are able to express thoughts in the L2 while adding significance and meaning towards language acquisition. Student success is facilitated as cultural understanding is effectively developed and incorporated into lesson plans. Integration of culture promotes student interest in learning and thus facilitates student success.

“Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society. ... The ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies lie are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached” (Sapir, 1985, p. 162).

To effectively teach both language and culture, instruction needs to be contextualized and seamlessly integrated.

Meaningful learning assumes that a student's prior knowledge is relevant to what he/she is learning. Comprehension and acquisition is finding a mental home for new information. This is more readily accomplished when connections are made between new learning and previous knowledge, lived experiences, or familiar circumstances. A study conducted by Savignon (1997) noted higher student contentment, specifically when communicating in “real world settings,” rather than through pre-fabricated sentences and or scenarios created by textbooks. As educators we should strive to prepare students to communicate in an authentic environment. This promotes value laden practical learning.

Virtual environments can help to create some of these opportunities for engaging, motivating, meaningful, and authentic communication. Our students are Millennials (Jonas-Dwyer & Popisil, 2004), they desire to be creators of content not just consumers. The relationship between technology and second language acquisition (SLA) offers opportunities for content creation. Blending communication within the context of culture via technology paves the path for the development of students' 21st century skills, which include problem solving, critical thinking, and collaboration (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011). Incorporating technology-based activities can facilitate the use of critical thinking skills and problem solving. Students develop leadership through collaboration, and become autonomous learners.

The fundamentals of communication within the ‘real world’ that Sapir spoke of remain. Yet, the rapidly changing technologies that are available are impacting the world language classroom, creating 21st century opportunities for contextualized and meaningful learning. World language learning today extends beyond the traditional activities that can be done within the brick and mortar walls of a classroom; technology allows for creative, dynamic, and collaborative learning venues, both within and outside the school day. “The ‘spaces’ where students learn are becoming more community-driven, interdisciplinary, and supported by technologies that engage virtual communication and collaboration” (Johnson, Smith, Levine & Haywood, 2010, p. 4).

The trend in many schools is to provide students with technology such as 1-to-1 initiatives, whether iPads, tablets or laptops for each student. Technologies are becoming more readily available, and rather than be reactive to implemented changes and initiatives, it is better to be proactive. It is vital to keep learning objectives as the cornerstone of instruction, then seek out meaningful and purposeful ways to integrate technology. McGrail (2007) emphasizes, “pedagogy before technology, rather than technology before pedagogy, ... constructively re-envisioning technology in their (teachers) classrooms” (p. 83). As a result, the authors explored how to pragmatically and effectively integrate language instruction with cultural competence via Web 2.0 technologies. Extending the work done in a previous study, in which the Technology Evaluation Rubric for Communicative Competence (TERCC) was offered to gauge the value and effectiveness of Web 2.0 tools (author & author, 2014), a Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence – Products, Practices, and Perspectives (TERCC-P³) is presented. The TERCC-P³ is intended to be a resource to evaluate how Web 2.0 tools can help facilitate students’ cultural competence via either input or output. To demonstrate its practicality, Web 2.0 tools will be highlighted, and examples outlined regarding how each was integrated within instruction.

Culture and Cultural Competence

World language classrooms have undergone pedagogical shifts over the years regarding how to teach culture, and what culture to teach. Culture is more than just teaching; 1) random cultural activities, the “Frankenstein” Approach, 2) folk dances, festivals, fairs, and food, the “4-F” Approach, 3) monuments, rivers, and cities, the “Tour Guide” Approach, or 4) sporadic tid-bits, random lectures, or stark contrasts, the “By-the-Way” Approach (Galloway, 1985). The “4-F” and “Tour Guide” approaches to culture offer a sense of big “C” culture, the elements of the culture that are most visible. But what about the little “c” culture, the nuances of daily life, interactions, and ways of thinking that are omitted? Frankenstein and “By-the-Way” approaches may tap into both big “C” and little “c” culture, but they are done sporadically, unplanned and lacking purpose. This makes it difficult for students to establish connections and/or contextualize their learning. Therefore, cultural competence is achieved through recognizing, exploring and appreciating how people from other cultures think and interact, what they value and believe, the combination of both big “C” and little “c” culture. Cultural instruction has

moved toward a process oriented constructivist approach providing, “learners with the experiences they need to approach, appreciate, and bond with people from other cultures” (Shrum & Glisan, 2005, p. 136).

Therefore, cultural instruction has transitioned from a bifurcated stance on culture, big “C” and little “c” culture, to viewing cultural competence as trifold, investigating products, practices, and perspectives (ACTFL, 2014). High quality cultural instruction is teaching using materials, resources, and artifacts that are culturally authentic; those that are created *by* native speakers *for* native speakers. Products can be concrete or intangible creations of a particular culture. For example, products could include physical household items, clothing, housing, literature, artwork, and musical instruments, or intangible creations such as dance styles, music, language, and political or social institutions. Cultural practices have to do with patterns of social interactions and behaviors; rites of passage, traditions, gestures and nonverbal communication, dinner etiquette, social norms, or when to use formal or informal language. Perspectives include the attitudes, values, beliefs, and ideals of a culture; the perspectives that underpin the cultural products and practices of a society. For example, cultural perspectives include a people’s view of freedom, family, privacy, education, etc. When combined, the triad of authentic products, practices, and perspectives, provides students with a more holistic understanding and appreciation of a specific culture.

Standards-driven Instruction

Teaching culture in today’s schools requires more than the integration of supplemental materials or cultural notes from the textbook. Instead, students need opportunities to interact with the language and culture, to engage with the content in a meaningful way. Theisen (2013) supports an, “engaging and relevant lessons and supportive learning environment where they (students) can advance at varied rates and in different ways. We know they need choices, challenges, respectful tasks, flexible grouping, and opportunities to take on leadership roles” (p. 7). Successful cultural instruction is contextualized, integrated, and standards-based; supported through authentic resources, emphasizing communicative, creative, and collaborative demonstrations of learning. Therefore, teaching within the silo of the 5 C’s (Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities), is not sufficient anymore. Standards-driven instruction includes not only the World Readiness Standards (ACTFL, 2014), but also includes the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014), and skills identified by the Partnership for the 21st Century (P21) (P21, 2011).

The World Readiness Standards for Learning Language stress the, “application of learning a language beyond the instructional setting. ... To prepare learners to apply the skills and understandings measured by the Standards, to bring a global competence to their future careers and experiences” (ACTFL, 2014, p. 2). This stress of ‘application for the future’ is echoed within the CCSS and P21 skills. Common Core State Standards emphasize skills and understandings that students will need outside the classroom; skills and understandings that support

success within 21st century society. The P21 World Language Skills Map reinforces this within its introduction,

“global economies, a heightened need for national security, and changing demographics in the U.S. have increased attention to our country’s lack of language capability. Every call to action to prepare our students for the 21st Century includes offering them the opportunity to learn languages other than English and increase their knowledge of other cultures” (P21, 2001, p.2)

Yet again, value and importance is placed upon the need to combine language and cultural learning in a fashion that is relevant, meaningful and characteristic of the ‘real world.’ When utilizing instructional materials and techniques that are culturally authentic and stress cultural competence, students are able to move beyond traditional and/or benign educational experiences to embark upon significant and rigorous learning.

Culture in the Classroom

While world language instruction teaches to the 5 C’s of language learning, not all of the C’s end up carrying the same weight within the teaching and learning. For example, the Communication standard is focused upon daily within the world language classroom; whereas, the Connections standard might be addressed only weekly. Culture and cultural competence deserve significant emphasis and attention within the instructional design. However, determining *how* to teach culture, *what* to include and *where* to locate quality cultural resources can prove challenging.

When planning for cultural integration within lessons, it is often easiest and wise to design instruction with culture as a thematic backdrop, or premise for a learning unit. This provides the most cohesion between culture and language, and it optimizes instructional time. The following model provides one example of how to embed culture within language learning. Instruction was designed to activate students’ schema, engage students in culturally authentic texts, and assimilate their learning through creative incorporation of technology. Lessons were based upon a culturally thematic instructional design. Pre-reading assignments and/or activities were created in order to prepare students to explore the cultural text. (When speaking in terms of reading, the authors interpret the term “reading” as viewing in addition to reading. One can “read” a poem, a painting, a gesture, a piece of music). Pre-reading tasks stressed activating students prior knowledge and assessing the readiness of students for the upcoming instruction. “Pre-reading tasks should seek to activate appropriate linguistic and cultural schemata” (Shook, 1996, p. 9). These pre-reading tasks allowed students to organize and structure their prior knowledge so that they were prepared for the new learning. Then, students were presented with a cultural text/activity that sought to address and blend together new learning within current frameworks. The post-reading assignment encapsulated the pre-reading new learning thus allowing the student to further his or her knowledge acquired based on all three activities.

The majority of the instructional activities were designed to be collaborative, encouraging communication while fostering cultural competence. Autonomous learning is the ultimate goal for our students, where they can function without the assistance of others, as opposed to requiring mediated guidance through the language. Scaffolding instruction and a gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) are important elements when working towards achieving this autonomy. The authors have found this constructivist, scaffolded instructional framework to be grounded in research, highly effective when integrating culture within instruction, and supports overall student learning.

Once the decision has been made about what cultural topics to teach and an overall structure established for how to design the learning, there is still the question about which resources to use and the specifics for how to facilitate the learning. The remainder of this paper will highlight specific examples showing how to facilitate cultural competence within instruction. However, quality cultural resources are still needed in order to integrate within instructional activities and technology tools in order to create valuable learning opportunities. The following list offers materials and resources to integrate culture within instruction.

- @openculture is a culture repository within twitter. Daily cultural tweets offer additional resources for teachers to implement in the classroom.
- Flickr is a repository of images that can be viewed by both Apple and Android devices. Uploading, editing and sharing photos are excellent sources for learning. Graphics can be embedded within any instructional lesson.
- mipuebloysugente.com is a Spanish website that has many of El Salvador's cultural categories which are located and linked within other websites. Videos and audio provide authentic cultural and historical traditions of El Salvador.
- <http://www.historiacultural.com/> allows users to navigate through various historical eras of time. This is an excellent historical source of history in Spanish.

Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence – Products, Practices, Perspectives (TERCC – P³)

When designing instructional opportunities and integrating technology, pedagogy must always remain at the forefront (McGrail, 2007). The educational purpose and learning objectives, are the cornerstones when planning and executing effective standards-driven instruction. From here, one can consider how best to situate learning experiences in order to make them motivating, engaging, and meaningful. There are a plethora of strategies to choose from and technologies available; how does one decide which is the best fit for an intended outcome?

The Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence (Products, Practices, & Perspectives) (TERCC-P³) was created in order to support language teachers in determining IF a particular technology will support intended outcomes, and students' ability to demonstrate cultural competence.

Table 1. Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence (Products, Practices, & Perspectives) (TERCC-P³)

Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence (Products, Practices, & Perspectives) (TERCC-P³)				
		Highly supportive	Moderately supportive	Unsupported
Part 1	Products	Technology allows cultural products to be integrated, embedded and/or highlighted. Technology allows participants to interact with and/or annotate the cultural product.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural products.	Cultural products cannot be addressed.
	Practices	Technology allows participants to participate within cultural practices.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural practices.	Cultural practices cannot be addressed.
	Perspectives	Technology allows integration of diverse and authentic cultural perspectives. Participants can interact with these perspectives, and/or contribute to them.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze the different cultural perspectives.	Technology only allows for a singular perspective to be offered. Cultural perspectives are discussed but not offered.
Part 2	Authenticity	Technology encourages/ supports the integration of resources that are culturally authentic (Resources that are made by native speakers, for native speakers)	Potential exists for the integration of culturally authentic resources. Technology is used <i>either</i> by or for native speakers— semi-authentic.	Cultural resources are informative, but not authentic.
	Feedback	Technology offers participants timely feedback. There is ease of use when giving or receiving feedback.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback.	The opportunity to give or receive feedback is unavailable.
	Language/ Culture Connection	Technology encourages/ supports language learning through cultural competency.	There is limited connection between communicative competence and cultural competence.	Cultural competence is isolated from further language learning.

Cultural competence was analyzed based upon its sub-categories of products, practices, and perspectives. While all three elements are needed to gain a true sense of another culture, there are situations in which meaningful learning is taking place, yet one sub-category is emphasized over another. Therefore, the three P's of cultural competence (as discussed previously) were analyzed separately within the first part of the rubric. Part 2 of the rubric deals with elements that are integral in the evaluation of a technology's ability to support cultural competence, but not direct elements of culture themselves.

Authenticity of cultural products, practices, and perspectives is paramount. Without authentic materials and resources, learning is more artificial, and less genuine. Therefore, there is a real strength in technology tools that support, encourage or offer students the opportunity to interact and engage with culturally authentic materials.

In addition, the ability for teachers to provide and students to receive feedback is essential. Without this element, misconceptions can be perpetuated and opportunities missed to extend student learning. As a result, the ability to offer quality and timely feedback is evaluated.

The connection between communication, language learning, and cultural competence is also addressed. As mentioned earlier, cultural learning should not be isolated, but contextualized to support meaningful language learning. Consequently, it is important to evaluate a technology's ability to support and foster the link between language and culture.

The TERCC-P³ is a semi-subjective evaluative tool. Pawson and Tilley (1997) state, "the 'findings' of evaluation are inevitably equivocal, but ... they are still profoundly useful" (p. 16). The rubric is intended to provide a measure to assist world language teachers in determining if a particular piece of Web 2.0 technology is a good match for the instructional objectives and cultural outcomes. It may also be viewed as a resource to justify to administrators, curriculum specialists, or naysayers, the feasibility of a specific technology tool's integration within world language instruction.

Web 2.0 Tools in the 21st Century World Language Classroom

In today's world, we must prepare our students to adapt and adjust to different registers, from posting to a blog to tweeting, from composing an email to an employer to updating your status on Facebook (Blommaert, 20013, and Godwin-Jones, 2013). As reflective educators, the authors continually pursue different instructional tools and techniques to enhance teaching and support 21st century learning. In order to help ensure the use of valid technology aligned to instructional objectives, the TERCC-P³ was used to explore how cultural competence is actualized when employing Web 2.0 tools during instruction. The Web 2.0 tools had to meet certain requisite criteria in order to be selected. They needed to be: open source, asynchronous, intuitive, offer classroom management features, and allow for creativity, collaboration, and support communication. Additionally, the TERCC-P³ was used to analyze and evaluate how each potential technology supported cultural competence outcomes. Based upon this information, final determinations were made regarding which technology to integrate, with which learning objective, and in alignment with which cultural resource(s).

General qualitative research methods were employed (Creswell, 1998) using a case study design (Stake, 1995). Internal Review Board (IRB) protocol was secured and followed when informing participants of the scope and potential impacts of this project. The participating classroom was a post-secondary level one Spanish class. The class was considered a hybrid, a blending of in-class and online learning. This provided the 47 student participants with instructional opportunities afforded by an online learning environment in addition to the more traditional face-to-face classroom setting. Data were collected through artifacts, surveys, qualitative comments, researcher observations and field notes. These data sets were triangulated with the TERCC-P³ data to create a more holistic analysis of the interaction between Web 2.0 technology tools and resulting cultural competence.

Animoto

The Tool. Animoto is an open-source web-based application that allows individuals to create professional quality videos from their computers or mobile devices (Animoto, 2014). Participants import their images, short video clips, audio, and/or text, and with the ability to customize the final product Animoto will help create a polished video.

TERCC-P³ Results. Animoto, even with its limitations was shown to be moderately supportive overall when addressing cultural competencies (Figure 1).

Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence (Products, Practices, & Perspectives) (TERCC-P³)				
		Highly supportive	Moderately supportive	Unsupported
Part 1	Products	Technology allows cultural products to be integrated, embedded and/or highlighted. Technology allows participants to interact with and/or annotate the cultural product.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural products.	Cultural products cannot be addressed.
	Practices	Technology allows participants to participate within cultural practices.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural practices.	Cultural practices cannot be addressed.
	Perspectives	Technology allows integration of diverse and authentic cultural perspectives. Participants can interact with these perspectives, and/or contribute to them.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze the different cultural perspectives.	Technology only allows for a singular perspective to be offered. Cultural perspectives are discussed but not offered.
Part 2	Authenticity	Technology encourages/ supports the integration of resources that are culturally authentic (Resources that are made by native speakers, for native speakers)	Potential exists for the integration of culturally authentic resources. Technology is used <i>either</i> by <i>or</i> for native speakers—semi-authentic.	Cultural resources are informative, but not authentic.
	Feedback	Technology offers participants timely feedback. There is ease of use when giving or receiving feedback.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback.	The opportunity to give or receive feedback is unavailable.
	Language/ Culture Connection	Technology encourages/ supports language learning through cultural competency.	There is limited connection between communicative competence and cultural competence.	Cultural competence is isolated from further language learning.

Figure 1. Animoto TERCC-P³

Animoto offers students the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural products, practices, and perspectives. The nature of the Animoto tool is geared toward student output; therefore, cultural resources are rarely authentic and opportunities for feedback do not exist. Depending upon how the Animoto project is structured and then implemented, the language/culture connection is moderately supportive. There is at least a limited connection between communicative and cultural competencies.

In Action. Animoto was the first Web 2.0 technology introduced to students. It was chosen as one of the first technologies due to Animoto's simplistic navigation within their platform. The online account registration and movie instructions for creating and sharing the images are easy to understand. Students add their personal photos and/or use professional videos or graphics from Animoto's library in order to produce a high quality final product. Multiple assignments were given to students using the Animoto template. Animoto's cinematic visual technology is engaging. It allows students to be creative, and promotes personalization of content through integration of personal photos or uploading pictures from within their website.

The first assignment using Animoto served as a springboard for a series of future cultural assignments to be strategically and purposefully assigned within the duration of the course (Appendix A). The learning objective of this assignment was to introduce the concept of culture by comparing and contrasting similarities and differences among the student's culture and that of the Latin American community. As a pre-reading task, students were asked to reflect upon and analyze the following questions:

1. Find two similarities and two differences between your culture and the culture of the people from Puebla. Reference the movie "Food for the Ancestors."
2. What does the word 'culture' mean?
3. What does culture mean to you?

To demonstrate their understanding, students created a video using Animoto expressing "culture" in the L2. Expressions were in the form of video and text. Some students chose to add cultural music conveying the tone of the movie. Upon completion of the assignment the Animoto movie was tweeted via twitter.com. The embedding of the video in Twitter allowed for students to view, reflect and comment in the L2.

As students completed their final products, some became dissatisfied due to Animoto's watermark appearing across the final polished cultural assignment. Some students were also upset and frustrated with the limited free 30 second download (which Animoto limited without the watermark). As a result, a typically quiet student transformed into a motivated autonomous learner, collaborating with peers to find a solution using an alternative, but similar technology, Stupeflix.com (Stupeflix, 2014). Students were learning from each other. A teachable moment arose due to a perceived need, followed by collaborative communication. Students were allowed and encouraged to use the newfound technology. Half of the class chose to use Stupeflix, the other half Animoto. They were motivated and engaged; thus, they did not mind having to re-do their movies or the time it took to do the extra work. As an instructor, it was a satisfying moment to see students creatively engaged and enveloped in their assignments. Students were pleased when implementing Stupeflix, because the technology visually enhanced their final product, producing a better quality movie. According to Page (1992), "Learners, must no longer sit there and expect to be taught; teachers must no longer stand up there teaching all the time. Teachers have to learn to let go and learners have to

learn to take hold” (p. 84). The student who discovered the alternative technology of Stupeflix was transformed, taking ownership of her assignment.

Visme

The Tool. Visme is an online, open-source, free tool to create infographics, presentations, and more (Visme, 2014). The saying “a picture is worth one thousand words” could sum up the definition of an infographic. Infographics contain information whose visual representations are expressed by the person creating the infographic. The use of creativity, visualization, information, design, communication and vision are a form of artistic expression conveyed through an infographic. It is an intuitive technology, and it offers vast editing and customization tools, allowing for optimized personalization. Once complete, it’s possible to share the final product by downloading it for offline use, embedding it to a site, or sharing it online.

TERCC-P³ Results. Visme is an overall supportive technology that provides input that can support cultural competencies (Figure 2).

Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence (Products, Practices, & Perspectives) (TERCC-P ³)				
		Highly supportive	Moderately supportive	Unsupported
Part 1	Products	Technology allows cultural products to be integrated, embedded and/or highlighted. Technology allows participants to interact with and/or annotate the cultural product.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural products.	Cultural products cannot be addressed.
	Practices	Technology allows participants to participate within cultural practices.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural practices.	Cultural practices cannot be addressed.
	Perspectives	Technology allows integration of diverse and authentic cultural perspectives. Participants can interact with these perspectives, and/or contribute to them.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze the different cultural perspectives.	Technology only allows for a singular perspective to be offered. Cultural perspectives are discussed but not offered.
Part 2	Authenticity	Technology encourages/ supports the integration of resources that are culturally authentic (Resources that are made by native speakers, for native speakers)	Potential exists for the integration of culturally authentic resources. Technology is used either by or for native speakers— semi-authentic.	Cultural resources are informative, but not authentic.
	Feedback	Technology offers participants timely feedback. There is ease of use when giving or receiving feedback.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback.	The opportunity to give or receive feedback is unavailable.
	Language/ Culture Connection	Technology encourages/ supports language learning through cultural competency.	There is limited connection between communicative competence and cultural competence.	Cultural competence is isolated from further language learning.

Figure 2. Visme TERCC-P³

Visme offers students the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural products, practices, and perspectives. Since the premise of the technology is to provide input, to allow for the embedding of media, there is potential for authentic cultural products and resources to be embedded within the presentation/infographic. The largest limitation of the tool is its inability to provide feedback. However, because Visme is a presentation tool, this limitation is not unexpected. Visme encourages students to be exposed to the content and then to also process it whether through audio, visual or text; therefore, it is a highly supportive tool when encouraging language learning through cultural competency.

In Action. It was the intent with this assignment for students to gain an understanding of Spanish poetry and an introduction to the arts. Cultural products and perspectives were stressed as they were introduced to the poem, “*Las Jarchas*” and the artwork of Francisco Goya. The learning objective for the assignment was to have students demonstrate their understanding of products and perspectives of the language through Spanish poetry and art. As a pre-reading task, students viewed and discussed Francisco Goya’s painting, “*Fusilamientos del tres de mayo*” (“The Third of May”) which depicts a war scenario during the French invasion. Background knowledge about poetry was gained about “*Las Jarchas*,” poems written in Arabic dating back to the ninth century. As a post-reading task, students demonstrated their understanding through the creation of an infographic via Visme (Appendix B). Their infographic was to describe the emotions of the people portrayed within the painting and the emotions experienced by someone viewing the painting (the student). It was to also express their perception of the impact the painting and poetry had on Spain. Finally, they were to find another painting similar to the one used as an example, and compare them. Their infographic was assessed with a rubric, stressing learning objectives in addition to originality and creativity. One student self-reported his/her attainment of the learning objective when stating, “Without the text no one would have understood how to interpret the emotions behind the painting. After this I would like to look up other paintings and interpret the meaning behind each of the pieces.” Since every student depicts emotions differently, the Visme infographic was a good fit, allowing individual, unique responses to war and the emotions that these paintings evoke.

ThingLink

The Tool. ThingLink is an open-source, online tool that allows participants to make their images interactive through embedding video, audio, and/or text (ThingLink, 2014). Based upon the premise that every picture tells a story, ThingLink helps to facilitate and enhance that story.

TERCC-P³ Results. ThingLink is a versatile tool that supports cultural competence (Figure 3).

Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence (Products, Practices, & Perspectives) (TERCC-P ³)				
		Highly supportive	Moderately supportive	Unsupported
Part 1	Products	Technology allows cultural products to be integrated, embedded and/or highlighted. Technology allows participants to interact with and/or annotate the cultural product.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural products.	Cultural products cannot be addressed.
	Practices	Technology allows participants to participate within cultural practices.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural practices.	Cultural practices cannot be addressed.
	Perspectives	Technology allows integration of diverse and authentic cultural perspectives. Participants can interact with these perspectives, and/or contribute to them.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze the different cultural perspectives.	Technology only allows for a singular perspective to be offered. Cultural perspectives are discussed but not offered.
Part 2	Authenticity	Technology encourages/supports the integration of resources that are culturally authentic (Resources that are made by native speakers, for native speakers)	Potential exists for the integration of culturally authentic resources. Technology is used either by or for native speakers—semi-authentic.	Cultural resources are informative, but not authentic.
	Feedback	Technology offers participants timely feedback. There is ease of use when giving or receiving feedback.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback.	The opportunity to give or receive feedback is unavailable.
	Language/Culture Connection	Technology encourages/supports language learning through cultural competency.	There is limited connection between communicative competence and cultural competence.	Cultural competence is isolated from further language learning.

Figure 3. ThingLink TERCC-P³

One of the strengths of ThingLink is its general premise that imagery and multimedia are embedded within it, this allows for cultural products to be embedded, or highlighted within the tool, thus allowing students to observe and analyze them. ThingLink is moderately supportive when it comes to cultural practices and perspectives, allowing students to observe and/or analyze but not participate. Depending upon the image/multimedia chosen, there is potential to integrate culturally authentic resources. This tool is geared strictly toward input. Therefore, the ability to provide feedback is unavailable, yet there is a clear connection between language and culture since students must process text, audio, or other visual media in order to comprehend what is being presented. Overall, when aligned with instructional goals, ThingLink can be a valuable teaching tool that offers directed cultural input for students.

In Action. A ThingLink was created to introduce the Mayan civilization (Appendix C). The learning objective for this assignment was to gain knowledge and appreciation about the Mayan culture. Mayan cultural practices and perspectives were highlighted through rich, authentic input. The home picture

for the ThingLink was Chichén Itzá, a pre-columbian city built by the Maya's located in Yucatan, Mexico. An authentic Mayan video (the pre-reading task) was embedded within ThingLink to frame the reading assignments (which were also embedded). Students were given instructions to click on each of the icons to learn more about the Mayan civilization. Students were to complete and visit all the different icons. Every time students hovered over an image within Chichén Itzá, they were able to see the tags. The tags, images, audio and/or video, embedded within the ThingLink highlighted cultural artifacts and information. Each icon took students through a series of tags via URL's. Students were asked a series of questions eventually leading them to the last question represented by a Twitter icon. Here they tweeted their final answer to the assignment. Students were able to view responses from their peers and in some cases tweets were a springboard for generating an online discussion forum. This demonstrates student engagement within the assignment and exemplifies their motivation when voluntarily extending their communicative interactions and learning.

Twitter

The Tool. Twitter is a social media platform that allows participants to connect and share information and ideas instantly (Twitter, 2014). Individuals can follow others for professional/educational development, for entertainment, or for social connection. This tool allows for versatility. Twitter, while free, requires participants to create an account, thus establishing/expanding their digital presence. A tool of pop culture, the educational integration of Twitter allows technology that is normally considered out of school to be brought into the classroom (Klopfer, Osterweil, Groff, & Haas, 2009).

TERCC-P³ Results. Twitter as a social media platform was also found to be supportive when addressing cultural competence (Figure 4). Twitter offers students to observe and/or analyze cultural products and practices. However, depending upon how the assignment and interactions are developed, Twitter offers the opportunity for integration of diverse and authentic cultural perspectives, allowing students to interact and contribute to these perspectives. Due to the premise of the technology, it can be used either by or for native speakers, offering the potential for authenticity, or at least semi-authenticity. Twitter offers a variety of ways in which to connect, tweet and re-tweet; therefore, there is strong potential for timely responses, and the ease with which to offer feedback/tweet is great. Finally, since language is paramount when participating within this technology, there is a highly supportive connection between communication/language learning and the culture focus being emphasized. Overall, Twitter is supportive of developing cultural competencies, and strengths lie in how this well-known social media platform can be used as an educational and learning tool.

In Action. The use of Twitter within instruction offered a platform in which students could communicate, post reflective comments, publish assignments and communicate about those assignments. Twitter was an easy Web 2.0 technology to integrate because most students already had a Twitter account. Students were not obligated to use Twitter; they had a choice to post on a discussion board

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	Practices	Technology allows participants to participate within cultural practices.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural practices.	Cultural practices cannot be addressed.
	Perspectives	Technology allows integration of diverse and authentic cultural perspectives. Participants can interact with these perspectives, and/or contribute to them.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze the different cultural perspectives.	Technology only allows for a singular perspective to be offered. Cultural perspectives are discussed but not offered.
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	Feedback	Technology offers participants timely feedback. There is ease of use when giving or receiving feedback.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback.	The opportunity to give or receive feedback is unavailable.
	Language/ Culture Connection	Technology encourages/ supports language learning through cultural competency.	There is limited connection between communicative competence and cultural competence.	Cultural competence is isolated from further language learning.

Figure 4. Twitter TERCC-P³

within the schools learning management system; however, all students chose to use Twitter. Students composed basic tweets or messages in the L2. Hashtags were looked at as topics. As previously mentioned, through the use of Twitter, students voluntarily and spontaneously tweeted back and forth as they expressed opinions and thoughts. For the purpose of the class the instructor’s Twitter account was kept private. Only the people that the instructor accepted in the account were able to follow and see the class’s tweets. Students enjoyed using Twitter inside and outside of the classroom. One student shared, “Twitter helped me learn and practice more Spanish, and involving technology made it interesting.” Another student echoed these sentiments when stating, “I really enjoyed digging into culture for this project; I wish more of my classes would use technology like this.”

Assignments that integrated Twitter included students’ Animoto/Stupeflix movies and their Visme infographics. Because of the nature of Twitter, this technology platform boosted the support of students’ cultural competence when using the accompanying technologies of Animoto and Visme. The TERCC-P³ identified various limitations of technology applications.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2003), “They [students] have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher. Therefore, they are autonomous” (p.140). Data was collected from tweets and were time stamped at all times. The level of engagement with the learning task was notable. Furthermore, it was encouraging to realize as educators, the collaborative environment that was being created and communication in the L2 that was happening independently outside the classroom. Twitter was fostering learner autonomy.

VoiceThread

The Tool. VoiceThread is an online, open-source, collaborative slideshow that allow participants to have virtual asynchronous conversations based upon embedded multimedia (text, images, video, etc.) within the slideshow (VoiceThread, 2014). VoiceThread allows participants to comment and converse through audio, video, and/or text. In addition to the basic operational functionality of this tool, participants can also use the doodle tool to annotate the embedded slide while commenting.

TERCC-P³ Results. Overall, VoiceThread was found to be a moderately supportive tool to support cultural competence (Figure 5).

VoiceThreads are created around multimedia, which allows students to observe and/or analyze cultural products, practices, and perspectives. IF the VoiceThread is accessible to everyone, there is potential that students might be able to hear from and respond to comments made by native speakers, which would allow students to interact with various cultural perspectives. Ideally, cultural content chosen and embedded within VoiceThread will be authentic. Again, the potential exists for authentic multimedia to be embedded. As a result of the asynchronous nature of VoiceThread, there are limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback; however, if done through a comment, there is an ease of use in commenting so that feedback could be offered as audio, text, or video. This form of feedback, while not most accommodating for individual students, can be highly effective when providing generalized feedback via comment or to help clarify misconceptions that would benefit the larger group. Finally, the discussion element (commenting) surrounding the multimedia slideshow encourages and supports language learning, the culture/language connection. While VoiceThread has limitations, there are many elements that make it potentially a valuable learning tool when teaching culture. Much is dependent upon how it’s created, structured, and implemented within instruction.

In Action. The assignment that integrated VoiceThread served as a capstone project that captured digital footprints of students’ own cultural perspectives (Appendix D). The learning objective for this assignment was for students to display an understanding of their culture and stimulate their linguistic ability in L2. Content for this assignment encouraged personalization, allowing students to demonstrate their learning when greeting others, interacting with families and making connections between the L2 culture and their own. Students had

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	Practices	Technology allows participants to participate within cultural practices.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze cultural practices.	Cultural practices cannot be addressed.
	Perspectives	Technology allows integration of diverse and authentic cultural perspectives. Participants can interact with these perspectives, and/or contribute to them.	Technology offers participants the ability to observe and/or analyze the different cultural perspectives.	Technology only allows for a singular perspective to be offered. Cultural perspectives are discussed but not offered.
Part 2	Authenticity	Technology encourages/ supports the integration of resources that are culturally authentic (Resources that are made by native speakers, for native speakers)	Potential exists for the integration of culturally authentic resources. Technology is used either by or for native speakers— semi-authentic.	Cultural resources are informative, but not authentic.
	Feedback	Technology offers participants timely feedback. There is ease of use when giving or receiving feedback.	Technology offers limited opportunities to provide or receive feedback.	The opportunity to give or receive feedback is unavailable.
	Language/ Culture Connection	Technology encourages/ supports language learning through cultural competency.	There is limited connection between communicative competence and cultural competence.	Cultural competence is isolated from further language learning.

Figure 5. VoiceThread TERCC-P³

to reflect upon their newly acquired knowledge in relation to cultural products, practices, and perspectives in order to translate that learning in a meaningful and comprehensible way. When assessing student projects, it was clear their linguistic prowess in addition to their cultural competence had improved.

Discussion and Implications

Based upon the data collected and analyzed from the implementation and integration of the Web 2.0 technologies (Animoto, Twitter, ThingLink, Visme, and VoiceThread) within the classroom, the authors can generalize that the TERCC-P³ is a valid metric when evaluating the level of support potential technologies will provide students in developing cultural competencies. Yet, when circling back to one of most basic questions, how does one know what culture to integrate within instruction, when and how; does the TERCC-P³ answer these questions? The simple answer is, no. The ultimate responsibility rests with teachers. It is up to the teacher to determine how instruction will support learning goals and objectives. Furthermore, it is paramount that these learning goals and objectives remain at

the heart of decision making when choosing instructional tools, activities and technologies (McKeeman & Oviedo, 2013). However, it is not enough for teachers to maintain focus on these instructional goals, students must be made aware of what the intended learning outcomes are as well. It should not be a guessing game for students regarding what they are to be learning, why they are learning it, and why this particular instructional format/activity was chosen to achieve it. As educators, countless decisions are made within each lesson, our students' willingness to explore new things and challenge themselves will increase when they are clued into the larger picture. While the TERCC-P³ may not be all things and answer all questions, it *can* offer a guideline with which to begin the evaluation process when sifting through and deciding upon which available technology to use for instruction. This is where the value of the rubric lies. The TERCC-P³ can help teachers make supported and validated decisions when aligning technology tools appropriately to instructional design.

Cultural competency is such a valuable part of world language instruction; however, it can be challenging when integrating cultural content in a meaningful and relevant way. A major benefit of technology integration is the extension of learning beyond the traditional classroom setting; virtual experiences, connecting students with L2 culture, and increasing overall contact with instructional opportunities. One student stated, "I'm more aware of my surroundings and find similarities outside of the classroom." Making connections between what is taught/learned and real-world experiences is a foundational goal of language educators. The use of technology created a bridge between learning and content. Activities and content did not happen in isolation and technology tools were not kept separate; there was a conscious effort to connect learning outcomes with instructional methods in order to optimize students' cultural and communicative competencies. This connection and appreciation for other cultures was echoed when another student stated, "I never realized how something as simple as a meal can bring a family together and expand culture." As a result of carefully scaffolded instructional activities via a platform that was appropriate and engaging, this student was able to have an "aha" moment when reflecting upon a cultural practice and perspective.

When done effectively, technology integration within instruction can offer student motivation and engagement along with enhanced and meaningful learning opportunities. One student stated, "It made me want to learn more about my culture. The assignment also allowed me to explore other cultures. Usually I do not have the time but I did through these assignments." While unlikely that this student truly didn't "have the time," the comment speaks to the student's increased motivation and willingness to take the extra time to learn and explore the L2 culture when embedded within technology. This increase in motivation was demonstrated when pockets of students were frustrated with a limitation of a technology and took initiative to seek out another venue that provided a better fit for what they wanted to do. This sense of ownership to the instructional task and thus the learning outcome was rewarding to observe. The technology integration was not a frill or add-on, but a needed, useful tool sought after in order to achieve

a desired outcome. Another student personalized their learning when sharing, “Once I started to think Spanish was too hard to learn, the assignment reminded me this is who I am, and I owe it to myself to try and learn.” This student’s comment highlights student engagement with the instructional tasks/tools/objectives. They recognized the relevance of the learning even though it proved rigorous and challenging. This balance between maintaining a low affective filter while still providing challenging instruction is the sweet spot where optimal learning takes place. Students recognized this and took ownership of the learning process.

While learning is collaborative, final instructional decisions are the responsibility of the teacher; teachers need to make the best choices for their own classes and students. Wise instructional choices are grounded in research and best practices. It was the intention of the authors to explore how technology could be integrated within instruction so that cultural competency was highlighted while stressing the importance of aligning learning goals and objectives with cultural competency outcomes and appropriate technology tools. The Technology Evaluation Rubric for Cultural Competence (Products, Practices, Perspectives) (TERCC-P³) provides a metric upon which instructional decisions can be made.

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Appendix A

Culture Assignments

Unit I. Introduced Broad spectrum of Culture to Students

Web 2.0 Technologies utilized: Twitter & Animoto

Pre-Reading - Movie “Food for the Ancestors”

Assignment- Cultural Dish

Post Reading-Animoto movie/twitter

1. Web 2.0 Technologies: Animoto & Twitter

Learning objective→ Introduce Culture to students by comparing and contrasting similarities and differences among the students culture to include the Latin American community.

Day 1

Pre-Reading→Movie “Food for the Ancestors”

Day 2

Assignment→ Students were asked to bring and or share a family dish or food that was shared at special occasions. The dish or food item could have been handed down from one family member to another, for example from a grandmother to the mother.

Students were asked to answer the following:

1. Find two similarities and two differences between your culture and the culture of the people from Puebla reference the movie “Food for the Ancestors”.
2. What does the word Culture mean?
3. What does culture mean to you?

Day 3

Post Reading→ Create a movie using Animoto to express “culture”. The movie was tweeted via twitter.com. upon completion of the movie.

Reflective Tweet: [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

Appendix B

Web 2.0 Technologies utilized: Visme & Twitter & VoiceThread

Unit II. Art is introduced

Pre-Reading-“Las Jarchas”.

Assignment- Goya *Fusilamientos del tres de mayo*

Post Reading-Info graphic

Learning objective- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the cultural products and perspectives in the language studied. Students will understand Spanish poetry and art.

Day 1

Pre-Reading

Students read and interpret the first four strands of “Las Jarchas” This assignment is introduced with “Las Jarchas” –

Para la lectura se usara cuatro breves frases de el texto “Las Jarchas,”

Las Jarchas

Garid vos, ay yermanillas, **Decidme, ay hermanitas,** [Tell me, oh sisters,]

¿cóm’ contener a meu male? **¿cómo contener mi mal?** [How do I contain my
sadness?]

Sin el habiib non vivreyu: **Sin el amado no viviré:** [Without my love, I wont
live:]

¿ad ob l’iréy demandare? **¿adónde iré a buscarlo?** [Where do I go to look
for him?]

Instrucciones

Paso 1—

*Los estudiantes trabajan en **parejas** para la respuesta de una sola palabra que sea un resumen de las oraciones. 10 minutos. Los estudiantes contestan lo siguiente:*

- 1. Escribe lo que viene a tu mente cuando leas cada sección.*
- 2. Después, escribe una sola palabra de un sentimiento que describe cada jarcha. (Contestar en **parejas**)*

[Paso 1—

Students work in **pairs** answering the following with a single word: 10 minutes.

1. What comes to mind upon reading each line of the poem?
2. Write one word to describe a feeling that captures the essence of each jarcha. (Answer and work in **groups**)

Paso 2—

La clase compara las respuestas y se hacen tweet o escriben las semejanzas y diferencias de las respuestas en la pizarra de los estudiantes. 5 Minutos

[Paso 2—

The class compares their answers tweeting their differences and similarities. May be followed up with white board annotation. 5 Minutes]

Day 2

Assignment

Students watch video embedded on VoiceThread: *Fusilamientos del tres de mayo por Goya*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TylGuoEN5x4>

1. Students fill in different emotions between those that are going to be killed, the soldiers and those waiting to be executed.
2. Students post their findings of <emotions> on VoiceThread.

Day 3

Post Reading

Students create an Info Graphic interpreting the following:

1. Goya's Emotions reference the Painting: *Fusilamientos del tres de mayo por Goya*
2. Emotions experienced by student
3. Emotions experienced by executioner
4. Emotions experienced by those being executed
5. Impact on Spain
6. Find an American painting similar to *Fusilamientos del Tres de Mayo por Goya*.
7. Use Vocabulary Chapter 5

Reflective Tweet: Twitter.com

Escribe las diferentes emociones entre los que van a ser fusilados, los soldados Franceses y los que esperan para ser ejecutados.

Write the different emotions experienced by individuals waiting to be executed, the French soldiers and those waiting to be executed

Las Emociones de...

[Emotions felt by...]

<p><i>Las personas que van a punto de ser fusiladas.</i></p> <p>[Individuals to be executed by French soldiers]</p>	<p><i>Los Soldados Franceses</i></p> <p>[The French Soldiers]</p>	<p><i>Los que esperan ser ejecutados/ fusilados por los soldados Franceses.</i></p> <p>[Individuals waiting to be executed by the French soldiers.]</p>

Appendix C

Web 2.0 Technologies utilized: ThingLink & Twitter

Unit III. Specific Culture is introduced- Mayan Culture

ThingLink #2

Pre-Reading - Mayan Video-

Assignment - Navigating ThingLink.com

Post Reading -Chichén Itzá Poem

Learning objective-

Students will have a broad knowledge and appreciation about the Mayan Culture.

Day 1

Pre-Reading-

Mayan Cultural Video

Day 2

Assignment

A series of icons were placed on a graphic of Chichén Itzá

Students will Tweet the answer to the question posted on ThinkLink. Students must complete a series of steps within ThinkLink in order to be able to answer the question.

Day 3

Post Reading- Chichén Itzá Poem **A Ti Madre/Chawe Nan** (artesmexico.com)

A Ti Madre/Chawe Nan

Tu amor es tierno,

Eres mi mejor tesoro,

nojbäl

Me guías por un camino eterno,

Tu amor es más valioso que el oro.

Eres como una mariposa,

Bella, llena de alegría y color.

Tú, hermosa como una gran rosa,

Que despiertas amor con tu rico color.

ixlab' la.

Le jun t'on laj ranima',

Are la' utzläj sutäq

Kink'amb'i pa le utzläj

Ranima nimläj b'antajik

Laj junam ruk'jun pepe,

Ütz xuquje' lal nojnäq che tz'ajbä

l al pa cha lontentiyil.

Lal, üt'z pa cha jun nimläj roxox,

Kwalajsäj la jun utzläj nojb' ä'l ruk'

Your love is tender

You are my best treasure

color

You guide me through an eternal road

You are like a butterfly

Beautiful, full of happiness and

You, as beautiful as a grand rose,

Your love is worth more than gold Awaking love with your **rich scent**.

Reflective Tweet: [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

Appendix D

Web 2.0 Technologies utilized: VoiceThread, Animoto & Stupeflix, Twitter
Unit VI. Culmination Project: Student's Cultural perspectives

VoiceThread assignments were spread out accordingly within the semester and or cycle. Each assignment consisted of a pre-reading, an assignment and a tweet or Twitter reflection. The final VoiceThread was to be a culmination of the previous two culture assignments. This allowed for students to focus on both cultural meaning relevant to their lives as well as grammatical concepts covered within the class time frame.

Learning objective- Students will be able to greet and make introductions in L2, comparing and contrasting similarities and making comparison between their family and other families in a Latin American community. Students will display an understanding of their culture.

Day 1

Pre-Reading- Movie 3 minute clip “*Los Saludos*” [Greetings].

Assignment- Students comment in L2 reference “*Los Saludos*”. Students will state their name, last name and where they are from as they greet each other using VoiceThread.

Post Reading- Discussing how the same greeting can be interpreted or misinterpreted in another country or by another culture.

Reflective Tweet: [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

Day 2

Pre-Reading--→Movie 3 minute clip “*La Familia*” <Family>

Assignment→Students comment in L2 reference “*La Familia*”.

Grammar lesson is introduced “comparisons of equality and inequality” using adjectives, adverbs and nouns. Students will compare and contrast their family and a Latin American Family or a family from another country.

Post Reading→ Families and different cultures. Discussion- “*La Familia*”.

Reflective Tweet: [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

Day 3

Pre Reading→ Discussion Family/USA/Ecuador

Assignment→ Students create a VoiceThread in L2. The following content must be included in the VoiceThread.

- Introduction of yourself
- Introduction of family members
- Movie embedded in VT-**Animoto/Stupeflix**
- What does Culture mean to you?

Post Reading→ Families and different cultures. Discussion- "*La Familia*".

Reflective Tweet: [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com)

**Transforming Lives by
Transforming Access:**

**Using Technology to Explore
Language and Culture**

7

Effective Cloud-based Technologies to Maximize Language Learning

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Abstract

The digital age in education has inspired scholars and researchers in the PK-16 sector to speculate how teachers might use new technologies to redefine teaching and learning. Many teachers may not be aware that a variety of free software application options exist and that many of them do not even need to be installed on their computers. In this article, examples of cloud-based technologies useful for teaching and learning foreign and second languages are provided. They are designed to help teachers expand their repertoire of tools and facilitate the needs of 21st century learners.

Introduction

According to Ware and Helmich (2014), “The digital turn in education has inspired a number of scholars in the K-12 sector to speculate on how educators might leverage new technologies to redefine how schooling and learning intertwine” (p. 140). Educators are charged to embrace not only the content standards in their specific areas but also technology standards, postulated by International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) (<http://www.iste.org/>) for students and

teachers, and to situate their practices in the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (<http://tpack.org/>). The ISTE Standards is one framework for implementing digital strategies to positively impact teaching and learning in the ever-evolving technological world. “ISTE’s core belief is that all students must have regular opportunities to use technology to develop skills that encourage personal productivity, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration in the classroom and in daily life” (ISTE, 2014, np). On the other hand, TPACK is a framework that identifies the requisite knowledge teachers need to teach effectively with technology. The TPACK approach goes beyond seeing these three forms of knowledge: Content Knowledge (CK), Pedagogical Knowledge (PK), and Technology Knowledge (TK) in isolation. It also emphasizes the new kinds of knowledge that lie at the intersections between them, representing four more knowledge bases, such as Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), Technological Content Knowledge (TCK), Technological Pedagogical Knowledge (TPK), and the intersection of all three, Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK). “Effective technology integration for pedagogy around specific subject matter requires developing sensitivity to the dynamic, transactional relationship between these components of knowledge situated in unique contexts” (TPACK, 2014, np). For these and many other reasons it is important to select and support the technologies that are closely related to student access, retention, and learning, and to meet the needs of 21st century learners (Diaz, 2011).

Literature Review

The digital transformation in education has inspired scholars and researchers in the PK-16 sector to speculate how teachers might use new technologies to redefine their pedagogy. The emphasis is on new technologies as learning opportunities, having educators rethink their goals of instruction, identifying what needs to be changed in their assessment procedures, and what new learning is initiated with digital tools. “The affordances of new technologies are viewed as products of a steady stream of innovation that offers novel learning environments, expanded semiotic resources, and new modes of communication” (Ware & Hellmich, 2014, p. 141).

In the literature on digital technologies, the term CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) is used primarily at the postsecondary and international settings, while digital literacies, or 21st century literacies, are used in the K-12 sector in the U.S. Although the nomenclature is slightly different whether addressing the post-secondary and international settings or the K-12 context, the idea behind these terms is the same (Ware & Hellmich, 2014).

The presence of technology does not guarantee that educators will feel compelled to use it in their instruction. The recent survey results by the National Center for Education Statistics indicated that only 40% of K-12 teachers reported using computers frequently in the classrooms and of those who reported using it, 60% reported using it for administrative duties and creating presentations, with only 9% of teachers reporting the use of more innovative digital technologies such as wikis and blogs in their classroom (NCES, 2010). In a time of budget cuts

and limited funding across all educational levels, opportunities for professional development in technology and purchasing of the latest software on classroom computers have dramatically decreased (NCES, 2010).

Many teachers may not be aware that a variety of free software application options exist and that many of them do not need installation—software has become a service. Increasingly, many software applications are available via subscription over the Internet. Users create a sign-in profile and access the tools through their browser. Open source, cloud-based applications are developed and maintained on the providers' server. In this article, effective cloud-based technologies are provided that are designed to assist teachers to engage learners in the language learning process. According to Aaron and Roche (2011), "Today's millennial students are digital natives. Technology is so entrenched in their lives that they don't even realize they are using technology" (p. 101).

What are cloud-based technologies?

According to Diaz (2011), cloud-based or Web 2.0 technologies "...refer to the vast array of socially oriented, free or nearly free, web-based tools" (p. 95). O'Reilly (2005), one of the proponents of the Web 2.0 term, describes it as "a collaborative environment in which users have the opportunity to contribute to a growing knowledge base, assist in the development of web-based tools, and participate in online communities" (as cited in Stevenson & Liu, 2010, p. 233). The quality and the survival of Web 2.0 tools are dependent on the quality and consistency of their contributors.

Web 2.0 technologies provide several affordances including: communication, collaboration, free and premium payment structure, connectedness, cloud computing, community, contextualization, and convergence (Solomon & Schrum, 2014). Cloud computing is comprised of products and services that are all housed within a networked data center - optimizing costs and providing many free services. Increasingly open source, inviting a community of developers to contribute to the development of the application or service, and delivered through a browser.

According to Thomas (2011), the benefits of cloud computing to academics include the following:

- used as a personal workspace;
- used by many as an alternative to institutionally controlled virtual learning environments with personalized tools to meet their needs and preferences;
- enhances teaching and learning;
- provides opportunity for ubiquitous computing;
- ensures real-time automated back-ups;
- creates a repository of information that stays with a person regardless of their workplace; and
- provides a large amount of processing power comparable to supercomputing.

Web 2.0 tools provide educators with tool categories to enhance their teaching and promote student learning, as depicted in Figure 1.

Annotation and Note Taking	Communication and Online Discussion Tools	Publishing and Drawing Tools	Virtual Worlds Simulations/ Games
Webcast Tools	Learning Management Systems	Portals and Social Bookmarking	Wikis
Blogs	Online Whiteboards	Quiz and Activities Generators	Wearable Technologies Surface Technologies
Calendars	Maps	Really Simply Syndication (RSS)	Mixed Reality
Collaborative Writing Tools	Microblogging and Microblog Readers	Timelines	Tutoring Programs
Educator and Student Communities	Photo Editing and Photo Sharing	Video Sharing	Platform Environments

Figure 1. Web 2.0 Tool Categories (adapted from Solomon & Schrum, 2014)

Thomas and Peterson (2014), while surveying the research, have observed that “Web 2.0 has been an enduring and developing theme in language research and has broadened its focus from a concentration on the four skills to wider areas including learning collaboration, intercultural communication and L2 learner identity” (p. i).

There are over 3,000 Web 2.0 applications (<http://www.go2web20.net/>), which are constantly being updated. According to Diaz (2011), “one challenge is the sheer volume of tools that exist with no simple way to narrow the search process for a faculty member looking to select and implement one” (p. 97). Following is the classification proposed by Diaz (2011), namely communicative, collaborative, documentative, generative, and interactive cloud-based or Web 2.0 tools.

Examples of Effective Cloud-based Tools in a Foreign/Second Language Classroom

Communicative Web 2.0 Tools

Communicative Web 2.0 tools are used to share ideas, information, and creations (Diaz, 2011). Examples of these tools are blogs, podcasts, and video chats. In the meta-analysis on Web 2.0 and second language learning, Wang and Vasquez (2012) stated that out of all Web 2.0 tools, blogs and wikis have been studied the most. However, these two represent only a small entity of the larger Web 2.0 universe (Oliver, 2010).

Blogs provide the following pedagogical benefits:

- develop thinking, analytical and communication skills;
- promote authentic assessment opportunities (e.g., e-portfolio);
- support second language development for at-risk students (Gebhard, Shin, & Seger, 2011);
- promote reading and writing skills through meaningful tasks and extended readership (Ducate & Lomicka, 2005);
- serve as a medium of individualized self-expression in a form of a personal journal writing (Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008);
- cultivate interaction in a form of a threaded discussion (Campbell, 2003);
- allow access to entries by experts and other learners referenced within a blog;
- develop intercultural communicative competence (Elola & Oskoz, 2008); and
- encourage individual authorship in a larger, interactive community (Sykes, Oskoz, & Thorne, 2008).

Blogs exist in many shapes and forms. They are free, easy to create, and easy to customize. For example, using Blogger.com (<https://blogger.com/home>), which is part of the Google+™ platform, will let users choose their own name or pseudonym to connect with readers, allowing them to share their content on the web and on Google+™.

Other free popular blogging sites are Wordpress.com (<https://en.blog.wordpress.com/>), Tumblr.com (<https://www.tumblr.com/dashboard>), and Weebly.com (<http://www.weebly.com/>). The last site provides five free pages, after which a small fee is charged.

Real-time blogging, which is called microblogging, is taking a blog a step further by allowing opinions to be documented and shared synchronously. An example of microblogging is Twitter (<https://twitter.com/>). Microblogging, is a cross between blogging and text messaging and is limited to 140 characters. Tweeting is synonymous with short message service. Tweets can originate from a variety of devices and platforms and can be customized to limit followers and viewers.

According to Borau, Ulrich, Feng, and Shen (2009), microblogging has the following pedagogical benefits:

- provides answers from experts;
- provides a venue for low stakes writing tasks—students can choose a topic and grammatical structure, fitting their proficiency level;
- increases student motivation through the sense of connectedness and instant feedback;
- promotes communicative and cultural competence;
- ensures cognitive support—opportunity to explain, clarify, and compare thinking;
- enables custom messaging, and live and thematic data collection.

By using the #Hashtags.org website (<https://www.hashtags.org/>), students and teachers can organize hashtags to find relevant information for research purposes.

The membership is free and by registering, certain benefits can be obtained, such as adding hashtag definitions, researching and publicizing one's hashtag, following people and freely contributing to discussion in forums. TweetDeck™ (<https://about.twitter.com/products/tweetdeck>) serves as a Twitter aggregator, which helps track and organize tweets by theme.

Tips for classroom application:

- explain concept for microblogging and establish goals for the project;
- pick simple topics for novice students and practice brevity;
- provide time for responses inside and outside of class;
- collate responses (Twitter Client/Cloud) – TweetDeck™;
- ask students to follow newsfeeds in the target language to build vocabulary, acquire cultural information, and practice reading and writing in the language by interacting with native speakers of the target language;
- create a small group discussion by asking students to tweet their group's consensus on a debate question or a news report, or summarize the group's thoughts and ideas on a story, poem, or song; and
- have students start a book club by asking them to share their insights and recommendations for books they have read in the target language.

Other communicative tools are webcasts—podcasts (audio broadcasting) and vodcasts (video broadcasting). Little computer literacy is required to use and create webcasts. As with vodcasts, most podcasts can be downloaded free of charge through iTunes (<http://www.apple.com/itunes>) or other websites. Students will need a computer with speakers and microphone to listen and record their own podcasts. The free podcasting website such as PodOmatic (<https://www.podomatic.com>) allows teachers and students to produce simple podcasts. Users can register for a free account with limited storage space and can record their own podcast directly from the website or can upload previously recorded sound files and then publish the recording to their own podcast webpage. Additionally, users can search PodOmatic's collection of podcasts, especially those in the Education category (Bittenbender & Von Koss, 2008). Vocaroo (<http://vocaroo.com>) is a voice recording service that has no limit on how long one's recording can be. Other free, open source, cross-platform software for recording and editing sound are Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net>) and Audioboom for Education (<http://audioboom.com/about/education>). In the case of Audacity, users will need to download the application to their desktop to create their recordings. Audioboom provides students a virtual space to create their audio recording and provides teachers with thousands of audio clips to help create lesson plans, support their classrooms, and enhance student learning.

Collaborative Web 2.0 Tools

The purpose of collaborative Web 2.0 tools is to promote working with others in a shared work area (Diaz, 2011). Wikis, editing/writing tools, and virtual communities of practices are just a few examples of tools in this category.

A wiki, namely, Wikispaces™, can be utilized as a peer-editing platform for students. With respect to the technological affordances, it is a free, easily accessible, and user-friendly tool provided via the Internet.

Wikis provide the following pedagogical benefits:

- support both teaching and learning with the emphasis on a learner-centered community;
- promote a variety of interactions such as peer-peer and students-teacher interactions in a safe and
- comfortable environment;
- facilitate authoring flexibility, content creation, and the generation of new knowledge;
- support collaborative writing through open editing and review structure;
- promote language development through meaningful interactions;
- add possibility for asynchronous communications through discussion forums and personal messaging
- and synchronous communication through chat; and
- secure backups as well as support flexible environment by reverting a page and using autosave (Elola, 2010; Singh, Harun, & Fareed, 2013).

Popular wiki sites include PBworks™ (<http://www.pbworks.com/>) and Wikispaces™ (<http://www.wikispaces.com/>). Teachers can create a free classroom wiki space where collaborative writing, social newsfeed, group or individual work organization, and student progress can be monitored.

Tips for using wikis in a foreign/second language classroom:

- familiarize students with the purpose of wikis and how to create an account on wiki sites;
- make wiki pages organized with a clear and easy-to-use navigation menu for easy access and editing;
- create tasks rich in content that are aligned with course outcomes;
- build a discussion forum or chat on every page;
- provide peer editing tasks over several classroom periods;
- incorporate journaling and book discussions - class, group, or individual;
- assign portfolio wikis based on content instruction or writing; and
- ask students to present content and language using wikis (see Appendix A).

Google Drive™ (<https://www.google.com/drive/>) is another example of collaborative Web 2.0 tools. In 2012, Google Drive™ was released, which provides file storage and synchronization services and enables cloud storage, file sharing, and collaborative editing. Part of Google Drive™ is Google Docs™, which is regarded as a premier cloud-based productivity application.

Google Drive™ provides the following benefits:

- offers editing, collaboration, and integration with other Google functions;
- contains free web-based word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation application;
- offers creation and naming of documents, spreadsheets, and presentations in Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides, which can be later edited, shared, and worked on with others;

- enables users to create new documents or upload an existing document in a variety of file formats (files are saved automatically in the latest version; however, a revision history can be downloaded with all contributors' editions in previous versions of the same document and any change made in the Google Docs alerts contributors, making it user-friendly and timely);
- enables embedding of YouTube™ videos into Google presentations;
- enables users to create charts, graphs, diagrams, and shapes, using Google Drawing™;
- provides users with the ability to create surveys and online assessment items, using Google Forms™ (data is collected and placed into a spreadsheet, which can be transformed into charts);
- offers sharing privileges which sets it apart from its competitors—an owner of a document can share publicly, share with specific users, and share privately (owners can assign editing privileges, and up to 50 users might be editing simultaneously in real time with a maximum of 200 participants present; and
- can be used to help educators and their students to collaborate among and between each other, using discussions, peer review, collaborative writing, projects, reflections, journals, and other learning activities.

Another application suite is Zoho™ (<http://www.zoho.com/>). Zoho™ is free for personal and professional use offering pricing plans for businesses. The suite offers three categories, such as collaboration applications, business applications, and productivity applications. The collaboration applications offer chat, docs, discussions, mail, meeting, projects, share and Wiki. The business applications offer businesses the opportunity to organize their books and invoices, recruit people, and produce reports. The productivity applications provide calendar, notebook, planner, sheet show, writer, Zoho for Microsoft Sharepoint™, and Zoho Plug-in for Microsoft Office™.

Interactive Web 2.0 Tools

The purpose of interactive Web 2.0 tools is to exchange information, ideas, resources, and materials with each other (Diaz, 2011). Thorne, Black, and Sykes (2009) point out that second language classrooms are often isolated from contexts and opportunities “for committed, consequential, and longer term communicative engagement afforded by new technologies (p. 804). While it may be true for formal classroom settings, “informal use of SNSs [social-networking sites] outside of the classroom is growing as students make social bonds that they seek to build and maintain over time and distance” (Reinhardt & Zander, 2011, p. 326).

Social-networking sites, such as Facebook™, LiveMocha™, Whyville™, and others promote interactions with experienced members of a community and help novice learners develop discrete linguistic competence as well as sensitivity to patterns of interaction (Reinhardt & Zander, 2011). They allow users to develop online communities of shared interests (Stevenson & Liu, 2010).

Facebook™ (<http://facebook.com>) is the most visited online social networking site, with more than 1.3 billion users as of June 2014. LiveMocha™ (<http://livemocha.com>) is an online language learning community. The website provides instructional materials in 35 languages and is a platform for speakers to interact with and help each other with new languages. There are 12 million registered users from 196 countries around the globe. Registration, lesson, and access to native speakers is free (see Appendix B). Whyville™ (<http://www.whyville.net>) is a free social networking site that was developed for educational purposes. It has over 100 games and activities covering a wide range of subjects. It provides access to tools for teachers by signing students up as a part of their Whyville class (see Appendix C).

The social networking sites (SNS) provide the following pedagogical benefits:

- help students co-construct new identities (Black, 2009; Lam, 2009);
- serve as a platform for community building, participation, and identity construction (Blattner & Flori, 2009);
- develop communicative and intercultural competence (Reinhardt & Zander, 2011);
- enhance student motivation, classroom climate, and affective learning (Mazer, Murphy, & Simmonds, 2007);
- help students learn pragmatics, build relationships, experiment with multiple identities, and practice self-authorship - “writing/remixing of the self” (McBride, 2009, p. 40); and
- serve as a platform for relationship maintenance, self-presentation, and social learning functions, such as sharing creative works, peer support, and schoolwork help (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009).

Tips for classroom application:

- ask students to complete a questionnaire based on their usage of SNS and other technologies;
- ask students to listen to a National Public Radio story about Facebook use and privacy concerns, and discuss their answers based on the above-mentioned questionnaire in class;
- review various features of SNS (for example, Facebook™), such as layout, settings, and possible activities users can do. Ask students to create a profile, friend the instructor, and join the class group;
- introduce a social networking game from one of these categories, such as trivia and word games (Trivia Crack™, Words with Friends™, Scrabble™, etc.), Bingo games (Bingo Blitz™, The Price is Right™, Bingo Bash™, etc.), simulation games (Farmville2™, Kitchen Scramble™), board games, or others. The purpose is to develop critical awareness of digital gaming as a literacy practice (Gee, 2004). There are many SNS activities that are language mediated, which involves rule learning, message reading, and interacting with other players through chatting, wall posting, and gift giving (Reinhardt & Zander, 2011);

- ask students to focus on positive and negative aspects of game playing, which in turn promotes their metacognitive skills, as a culminating critical thinking activity; and
- ask students to join groups on Facebook who exclusively interact in the target language and ask them to observe written interaction between the members on the wall or in the discussion forums.

These tasks open new learning opportunities for students who usually have little exposure to language variation. As Blattner and Flori (2009) point out, “Groups on Facebook are often associated with linguistic- geographical pride and also present basic images associated with the main concept introduced, such as flags or landmarks, powerful visual cues for certain types of learners. Consequently, language variation and other important linguistic and cultural issues can effortlessly be presented to L2 learners by consulting groups” (np). In addition, observing the Group interactions on Facebook™ can help language learners comprehend how language and culture are interrelated and how certain speech acts are difficult to translate from their native to the target language due to cultural reasons. Finally, the bridging-activities model (Thorne & Reinhardt, 2008) is designed “to take advantage of the everyday, familiar qualities of online social literacy and community participation practices and leverage them for L2 learning purposes” (Reinhardt & Zander, 2011, p. 333). In this model, students bring internet-mediated L2 texts and practices of their own interest for analysis with the overall goal of developing critical language awareness. By allowing students to choose their own texts and practices, the authenticity of this practice is maintained. Teachers may guide their students to critically situate their own practices and analyze the register and genre-based features of these practices.

Documentative Web 2.0 Tools

The purpose of documentative Web 2.0 tools is to collect and/or present evidence of experiences, thinking over time, productions, etc. (Diaz, 2011). Examples of documentative web tools are blogs, videoblogs, e-portfolios, and wikis. Blogs and wikis have been previously discussed in this paper. In this section, videoblogs will be discussed.

According to Sykes, Oskoz, and Thorne (2008), “current blogging practices involve more than the written word. Three popular forms of multimedia blogging — audioblogging, moblogging, and vlogging — include the primary objective of blogging through multimedia as an addition to, or replacement of, textual postings” (p. 533). Multimedia blogs are organized by the time and date posted similar to text blog posts. While audioblogging allows users to record their voice as a blog entry, moblogging allows them to upload pictures from cell phones or digital devices while documenting and charting experience in real time. Videoblogs, or vlogs, on the other hand, are tools for language learning that can document both verbal and non-verbal language, which are paramount for language communication, and recorded with the use of a video camera and uploaded to the net (Hung, 2011). Using video creating tools, such as Animoto™ (<https://animoto.com/pro/>

education), Dvolver Moviemaker™ (<http://www.dvolver.com/moviemaker/make.html>), and YouTube™ (<http://www.youtube.com/create>) allows users to create their vlogs.

Vlogs provide the following pedagogical benefits:

- motivate student learning;
- foster a community of practice;
- increase opportunities to practice the target language, thus honing communicative competence;
- develop critical thinking and reflective skills by analyzing one's own verbal and non-verbal communication; and
- help learners become autonomous by monitoring their learning process and self-assessing their progress (Hung, 2011).

Tips for classroom application:

- use TeachHub.com (<http://www.teachhub.com/video-writing-prompts>) for ideas on writing prompts and popular videos;
- use Animoto™ to turn photos and videos clips into a video slideshow in minutes — upload photos, choose music from the copyright free music selection or upload one's own by providing a citation, and click “create video” — by creating a PowerPoint™ first with 10-12 slides and saving it as jpeg, it will make it easier to upload to Animoto™ (see Appendix D);
- use Dvolver™ to make a movie by selecting a background and a sky, a plot (*rendez-vous*, pick-up, etc.), two characters, typing up to 100 text characters per character's line, selecting background music, and sending it to others via email (see Appendix E).

Generative Web 2.0 Tools

The purpose of generative Web 2.0 tools is to create something new that can be seen and/or used by others (Diaz, 2011). Examples of generative web tools are mashups, virtual communities of practice, and virtual learning worlds. Mashup™ is a web page or web application that uses content from more than one source to create a single new service displayed in a single platform. Popular mashup platforms are MyYahoo™ (<https://my.yahoo.com/>) and Yahoo! Pipes™ (<http://pipes.yahoo.com/pipes/>). On the other hand, virtual worlds, such as Second Life™ (<http://secondlife.com/>), There™ (<http://www.there.com/>), and Active Worlds™ (<http://web.activeworlds.com/>) allow users to experiment and interact with a wide variety of norms of communication and social interaction. For example, in Second Life™ users select an avatar of their chosen gender, create their own clothing, and modify their behavior based on the presence or absence of other participants. Their behavior should be tailored to suit a certain social context, such as a classroom, a company office, or a tropical island, to name a few. The 3D world of Second Life™ attracts both language teachers and students because it can be a source of authentic interaction with target language speakers and a venue to develop intercultural communication.

These tools provide the following pedagogical benefits:

- Mashups develop ubiquitous computing environment, especially in accessing, managing, organizing, sharing, and recommending information (Huang, Yang, & Liaw, 2012).
- Online virtual worlds help build intercultural communication among users where complex communicative skills such as pragmatics are developed. Sykes, Oskoz, and Thorne (2008) posit, “Full participation in virtually rendered spaces requires pragmatic control of the communicative norms local to a specific online community as well as mastery of the interface and virtual topography” (p. 535). Users take on numerous, simulated identities and participant roles, which in turn help them experiment and practice communication skills in diverse social contexts and settings.

The following tasks may be incorporated with the help of the virtual learning worlds in a language classroom:

- Students may participate in virtual field trips by visiting places they want to see. They are invited to comment on what they see and do. They can look up information while they are virtually somewhere else.
- They may research a city and give a virtual city tour guide to other students online. Students exercise asking and answering for directions, using a virtual city map.
- Learners may interview others on a research topic of their choice by meeting others in a virtual world, which is less stressful for more anxious students than in real life.
- They may prepare a presentation or role play tasks, such as going to a restaurant, doctor, and such, with props and physical movement or gestures.

Conclusion

As Thorne and Smith (2011) posit, “CALL is both exciting and daunting due to its rapidly changing tableau of tools, environments, cultures, and expressive possibilities.... and it is important to recognize that technology and second language acquisition have a complex and dialectical relationship with one another” (p. 274).

Cloud-based technologies, or Web 2.0 tools described in this paper, focus on social connectivity and are driven by user contributions and interactions; they support the collaboration, negotiation of meaning, and sharing information necessary for social and active learning. Appendix F provides other Web 2.0 tools to facilitate student engagement, motivation, and desire for language learning.

With the advances in technology, education researchers have been freely using the term Web 3.0 in various blogs and discussion forums (Gaines, 2011). Web 3.0, the Semantic Web, is a place where machines can read web pages as well as a place where software engines are used to find and integrate information, and provide intelligent responses for human consumption. An enormous benefit of Web 3.0 is the ability to access data anywhere. Web 3.0 technologies, like its predecessor Web 2.0, “once stable and well developed will further transform” education (Hussain, 2013, p. 45). As new technologies become readily available for educators

and students, they should be carefully considered as potential instructional and learning tools in and out of the classroom. Educators are asked to carefully examine the possibilities of these technologies and design meaningful tasks for their students, so authentic use of language, content, and literacy development is encouraged while skills in technological literacy are being gained.

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Appendix A



English Language Learner Services

- 🏠 Wiki Home
- 🔄 Recent Changes
- 📄 Pages and Files
- 👤 Members

home

✎ Edit 🗨 7 🔒 301 ⋮

Announcements:

Professional Development!!!

ESL Curriculum Day 2015

Spring of 2015 SIOP and ExC-ELL workshops now in MyTalent!

Each image in the table is a button to take you to a page or a link:

The Standards	Lesson Planning and Curriculum Resources	Professional Development for TELLs
21st Century Learning	District-Supported Practices and Resources	Involving Parents
iPad		 <p style="font-size: x-small;">Sean Story's SIOP Website</p>

The Standards

- Content – NC Standard Course of Study
- Language – WIDA

Lesson Planning Resources

- Curriculum Guides
- ESL
- ELA
- Rigor with ELLs

Grade Specific Resources

- Elementary
- Middle
- High

ELL Committee

- ELL Chairs Documents

Technology: 21st Century Learning

- Webinars
- The Everything Series
- Google Classroom
- Apps for Devices
- QbaVerse

SIOP: SIOP Activities by Component

- ExC-ELL

Appendix B

Livemocha
Member Sign In

Free Online Language Learning

[Create an Account](#)



Learn

Learn to actually speak a new language (or two). Trust us – you can do it!



Join

Registration, online language lessons, and access to native speakers for FREE.



Explore

Explore the world through practice and conversations – with millions of people from over 190 countries.

Languages | Methodology

Join today for FREE!

Livemocha Community | Submitting Exercises | Who's in the Community?



Creating a World Without Barriers

Free online language learning with lessons, courses and other language-learning activities. Our fun and effective language lessons are available in 35 languages. Registration, lessons, and access to native speakers are FREE!

Appendix C



Members log in here. Forgot your password?


Welcome to Whyville!

As a citizen of Whyville, you can:

- Design your own look
- Chat and play games
- Hang out with friends
- Much more!

Click on a head to make your face.



GAMES

WORLD

COMMUNITY

What makes Whyville truly special are our citizens who come from all corners of the world. Whyville citizens, a.k.a. Whyvillians, bring Whyville to life! They design face parts, start their own businesses, write for the town newspaper, post in the forums, give each other makeovers, sell and trades, even run for the Whyville Senate.

Click on one of the examples below and join in the fun!












KIDS
PARENTS
TEACHERS



Nov 15 - Team up and test your math skills while earning claims at the SCION SOLUTIONS QUIZ GAME!

TODAY 08:00 PM - Speedy at simple math? Prove it during MATH EXPRESSIONS in the Greek Theater!

TODAY 01:00 PM - Be the first to find the hidden words in a game of LETTER SQUASH at the Greek Theater!

NOV BIOlympics Triple Day! Earn TRIPLE THE CLAIMS ALL DAY LONG competing in the BIOlympics Arena! (Bonus claims awarded the next day.)

NOV Want to MEET THE MAKERS of Whyville? CHAT WITH CITY WORKERS in the Club Why Chat Room!

OCT HAUNTINGTON MANSION welcomes all to our annual HALLOWEEN PARTY ALL WEEKEND LONG! Visit the outside of Dr. Lull's and chat the secret phrase ('straw' spelled backwards) to be teleported to the party!

OCT LOG IN as much as you can during October and you may get some PEARLS or a WHY-PASS as present!

OCT TEAM BRAINS vs. TEAM BLOOD! Zombies vs. Vampires vs. Humans all day Wednesday!

OCT HABITAT BUILDER TRIPLE DAY - EXTENDED! Earn TRIPLE THE CLAIMS ALL DAY LONG while building homes for animals! (Bonus claims awarded the next day.)

Selected Awards and Sponsors:



Appendix D



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Educators can apply for a free Animoto Plus account for use in the classroom. Its powerful features can be used to create stunning presentations incorporating images, video clips, music and text.

“ Animoto is one of the marvels of Web 2.0. It is a wonderful initiative and a true benefit to teachers and students. — *Discovery Education* ”

What makes Animoto special?

Animoto provides an array of tools for creating videos in your classroom. Browse some of the features of our Plus account below then check out individual case studies to see how others are already using us.

Cinematic A.I.

Animoto automatically analyzes music, photos and video clips, and orchestrates a custom video, leaving you free to focus on the content and narrative of your videos.

Spotlight

Spotlight lets you give specific image added prominence and screen time in your video.

Include text

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How educators are using Animoto in the classroom



Funky Function



The Alphabet



Civil Rights



Bridge Building

Appendix E



Appendix F

Voxopop™	http://www.voxopop.com	talk discussion board
Go Animate™	http://goanimate.com	create comics
Wordle™	http://www.wordle.net	word clouds
Tagxedo™	http://www.tagxedo.com	word clouds in shapes
Bubblr™	http://www.pimpumpum.net/en/content/bubblr	comic strips using Flickr™ photos
Piclits™	http://piclits.com	creative writing using images
Five Card Flickr Story™	hp://5card.cogdogblog.com/play.php?suit=5cardtt	create a story using 5 pictures
Issuu™	http://issuu.com	make a magazine or newsletter
Storybird™	http://storybird.com	collaborative storytelling
DropBox™	http://www.dropbox.com	filesharing
Slideshare™	http://www.slideshare.net	share powerpoints
Scribd™	http://www.scribd.com	share documents and PDFs
Polleverywhere™	http://www.polleverywhere.com	class poll
Brainshark™	http://www.brainshark.com/my-brainshark	do voiceover with PowerPoint™
Jing™	http://www.techsmith.com/jing	screencast
Quizlet™	http://quizlet.com/	create and use flashcards

8

An Alternative to the Language Laboratory: Online and Face-to-Face Conversation Groups

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Abstract

An alternative approach to the language laboratory may foster much needed additional communicative practice for foreign languages learners to achieve higher levels of oral proficiency. This study proposes an alternative language laboratory experience that promotes communication and practice of oral language skills. This study investigated second language students' perceptions about an alternative approach to the language laboratory requirement in their Spanish intermediate courses. Students participated in conversation hours online through Second Life and face-to-face as a laboratory requirement.

Introduction

Opportunities to develop oral proficiency in the traditional language classroom are very limited as college language courses usually only meet between three and four hours each week. The language laboratory is usually where students go to reinforce and practice what is learned in the classroom. However, this experience may have limited value as language laboratories were designed with audio-lingual applications inspired by the late 19th century study of phonetics (MacDonald, 2011). Students work on computerized repetitive drills for listening,

reading, and grammar with no opportunity for interpersonal communication or social interaction. This format is not sufficient to promote the development of communicative competence. Further, and as suggested by Weyers (2010), students learning foreign languages need more hours of language exposure and instruction than the typical college curriculum provides.

Virtual environments, or multi-user virtual, (MUVES) web-based, three-dimensional, immersive environments offer virtual innovative platforms as a means to communicate, including a text-based and voice-based chat (Bell & Trueman, 2008). Findings of previous studies in the area of virtual environments and language learning have shown the potential for using this technology in promoting language learning (e.g., Deutschmann, Panichi, & Molka-Danielsen, 2009; Diehl & Prins, 2008; Shih & Yang, 2008; Shively, 2010; Von der Emde, Schenider, & Kötter, 2001; Wang, Song, Xia, & Yan, 2009). McDonald (2011) proposes the implementation of a virtual language laboratory without one specific location that provides students with the assistive technological tools to enhance the L2 learning experience. Virtual environments can provide the tools and capabilities to promote communicative practice for distance learners, or a virtual language laboratory to complement courses on campus.

A review of the literature revealed a lack of research regarding students' perceptions about face-to-face versus online conversational practice. Therefore, this study aims to address the following question: What are the differences and similarities of the perceptions of students' participating in virtual and face-to-face conversation groups?

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated language learning through social interaction thereby altering the language laboratory experience from one of individualized computer-assisted practice to a language laboratory centered with communicative activities to promote conversation and social interaction. Students practiced the target language in a low-anxiety setting, with native-speaker tutors. The participants (intermediate Spanish college students) were divided in two groups to participate in conversation hours online through Second Life and face-to-face. This study explored the perceptions of these language learners regarding an alternative approach to the language laboratory requirement.

Literature Review

The Traditional Language Laboratory

Most of the literature regarding the effectiveness of the language laboratory dates back to the 1960s and 1970s (Higgins, 1969; Hocking, 1964; Turner, 1968). A study conducted at the Defense Language Institute in Monterrey revealed that students in the experimental group (lab use) had superior sound perception and pronunciation over the control group (no lab use), however there were no differences noted in grammar use (Hocking, 1964). Language laboratory experiments conducted in 1962-1963 by the Bureau of Audiovisual Instruction of the New York City Board of Education called

The Relative Effectiveness of Four Types of Language Laboratory Experiences concluded that the record-playback daily had more significant learning gains when compared with audio-active daily, record play-back once weekly, audio-active one weekly, and control group with no use of any laboratory equipment. Green (1965) expressed concern regarding validity of the study and questioned the interpretation of the results of the study.

Many practitioners have described the language laboratory and the audio-lingual method as mechanistic and as “an artificial, constraining, and even stultifying environment” (Mueller, McCavana, Ramsden & Shelly, 1987, p. 588). Lavine (1992) examined the main problems of the traditional audio laboratory including the teachers and dissatisfaction of lab instructional materials, but also the negative perceptions from the teachers and students of the laboratory. Salaberry (2001) noted that few quality empirical analyses had been conducted in the field regarding the pedagogical effectiveness of language laboratories due to problems with collection, scoring, and analysis of the data, such as apparent lack of control groups, lack of long-term studies, lack of systemic analysis of empirical research questions, and the use of post-hoc explanations that, at times, contradicted the analysis of the data gathered for the specific study. Therefore, more research is needed in the practical and effective uses of the current language laboratory.

However, most literature and research evidence revealed that the majority of students liked and preferred the autonomy given by the use of the language laboratory and the additional practice time that it provided (Mueller et al., 1987; Salaberry, 2001). The technological capabilities of the computer and language laboratories of today allow for experimentation with new approaches. The advances in technology and the propagation of the Internet have overcome the limitations of the language laboratory. Thorne & Payne (2005) described the generational shifts in Internet technologies and their proliferation and uses, with the majority of efforts focused on tools that support or mediate intercultural communication for purposes of L2 learning like contemporary environments such as blogs, wikis, podcasting, device-agnostic forms of Synchronous Computer Mediated Communication (SCMC), and advances in intelligent computer-assisted language learning (CALL).

Virtual Worlds used for Language Learning

Von der Emde, Schneider, & Kötter (2001) studied the pedagogical benefits of using a text-based virtual learning environment (MOO's) for language learning between German and American students. This qualitative study found that virtual environments provide a context for authentic communication, authentic materials, autonomous learning and peer-teaching, individualized learning, elements of experimentation and play, and students acting as researchers. Shih & Yang (2008) performed an ethnographic study about situated language learning in a collaborative virtual three-dimensional environment. This study found that students' perceptions of the use of virtual environments had a great impact on their overall educational experience. Students felt motivated to use the virtual world, and they felt more relaxed when communicating through their avatars. Similarly, Deutschmann, Panichi, & Molka-Danielsen (2009) found positive responses when they compared student participation (turn-length and

turn-taking patterns) using the virtual environment Second Life (SL), however, they concluded that more research is needed to seriously evaluate the potential benefits of the virtual environment in language learning. Diehl & Prins (2008) findings revealed that participation in SL enhanced participants' intercultural literacy by fostering the use of multiple languages, providing opportunities for cross-cultural encounters and friendships, and promoting greater awareness of insider cultural perspectives and openness towards new viewpoints. Also, respondents from the survey given in SL lived in 12 different countries and spoke fourteen different languages with English being the most common, followed by Spanish, and Portuguese. The results of this study show that SL is an ideal environment to meet people from different cultures and that speak different languages. Wang, Song, Xia, & Yan (2009) performed an action research study that investigated students' readiness and perspectives when integrating SL into a language program. Results showed that students were ready to use SL and that students had positive feelings towards SL as a language-learning platform.

Methodology

Context

While the majority of research criticizes the audio-lingual approach traditionally utilized in language laboratories, very little research has explored innovative ideas to implement in the language laboratory. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate second language students' perceptions on an alternative approach to the language laboratory requirement in their Spanish intermediate courses. Students participated in conversation hours online through Second Life and face-to-face as a laboratory requirement.

Participants

The participants consisted of 62 college students enrolled in five sections of intermediate Spanish classes. The participants were selected by convenience depending on the course section in which they were enrolled in order to keep the same instructor for each treatment group. The courses selected for this study were Spanish language classes at the intermediate level designed with a language laboratory requirement of one-credit hour. Students enrolled in intermediate courses have taken at least one year of college-level Spanish or have otherwise qualified through a placement exam. Participants included 49 female students and 13 male students. From the total 62 participants, 11% (seven students) were Spanish majors and 50% (31 students) were completing a minor in Spanish. The other 39% (24 students) had a different major and minor. The majority (97%) of the students were native speakers of English. One student was a native speaker of French and one student was exposed to Spanish as a young child.

Procedures

The study compared students' perceptions of two types of conversation hours, face-to-face and virtual, aimed at improving second language oral proficiency. The virtual environment, Second Life, was used as a meeting place for the online

conversation hours to practice communicative activities in the target language. The face-to-face conversation hours performed the same activities but met in person in a conference room at a university. The goal for each activity was the improvement of communicative competence with a focus on oral proficiency skills. The activities were diverse and students had to perform interviews, role-plays, descriptions, and narrations in different contexts, all while using the target language.

All courses involved in this study met for 16 weeks, which included three hours per week of lecture and one hour of laboratory work. Students were required to attend the Spanish conversation hour as part of their laboratory work for 50 minutes each week, starting during the third week of classes. The face-to-face group met on campus in the foreign language conference room, while the online group met in a location within SL but accessed SL from different locations (on campus or off-campus). Some students accessed SL from the language computer laboratory on campus while others from their personal computers at home.

During the first two weeks of class, the online group was required to attend a SL training session in the computer laboratory. A total of five training sessions were held to accommodate students' schedules. In preparation for the SL training session, the SL program was installed on all computers in the laboratory. Instructors advised students in the virtual treatment group to bring their personal portable computers to the training sessions if possible. Many students brought their computers but experienced technical problems due to a slow wireless Internet connection. One student had a portable computer that did not comply with the minimum hardware requirements of SL. During the SL training session, students were introduced to SL by creating their account and completing a tutorial activity that provided training and guidance on how to use the various features of the virtual environment. Each student received an informational handout with specific instructions for downloading SL, technical requirements, location of the conversation hour, and tips for using the virtual environment (see Appendix B).

Students also visited the meeting place, or island in SL (places in SL are called islands). The researcher explained privacy issues online and requested that the students use aliases or nicknames for their avatars. Only the researcher knew the real identity of each avatar. Students were asked to use only Spanish within SL and not to leave the group or change their appearance during a given conversation hour. However, they could change their appearance and clothing from one conversation hour to another. Once all the students were in the indicated island, students tested their sound and speech capabilities. A total of four students failed to attend the SL training session. The researcher emailed the students the information packet and provided guidance on the phone, by email, and in person. Of these four students who missed the training session, two discontinued the treatment because they had difficulties using the SL software.

During the fourth week of classes, both groups started attending weekly conversation hours. The conversation hours for each group used the same native-speaker tutors and covered the same information. Students in both groups were

given a packet of handouts with the activities to complete for the semester (See Table 1).

Table 1. *Activities' Objectives & Descriptions*

Activities	Objectives	Description
Activity #1 <i>La entrevista</i> (Interview)	Students ask and answer questions.	Students interview a classmate regarding personal information and then introduce their partner to the group.
Activity #2 <i>Preguntas</i> (Questions)	Students ask questions when presented with pictures of their classmates.	Students bring pictures of places they have been and/or things they like to do, and their partner asks questions about the pictures.
Activity #3 <i>¿Adivina quién soy?</i> (Guess who?)	Students describe people and activities in different tenses.	Students choose a famous person, change their appearance to look like the person chosen, and prepare a short presentation in Spanish about the person.
Activity #4 <i>¿Dónde se encuentra...?</i> (Where is it located?)	Students ask for directions. Students will give directions.	Students present a scenario in which they have to find out how to get to different places in a city.
Activity #5 <i>Tour virtual</i> (Virtual tour)	Students describe, narrate, and persuade someone.	Students visit a place of their choice in Second Life or in real life. Each student describes the place they visited and narrates what people were doing in this place.
Activity #6 <i>Viaje al exterior</i> (Traveling abroad)	Students explain a process.	Students explain how to travel to a destination abroad.
Activity #7 <i>Una historia de amor</i> (A love story)	Students describe people and activities in the past.	Students chronologically reconstruct a love story when provided with pictures of the events.
Activity #8 <i>Celebraciones</i> (Holidays)	Students discuss activity] \ Bv using past, present, and future tenses.	In pairs, students talk about what they did during the spring vacation, what they usually do for New Year's Eve, and what they plan to do during the winter break.

The instructional method is a peer-based, task-oriented conversation hour as an adjunct to classroom instruction in a formal language-learning context. The activities designed for the conversation hours are a combination of action learning

(Revans, 1982) and strategies to develop communicative competence (Savignon, 1997). Learning modules based on action learning are characterized by closing the knowing-doing learning gap (Molka-Danielsen & Deutschmann, 2009, p. 91). There are four steps in the action learning cycle: explore, plan, act, and reflect. According to Molka-Danielsen & Deutschmann (2009) action learning works when using virtual worlds because this model allows students to engage in authentic tasks in which they can:

- Explore—content, context, locations, communities, or a combination of any of these roles;
- Plan and act—based on the roles explored in the previous step, a plan is formulated to put into action; and,
- Reflect—refers to reflection as a social process. After each activity, students will reflect on their own learning.

Participants explored a topic before meeting for the conversation hour, then planned their performance, acted out orally, and reflected on their learning (see Appendix C).

The researcher supervised and monitored all conversation hours to ensure that the content and the activities were carried out the same way in the face-to-face and online groups. The conversations were under the direction and guidance of a hired native speaker tutor. Two native speaking tutors worked during the conversation hours. There were two sessions a week for the face-to-face group and two sessions a week for the virtual group. Each tutor worked in both types of sessions. The tutor organized the students into pairs or small groups, explained the activities, kept students on task, and provided feedback.

The face-to-face group met in person on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the day in a conference room with the tutor. The conference room had a blackboard, chairs, and a round table. The online group met Tuesdays and Thursdays in the evening in an island in SL called “EDUNATION.” The area used also had a large board and chairs, and students performed the same language activities (see Figure 1 on the next page).

Students completed the activities in pairs using the target language to practice the interpersonal mode of communication. After all groups finished the activities, they regrouped to practice the presentational mode of communication as the students talked about their conversations to the whole group using the target language. Some activities took two meeting sessions to complete and the most difficult activities were repeated for additional practice. The same approaches were taken for all the groups as they worked on the same content and activities each week. Students were not required to write during the conversation hour as the focus was on speaking.

In Figure 2 (on the next page), some participants chose an avatar in the shape of an animal or even of the opposite gender (see Lion King and President Lincoln). Students were free to change the appearance of their avatar as many times as they wanted. For Activity #3 in which students chose a famous person to talk about, many students modified their avatar to the appearance of the famous person. The

participants in face-to face conversation hours could potentially also change their appearance by wearing a costume, but only two students dressed up in the face-to-face meeting.



Figure 1. Setting of the online conversation hour held in SL. The meeting place includes black chairs and an overhead projector on which websites or links can be uploaded to show to the class.

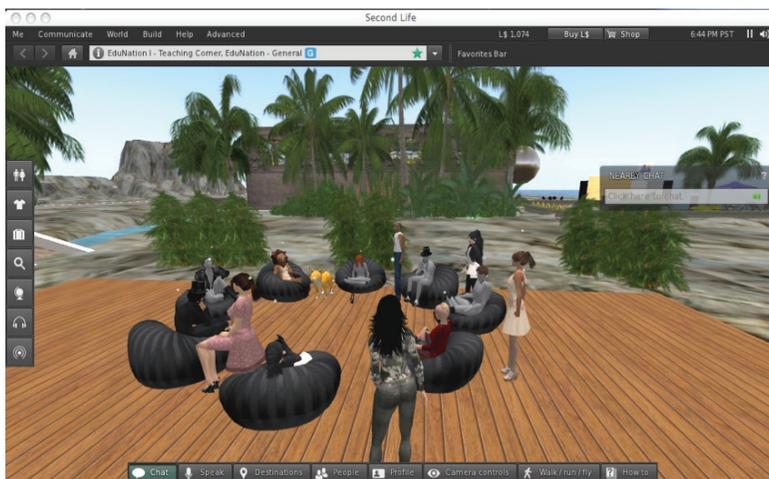


Figure 2. Affordances of an online conversation hour held in SL. The picture shows all the tools available to the students in the side bar and bottom bar. The researcher's avatar stands on the side while the conversation hour is in session.

Students were required to use the speech capabilities during the activities with their partners but they could also use text chat simultaneously to ask questions of

the tutor. As you can see in Figure 3, there are many buttons around the screen including the options of “chat” and “speak” at the bottom of the screen. Many students took advantage of the “chat” feature by asking the tutors for the meaning of words and how to say something they needed to communicate in Spanish. In addition, the tutor used both tools when making corrections, via voice chat and text chat during the activities and group presentations.

The activities were completed over a period of 11 weeks, including a make-up week for students who missed a session. Both groups were able to complete activities during the make-up sessions held in the respective format, face-to-face and online.

Data Collection

During the first week of classes, instructors informed the students about the opportunity to participate in the research project. The instructor offered to provide an alternative assignment if a student was not willing or able to participate. All the students agreed to participate in the study voluntarily. The internal review board for human subjects approved this protocol. Language background information, course information, and schedule information about each student was collected during the first week of classes using a student information sheet. The students’ information sheet helped in identifying outliers and obtaining additional relevant information about each participant (see Appendix A).

The week after all the conversation hours ended, the instructors provided the survey form for the students to complete to provide feedback about their experience in the conversation hours (see Appendix D). The survey included questions regarding the language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) used during the conversation hour, the communication tools used in SL (voice-chat and text-chat), ten scaled questions regarding learning and motivation and two open-ended questions asking what things they liked and would change about the conversation hours.

Data Analysis

The participants’ responses from the two sections of the survey were tabulated into Microsoft Excel for analysis. Frequencies of responses were calculated and then converted to percentages and graphs were created to visualize the data. In addition, the means of the ten Likert scale questions were calculated for each group for each of the participants (virtual and face-to face). Open-ended responses were transcribed and analyzed by looking for emerging themes in the responses that provided a more in-depth understanding of participants’ perspectives and experiences.

Results

A total of 53 students responded to the survey including 30 students from the face-to-face conversation hour and 23 students from the online conversation hour.

The results of the first section of the survey asked which skills they used the most when participating in the conversation hours. Participants in both groups rated “speaking” as the skill they most practiced during the conversation hour, including 58% of the online and 62% of the face-to-face group. However, the second most rated skill differed between the two treatment groups. In the online group, 38% of respondents rated the skill of “listening” as their most used skill, while in the face-to-face conversation group only nine percent agreed. The face-to-face conversation group selected the skills of “reading” and “writing” as their second most rated skills with 29% each (see Table 2).

Table 2. Skills most practiced during online conversation hours (N = 53)

Group	Speaking	Listening	Reading	Writing
Virtual	14 (58%)	9 (38%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)
Face-to-face	20 (62%)	3 (9%)	5 (16%)	4 (13%)

The next part of the survey consisted of ten scaled questions in which the participants rated their experience during the conversation hours. The Likert scale contained the conventional options of: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. The aggregated data results are listed in Table 3 for the virtual group and Table 4 for the face-to-face group.

Table 3. Virtual group’s perceptions in regards to the conversation hours (n=23)

Item	Not applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
1	1	0	0	7	10	5	3.74
2	0	1	5	7	7	3	3.26
3	1	0	0	2	17	3	3.87
4	0	2	4	5	10	2	3.26
5	1	4	5	8	4	1	2.57
6	1	2	7	8	4	1	2.65
7	1	0	0	2	12	8	4.09
8	1	1	1	10	6	4	3.35
9	0	6	6	7	3	1	2.43
10	1	1	0	5	7	9	3.87

Most of the face-to-face participants (97%) agreed or strongly agreed that the tutors in the conversation hour were helpful and knowledgeable, and only 65% from the online group. 30% percent from the online group reported a neutral rating (See Figure 5 on the next page). Participants were asked if the instructions on the activities were clear, both groups had similar responses. Most participants

in both groups agreed that the activities provided them with opportunities for communication.

Table 4. Face-to-face group’s perceptions in regards to the conversation hours (n=30)

Item	Not applicable	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
1	0	0	1	0	9	20	4.60
2	0	2	7	9	8	4	3.17
3	0	0	1	4	17	8	4.07
4	0	1	0	3	14	12	4.20
5	0	2	2	8	9	9	3.70
6	0	1	2	12	10	5	3.53
7	0	0	2	2	18	8	4.07
8	0	1	0	5	16	8	4.00
9	0	4	0	8	10	8	3.60
10	0	0	0	6	9	15	4.30

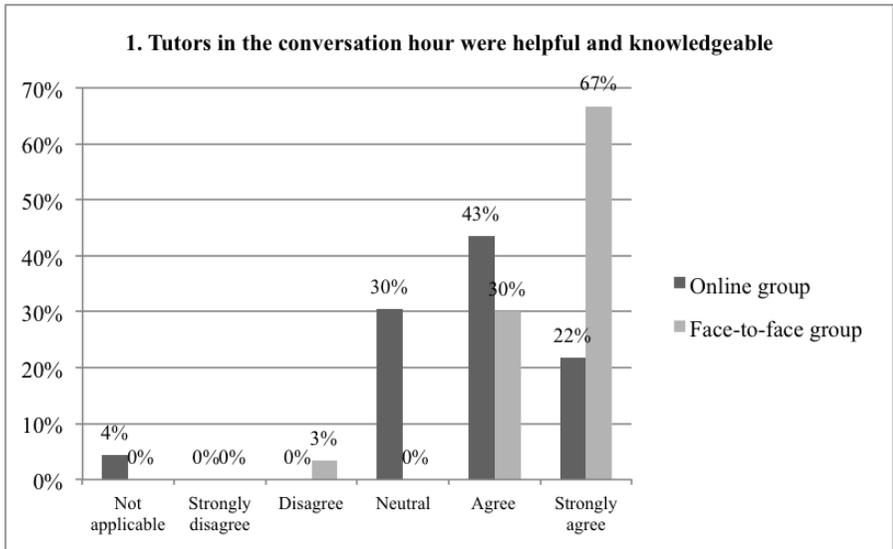


Figure 5. Tutors’ helpfulness and knowledge.

Most of the students in the face-to-face group (87%) thought the conversation hour was beneficial to their learning, while only 52% agreed or strongly agreed to the same statement (see Figure 6 on the next page). Similarly, 60% of participants

thought the conversation hour was fun and engaging in the face-to-face group, while only 21% from the online group agreed or strongly agreed (Figure 7 below).

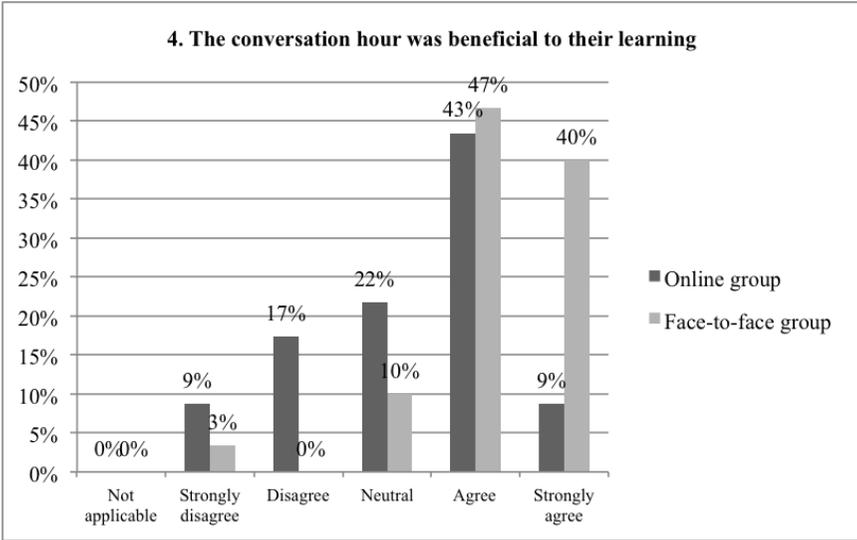


Figure 6. Perceived benefit from the conversation hour on learning.

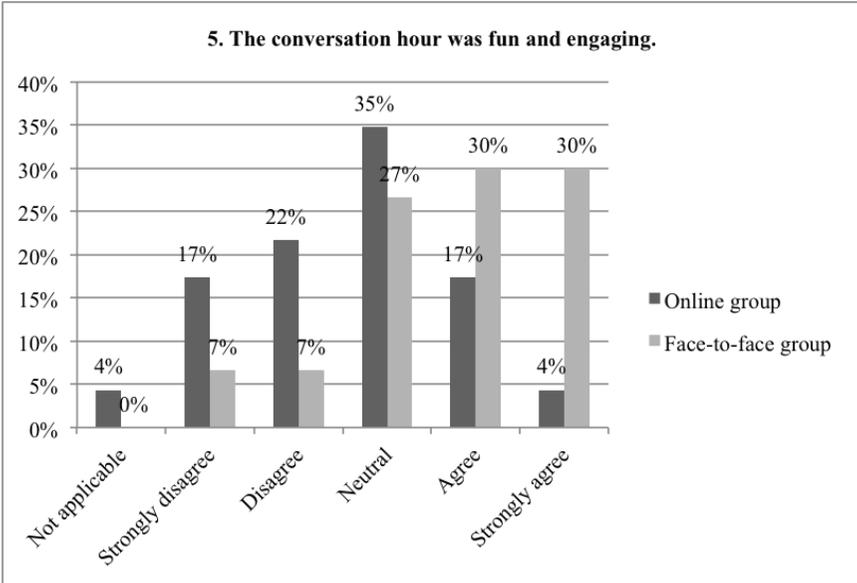


Figure 7. Participants' opinion about the conversation hour.

Participants responded that the conversation hour helped them perform better in class in only 21% of the cases from the online group and in 50% of the cases for the face-to-face group. The majority of the students in both groups reported that they were able to communicate in Spanish during the conversation hour. Most of the participants of the face-to-face group (80%) also believed that the activities helped improved oral proficiency, while only 43% of the online group. The majority of participants (52%) would not recommend the online conversation hour to other students. In contrast, 60% of participants would recommend the face-to-face conversation hour (Figure 8).

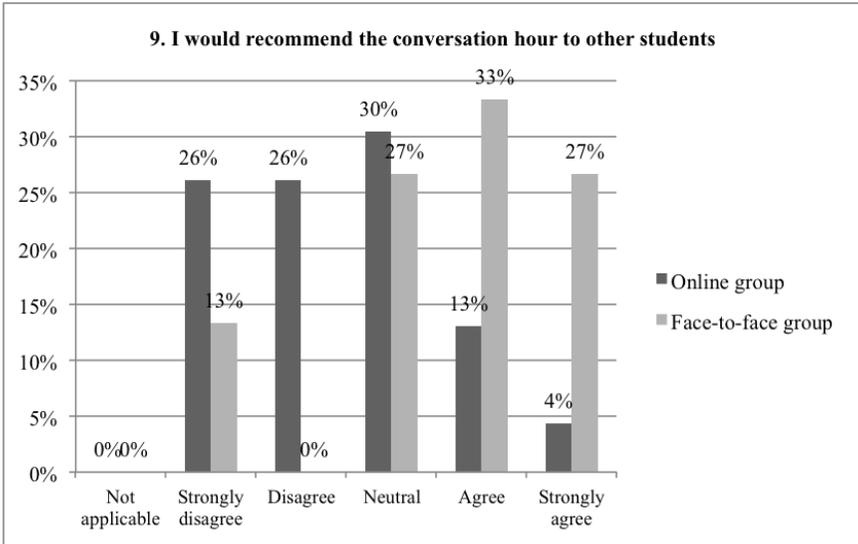


Figure 8. Participants’ responses in regards to recommending the conversation hour to other students.

Open-Ended Responses from Survey

These opinions are also supported by the responses to the two open ended questions asked at the end of the survey: what did you like about the conversation hour and what would you change about the conversation hour?

Twenty-three students from the online conversation hour responded to the open-ended section of the survey. Students in the online group enjoyed having opportunities to communicate with other students and native speakers of Spanish from home. They also liked having the tutor and teacher available for help and corrections. A student from the online conversation hour commented, “It allowed us to speak the language and practice our grammar outside class.” Students in the online group felt that the activities helped improve their speaking skills. A student commented, “It was practice for speaking Spanish fluently. It taught me how to listen and speak consistently.” Participants enjoyed the option of using private chat when working in pairs from home. They also enjoyed relying on listening skills.

Regarding what they would change about the online conversation hours, students commented mostly on the technical difficulties and the schedule. Technical difficulties included sound problems and program updates, and many also disliked the Second Life program altogether.

Thirty students from the face-to-face conversation hour responded to the open-ended section of the survey. Students enjoyed being able to engage in conversations with others outside their classes. Several students commented that the activities were easy and the environment was friendly. Four students commented that the conversation hours were fun, interactive, and helpful. One student commented, "It was highly useful for my own Spanish level. I was personally able to practice that which I was learning in class." Students thought the activities were interesting and reinforced what was being learned in class. They also liked the tutor, the structure, and guidance. One student commented, "The group sizes were perfect amount of students and the activities were good. Also the instructor was good help and made you feel comfortable to talk in Spanish even if you make mistakes."

Regarding the things they would change about the face-to-face conversation hours, students commented on the schedule and making directions for the activities clearer. They also commented that they wanted more speaking and less writing.

Discussion

The problem of developing oral language proficiency has been an issue of debate among schools, language education organizations, and universities. The lack of oral proficiency may be a contributing factor to the attrition rate of students beyond the second year of language study. In June 2008, the Center for Applied Linguistics completed data collection from primary and secondary schools in the United States for its third national survey (Rhodes & Pufahl, 2009). The data showed trends in foreign language education at three points in time: 1987, 1997, and 2008. The survey revealed that foreign language instruction decreased in elementary schools from 31% to 25%, in middle schools from 75% to 58%, and remained the same in the high school level at 91%. More importantly, it showed a great shortage of language teachers in the United States. The percentage of uncertified language teachers had increased from 17% in 1997 to 31% in 2008. (Rhodes & Pufahl, 2009).

New enhanced standards in foreign language education have increased the requirements for oral proficiency for future teachers of foreign languages and made more difficult to obtain certification in an accredited institution. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) collaborated to develop the *Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (ACTFL, 2002). These standards require a strong emphasis in development and continuous assessment of oral proficiency for foreign language education majors. These majors must achieve high levels of oral proficiency in the foreign language, which can be difficult to attain when they cannot, or do not, go abroad for immersion experiences.

Findings of previous studies in the area of virtual environments and language learning have shown the potential for using this technology in promoting language learning (e.g., Deutschmann, Panichi, & Molka-Danielsen, 2009; Diehl & Prins, 2008; Shih & Yang, 2008; Shively, 2010; Von der Emde, Schenider, & Kötter, 2001; Wang, Song, Xia, & Yan, 2009). This study implemented many of the recommendations learned from previous studies that revealed great potential for virtual environments for language practice, however, when comparing student's perceptions of their learning, the findings in this study were not as positive. Shih & Yang (2008) found that students' perceptions of the use of virtual environments had a great impact on their overall educational experience. In contrast, this study found that the online group did not enjoy the conversation hours as much as the face-to-face group. It appears that the novelty effect of using Second Life and the Avatars was quickly gone by the end of the semester when the online conversation group completed the evaluation. Only 21% of the students in the online group thought the online conversation hours were fun and engaging. Since the activities, tutors, and students' participation were the same for both groups, the only difference was the SL interface and its affordances. The technical difficulties with the SL platform may have contributed to students' frustration and lack of engagement towards the end of the semester.

Deutschmann, Panichi, & Molka-Danielsen (2009) found positive responses when they compared student participation using the virtual environment Second Life (SL). This study found more positive results from participants in face-to-face versus the virtual group. Most students in the face-to-face group reported that the conversation hour helped them perform better in class, they were able to communicate in Spanish during the conversation hour, the activities helped them improve their oral proficiency, and that they would recommend them to other students. In contrast, in only 21% of the participants in the virtual group reported that the conversation hour helped them perform better in class, only 43% believed that the activities helped improve oral proficiency, and the majority of participants (52%) would not recommend the online conversation hour to other students. These results also contradict Wang, Song, Xia, & Yan (2009)'s results which showed that students were ready to use SL and that students had positive feelings towards SL as a language-learning platform.

Results from the survey showed that participants' perceptions about which language skill they practiced the most, varied significantly among groups. The online conversation hour group felt that they practiced listening and speaking skills the most. The affordances of virtual environments may have played a role in the skills most practiced by the students. While in SL, students wore headphones and used a microphone and had to rely on listening and speaking for communicating. The face-to-face conversation group also stated they practiced speaking; however, a high number of respondents stated that they practiced writing and reading skills. They relied on reading the instructions more than on listening, and writing their answers than on speaking.

Results from a Likert scale completed by the students who attended the face-to-face conversation hours were very positive. Most of the students thought the

conversation hours were fun, engaging, and beneficial to their learning. On the other hand, the online group did not enjoy the conversation hours as much but they did focus their time more on listening and speaking.

One of the major limitations of this study was the unexpected small sample size. Usual enrollment in second year Spanish classes is larger than it was during the semester when the study was performed. The sample was also not drawn randomly and students were assigned to treatments according to their course section in an attempt to keep the treatment groups even in size and to balance the groups for instructors. All the students who participated in the study were voluntarily assigned to a treatment group depending on their schedules. Assignment did not include considerations of computer literacy among the participants. Participation in the study was also limited to students in second year courses of Spanish, therefore, the results of the study are not generalizable to all levels of proficiency in Spanish or to other languages.

Although information collected and analyzed could be valuable to those interested in other content areas, this study was confined to obtaining data needed for further research and improved practice in the area of language education. As the oral proficiency levels of language students have been an area of primary concern to language programs due to high requirements set by the Illinois State Board of Education and NCATE, the study sought to explore an alternative approach to develop only this language skill.

Implications and Future Research

This study utilized a framework of pedagogically sound instructional practices to improve oral proficiency of language students at the college level. It provided them with an alternative approach to the traditional language laboratory experience. Students were able to practice the language in a low anxiety environment. Instructors of the courses participating in the study agreed that the laboratory experience of hosting conversation hours and the designed activities that focus on oral proficiency were a great improvement to the previous practice of isolation in the laboratory.

The results of this study are valuable in the language education field because they suggest there is potential benefit in learning the effects by delivering a known and accepted language learning method with an alternative approach. Designers and instructors of language courses delivered online will be able to take advantage of the affordances that an immersive virtual environment offers knowing that this environment can be used to promote oral proficiency.

The approach of using weekly conversation hours with native speakers of the target language offers an alternative that does not compare to the potential cost of traveling abroad that a language learner may incur while attempting to acquire a second language. While not as costly as immersion approaches, both virtual and face-to-face conversation hours required regular practice from the language learner, a condition similar to that experienced through immersion. Through the use of a virtual environment, the language learner is given a more cost effective method to practice the target language with native speakers and on a regular

basis. Schools may see this approach as an opportunity to recruit international students or other target language speakers to participate regularly as tutors in the conversation hours.

The proliferation of online learning can take advantage of the affordances of virtual environments to provide more opportunities for students to receive equivalent language benefits to those in a face-to-face setting. Participants reported malfunction of the SL software during various occasions indicating a need for the development of virtual environments that are technically efficient and reliable. Virtual environments currently available lack the special features for educational needs such as grading, recording, and tracking attendance among others. Also, these sophisticated programs need to be more stable and reliable as constant updates and lag time create disturbances in the learning environment. The results of this study add to current literature and encourage further research in the area of innovative approaches to implement in language laboratories to develop second language oral proficiency. As the current wave of technology advances, more empirical research is needed to address the actual learning gains and influence on the use of the technology on learning languages.

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Appendix A

Student Information Sheet

Student Information

Class: _____ **Section:** _____ **First Name:** _____ **Last Name:** _____

Current status: freshman / sophomore / junior / senior / graduate /visiting

Major: _____ Minor: _____

Phone #: _____ Email: _____

1. Is your native language English? Yes/No. If not, which? _____
2. Have you taken Spanish classes before? Yes/No.
If yes, where? _____ Which classes? _____
3. Did you take the Spanish placement test? Yes / No If yes, how did you score? _____
4. Have you studied any language other than Spanish? Yes / No
If yes, which? _____ How long? _____ Where? _____
5. Why are you taking this course? _____
6. What grade do you expect to receive? _____
7. How many credit hours of classes are you taking this semester? _____
Which classes? _____
8. Circle **one** day/time you are available to meet for the conversation hour:

<p>Mesa Real</p> <p>Tuesdays 3:30-4:20pm</p> <p>Thursdays 12:30-1:20pm</p> <p>Fridays 12:00-12:50pm</p>	<p>Mesa Virtual</p> <p>Tuesdays 8:00-8:50pm</p> <p>Thursdays 8:00-8:50pm</p>
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If you cannot attend any of these days/times, proof of your unavailability must be provided.

9. Do you have any disabilities or learning disorders of which your instructor should be aware?

10. Please sign on the line below if this statement is true:

"I have read the syllabus and I understand it."

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Online Conversation Training Manual

Second Life Training Session

The training session will help you become acquainted in using Second Life (SL). However, you must practice and become proficient in using the software before our first meeting. We will meet in different places in SL to perform language related activities. Therefore, make sure that you create your account, install the program in your computer, and practice using it. If you don't have a computer you can work at the language laboratory.

What is Second Life?

It is a multiuser 3D digital world, imagined, created and owned by its residents. You are only a resident once you buy land in SL. For this class we will meet in different places and you must always be respectful of residents and their rules.

Technical Requirements

Good news! SL runs on both platforms Windows and Macs. However, your computer and internet connection must be fast (Cable or DSL). Additionally, SL runs best on newer computers with advanced graphics cards. To learn more about specific system requirements, go to www.secondlife.com.

Join Second Life (for free)

It is very important that you familiarize yourself with SL. Creating an account is easy and free. Just go to the join page and register. You'll need to choose a standard avatar, an inworld name, and provide basic contact information before you can download the SL viewer—essentially your Second Life browser.

1. Open your browser and go to www.secondlife.com
2. Click on **Join Now>>**
3. **Enter the requested details** to create your Second Life identity.
 - a. **For your username: use a fake name, maybe a Spanish name of your choice.**
 - b. Choose a password and remember it!
 - Username: _____
 - Password: _____
4. Once your account is created, you will receive an **email confirmation** to activate your account.
5. Open your email and click on the link to **activate your account**.

Downloading the Second Life

- The link in your email will take you to the website to download the software
- If not, go to www.secondlife.com, click on <Download Second Life> at the bottom of the page
- Choose the appropriate download button depending on your system (eg. Windows XP or Mac)
- Click on 'run' to download and install the software (say 'Yes' to security message about authorizing download)

Learn to Work in a Virtual Space

Once you download the Second Life Viewer, you enter the Second Life environment on Orientation Island. This will be your first inworld experience and includes several training module to become proficient in using the program.

Moving around

- **Move forward / backward** → up / down arrow keys on keyboard
- **Change direction** → left / right arrow keys on keyboard
- **Fly** → click on the <Fly> button in the bottom menu or use the Page Up / Down buttons

Gestures

- **Sit down** → right click on the seat and select <Sit here>
- **Stand up** → click on the <Stand up> button in the bottom menu
- **Gestures** → click in <Edit> for more possible gestures

Appendix B (continued)

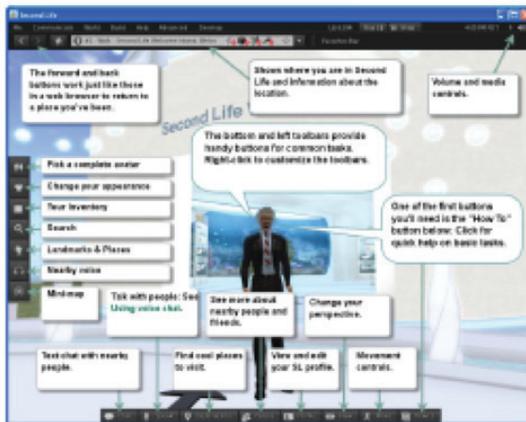
Online Conversation Training Manual

Mesa de Español Virtual

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Camera Views

- > **Zoom in/out** → Use the roller on your mouse or the ALT key
- > **Mouselook** → When you are looking through your mouse and your avatar's head is not in the way! You can use the mouselook view to get a better angle on everything. Got to the top menu and click View Mouselook. To come out of Mouselook click on ESC or on the arrow keys
- > **Changing the Light** → If it seems too dark, in the top menu bar, click on World > Environmental Settings > Midday to increase the sunlight

**Text Chat**

- > Make sure your toolbar is on view at the bottom of the screen. Click the button that says "Chat."
- > A button saying "History" will appear, next to a bar with a space to type. When you type, your avatar will appear to be typing on an invisible keyboard.

Voice Chat

- > **Remember you must wear a headset to participate in the conversation hour!**
- > Generally, it's best to connect your audio devices before you start Second Life. After you have connected your headset (or speakers and microphone), you may need to configure your

sound devices. To do this, choose Me > Preferences > Sound & Media. You'll be able to select your input and output devices and change your volume setting. Once you have configured your sound devices, simply click Speak to speak to those nearby. Click it again to turn off your microphone.

Sound Settings

You will quickly find out that some places have very loud music and environmental noises. You can change the sound setting to lower these volumes and increase the volume of the people that you are talking with. On the top menu go to **Me**, then select **Preferences**, got to the **Sound & Media** tab, **lower the volumes for everything (disable Streaming Music and Media), and increase the volume for Voice chat.**

Personalize Your Avatar

An avatar is a virtual representation of you. You can use your basic avatar as a starting point—given to you when you join—later you can then change nearly every element of your appearance from body size to hair color to clothing. Click Avatar  to change your avatar to one of the free provided avatars. You'll be able to choose from a wide variety of people, robots, animals, and even vehicles. For information on customizing your avatar, see "Editing your appearance".

Places in Second Life World

The meeting place that we will use every week is EDUNATION.

SLURL: <http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/EduNation/50/50/51>

Day: _____ Time: _____

APPENDIX B (continued)

Online Conversation Training Manual

Mesa de Español Virtual

3

However, some activities may require you to travel on your own and have previous preparation. In order to travel and go to different places in SL, first you need to login using your username and password, then in the top/right HOME tap you will find a category called **DESTINATION GUIDE**, here you can search for places of your interest or you can simply type a word of interest in the search space on the top right of the screen.

SPANISH SPEAKING PLACES TO VISIT

- Barcelona Virtual <http://slurl.com/secondlife/barcelona%20de%20este/169/71/24/>
- Colomblamor <http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/COLOMBIA/MOR/121/215/22>
- Marbella <http://slurl.com/secondlife/puerto%20banus/70/87/22/>
- Mexico City <http://slurl.com/secondlife/mexico/94/125/25/>
- Chichen Itza <http://slurl.com/secondlife/visit%20mexico/198/67/39/>
- Mexico, Monterrey <http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Monterrey%20Mexico/98/117/174>

**UniHispana**

Learn the basics of creating in Second Life, including building and scripting, in this Spanish-language sandbox and training area.

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/UniHispana/41/113/24>

**Virtual Spain**

Virtual Spain boasts an active Spanish language community to help newcomers to Second Life, including tutorials, daily classes, cultural activities, festivals, live music and more. <http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Virtual%20Spain/106/125/46>

**Guadalajara Mexico**

This sim captures the exotic beauty of one of Mexico's oldest cities. Explore Colima's Volcano or the Catedral de Guadalajara on your own or hop aboard the Tequila Express for a guided tour.

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/0pera%20loven/133/17/21>

**Maracaibo Life**

This replica of the city of Maracaibo in Venezuela showcases some of its famous landmarks and offers visitors a relaxed atmosphere in which to spend time with friends, play games, try some kart racing, or party at the disco mall.

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Maracaibo%20Life/83/92/23>

**Barcelona Plaza Real**

Stroll the tree-lined streets in Barcelona's famous La Rambla avenue, then stop to meet new friends in the central Plaza Real (Plaça Reial) in Second Life.

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Barcelona%20de%20Este/156/77/29>

Appendix C

Sample Activity Handout

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MESA DE ESPAÑOL Nombre: _____ Apellido: _____
 Clase: _____ Sección: _____
 Mesa: Real / Virtual Fecha: _____ Hora: _____

Activity #2 Preguntas

Exchange pictures with your partner and, after reviewing each picture, ask five (5) questions about each picture. Your partner answers each question thoroughly. You may take notes in the space provided below so you can remember facts that you will share with the class. QUESTION WORDS: ¿Qué? ¿Quién? ¿Con quién? ¿De quién? ¿Cómo? ¿Cuándo? ¿Dónde? ¿Porqué? ¿Para qué?

Foto #1

Foto #2

Foto #3

Reflect on your learning

Answer the following questions regarding this activity:

1. How well were you able to communicate in Spanish?
(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Excellent)
2. Did the activity provide language practice relevant to you?
(Not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 (Excellent)
3. What would you change about this activity?
4. Other comments:

FOR NEXT WEEK: Research facts about a famous person and be prepared to answer questions. The class must be able to guess your famous person.

APPENDIX D

Mesa de Español Evaluation

Mesa de Español Evaluation
(Spanish Conversation Hour)
SPRING 2012

1. Which conversation hours did you attend? Please write the day/time that you assisted weekly.

- a. Real:
- b. Virtual:

2. Rate 1 to 4, what skills did you practice the most during the activity?

_____ Speaking _____ Writing _____ Reading _____ Listening

3. During, the conversation hour, which communication tools did you use?

- a. None
- b. Second Life Text chat
- c. Second Life Voice chat
- d. Other:

4. Please rate your experience during the conversation:

	(0) Not applicable	(1) Strongly disagree	(2) Disagree	(3) Neutral	(4) Agree	(5) Strongly agree
1. The tutors in the conversation hour were helpful and knowledgeable						
2. The instructions on the activities were clear						
3. The activities provided me with guidelines and opportunities for communication						
4. The conversation hour was beneficial to my learning						
5. The conversation hour was fun and engaging						
6. The conversation hour helped me perform better in class						
7. I was able to communicate in Spanish during the conversation hour						
8. The activities used in the conversation hour helped improve my oral proficiency						
9. I would recommend the conversation hour to other students						
10. I expect to receive a good grade in the conversation hour						

5. What did you like about the conversation hour?

6. What would you change about the conversation hour?

Free Online Machine Translation: Use and Perceptions by Spanish Students and Instructors

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Abstract

This article reports the results of a survey-based study on the use of and attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about Google Translate and similar free online machine translation (FOMT) tools by students and instructors in university Spanish programs. The results of surveys administered to both groups are presented and discussed relative to the investigators' research questions, which focus on FOMT tool usage and student and instructor views regarding their accuracy and reliability, questions of academic integrity, and implications for foreign language (FL) teaching and learning. Taking those results into account, the authors propose a preliminary framework for developing best practices for addressing FOMT tool use in FL learning contexts. Chief among their recommendations is that students in FL teaching methods courses should receive training regarding their potential pedagogical applications.

Introduction

In today's world of ubiquitous Wi-Fi connections, laptops, tablets, and smartphones, foreign language (FL) instructors and students have at their fingertips

a broad array of free online resources for translators (FORTs), including powerful machine translation (MT) websites and apps. Despite the fact that a fair amount of research was conducted on pedagogical applications of MT in the 1990s and early 2000s (Anderson, 1995; García, 2010; Kliffer, 2005; Lewis, 1997; McCarthy, 2004; Musk, 2014; Niño, 2008, 2009; Richmond, 1994; Somers, 2001, 2003; Somers, Gaspari, & Niño, 2006; Steding, 2009; Williams, 2008), the rapidly increasing visibility, user-friendliness, and reliability of FORTs—and free online MT (FOMT) solutions, such as Google Translate, in particular—and the widespread perception that their use by students has risen sharply, seem to have caught much of the FL teaching profession off guard, with reactions ranging from cautious optimism to suspicion and even disdain. Indeed, discussions of the topic by FL instructors often focus on the assumed detrimental effects of this perceived increased in FORT use by students, such as concerns regarding the quality (accuracy, reliability, etc.) of FOMT output, issues relating to academic integrity, and the impacts reliance on these tools might have on language learning.

Although a few researchers have attempted recently to gauge the extent to which students actually use FORTs and document their views of them (Clifford, Merschel, & Munné, 2013; Niño, 2009; Xu & Wang, 2011), concerns about learner use of these tools seem to stem largely from anecdotal evidence and the observations and assumptions of FL instructors. An informed understanding of these concerns and any effective pedagogical response to them must rely on a sound understanding of the kinds of tools available to students as well as credible data from both students and instructors. Accordingly, the purpose of this article is to share data collected from students and instructors about their use of and their attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about FOMT tools such as Google Translate in an effort to provide a more accurate, data-supported picture of this issue. A secondary purpose of this research is to provide a preliminary set of recommendations for addressing FOMT tool use. This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides an overview of previous research conducted on issues central to the present project. Section 3 summarizes the methodology used in the study. Section 4 presents and discusses the survey results relative to the research questions. Section 5 outlines a preliminary framework for developing best practices for the use of FOMT tools in FL learning contexts.

Review of Literature

Free Online Translation Resources

Because not all FL instructors are familiar with the range of FORTs available to their students, an overview of these resources and an explanation of how FOMT tools work will be helpful before reviewing how researchers have looked at MT use in educational contexts and the importance of gathering data on learner and instructor perceptions. The rubric FORT includes any free online resource used by translators, such as Internet search engines, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, glossaries, parallel corpora, bilingual concordancers (parallel text alignment tools), peer-to-peer (P2P) language usage forums, sophisticated

computer-assisted translation (CAT) suites that combine multiple functions (terminology management, translation memory, etc.), and FOMT solutions, such as Google Translate. Research conducted on FL students at Duke University in 2011 and 2012 confirmed the prevailing suspicion among FL instructors that students overwhelmingly favor Google Translate over other FORTs: 81% of the respondents reported using Google Translate to support their language learning (Clifford et al., 2013, p. 111), a significantly higher percentage than that of any other tool. Accordingly, the research project described in this article was designed to focus on Google Translate by using in its questionnaires the terms *Google Translate* or *Google Translate or similar tools* exclusively (see Appendices A and B).

Google Translate is available on the Web and as a smartphone application. Both formats can accept input and generate output in text and voice in dozens of languages. It is described as a “free translation service that provides instant translations between dozens of different languages” (Google), a characterization which squarely fits standard definitions of MT as “computerised systems responsible for the production of translations from one natural language into another, with or without human assistance” (Hutchins & Somers, 1992, p. 3). As Google Translate and similar tools have gained prominence, updated labels, such as “free online MT” (FOMT) and “Web-based machine translation” (WBMT) have emerged in the literature (Niño, 2009; Williams, 2008). Framing Google Translate as an MT solution is important to attaining a basic understanding of how it works. MT systems are typically described as applying either ruled-based and statistical (or example-based) logic. Rule-based MT systems work by filtering source text input through bilingual dictionaries and subjecting their segments to large, pre-programmed inventories of rules, whereas statistical MT systems are based on “machine-learning technologies” and rely on “large volumes of parallel human-translated texts from which the MT engine can learn” (Steding, 2009, p. 184). Google Translate exemplifies the latter approach, as its website explains in layman’s terms: “By detecting patterns in documents that have already been translated by human translators, Google Translate can make intelligent guesses as to what an appropriate translation should be” (Google). Bowken (2002) makes a connection between this approach and output quality, noting that because statistical MT reflects a “better understanding of the strengths of machines” than earlier methods, errors are “less common and considerably less outrageous” than in the past (p. 3).

MT in Educational Settings

Long before MT found its way into educational settings, human translation (HT) had been a hallmark of FL teaching and learning, particularly during the late 19th century heyday of the grammar-translation method. Language teaching professionals vigorously debated the value of translation as a language learning and assessment activity during the first few decades of the 20th century, but professional consensus had turned against it by the 1960s after the emergence of the audio-lingual method and widespread acceptance of the four-skills model (Aarts, 1968). However, translation was never fully banished from the FL classroom

and, as Károly (2014) notes, an updated view of translation “as a communicative activity” which develops students’ communicative competence in their native and target languages has led to several recent studies proposing “the rehabilitation of this useful skill in foreign language teaching” (p. 90).

As MT systems transitioned from research labs to the marketplace, interest in their applications in educational settings grew. As noted above, a number of articles addressing the pedagogical potential, uses, and implications of MT have appeared since the early 1990s. This research spans two related areas—translator training and FL education—which have tended to be treated separately, although Somers (2001) and others focused on the first area recognized that MT and CAT tools might be deployed as computer-assisted language learning (CALL) tools. Several researchers addressing MT in translator training programs have emphasized the importance that translators-in-training be able to use state-of-the-art MT tools (Lewis, 1997; McCarthy, 2004; Somers 2001, 2003; Xu & Wang, 2011). For instance, Niño (2009) wrote that

one of the main applications of the teaching of MT ... is its use by professional translators who, apart from being proficient in two or more languages, need to know the intricacies of the translation art and be updated on the use of CAT ... tools such as translation memories or MT systems. (p. 242-43)

Other foci of research on MT in translation training include the evaluation of CAT tools and MT output (Belam, 2002; Xu & Wang, 2011) and strategies for their effective and ethical use (McCarthy, 2004).

Key issues that have emerged in research on MT in FL teaching and learning contexts include (1) actual or potential ways of using MT tools as CALL tools, (2) concerns surrounding the potential abuse and/or misuse of MT tools by students, including the detection and prevention of academic dishonesty, (3) recommendations for dealing with the inevitability of student MT use, including pedagogical best practices, and (4) student and instructor perceptions. Early studies addressing the first area involved subjecting problematic MT output to analysis or post-editing as a means of focusing student attention on differences between source and target language constructions (Anderson, 1995; Lewis, 1997; Richmond, 1994). Somers (2003) characterized this strategy as “using MT as bad model” (p. 327), a notion revisited by Niño (2009), who established a helpful four-part model for classifying MT uses which accounts for both translator training and FL education contexts: (1) use of MT as bad model, (2) use of MT as good model, (3) vocational use: translation quality assessment, pre-editing and post-editing, and (4) MT as a CALL tool (p. 242). Researchers have also begun to investigate how MT tools might support FL writing, comparing error patterns and other factors in MT-assisted and unassisted target language writing (García, 2010; Kliffer, 2005; Niño, 2008).

Studies addressing MT accessibility and its abuse (academic dishonesty) include Somers et al. (2006) and Steding (2009), who identified strategies for recognizing indicators of unauthorized FOMT use, reacting to it, and preventing it. Significantly, Clifford et al. (2013) marked the first systematic attempt to

gather information from FL students and instructors regarding their views on the appropriate uses of MT. Taking a slightly different tack, other researchers have pointed out the potential for misuse of FOMT tools owing to students' lack of understanding of their purposes (Williams, 2008) and their inability to evaluate their output (Niño, 2009). Musk (2014) highlighted another potential pitfall for students—that WBMT facilitates target language avoidance: “Google affords readily accessible opportunities for students to exercise their language preferences in order to ‘get the job done’” (p. 129). The authors who have gone as far as to recommend best practices for MT use in translator training and FL contexts include McCarthy (2004), whose discussions with students resulted in 12 “solutions” for dealing with the inevitability of MT use; Williams (2008), who suggested activities for using MT websites to augment students' electronic literacy; Steding (2009), who outlined four strategies for preventing MT-based cheating, including the creation of “smart assignments” (p. 188); and Niño (2009), who proposed a number of “good practices” and “bad practices” (p. 247-48).

Learner and Instructor Attitudes, Perceptions, and Beliefs about MT

In the introduction to their volume on beliefs about second language acquisition (SLA), Kalaja and Barcelos (2003) observed that interest in learner beliefs about language acquisition is fairly recent, an outgrowth of a shift of focus in SLA research in the 1980s toward individual learner differences, such as motivation, learning strategies, and aptitude (p. 1). Wesley (2012) provided a wide-ranging review of research on learner attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs, noting that investigators who examine these “unobservable attributes” do so on the assumption that “these thoughts are pertinent and important to understanding how languages are learned and taught” (p. S98). Indeed, Brown (2009) argued that input from FL students and instructors is a line of research investigators “should continue to pursue because L2 teaching practices will change over time and idiosyncratic perceptions of it among teachers and students will remain a reality in the L2 classroom” (p. 57). Although few of the studies focusing on MT use in FL contexts referenced above took into consideration student and instructor attitudes, perceptions, or beliefs about FOMT use, those that did are relatively recent (Clifford et al., 2013; Niño, 2009; Xu & Wang, 2011).

Xu & Wang (2011) set out to explore the “attitudes and knowledge” of Chinese students in translation training program about a variety of online translation resources, including online corpora, search engines, and professional-grade CAT suites (p. 63). Their survey of 100 students included questions about preferred translation techniques, awareness of different CAT tools, output quality (accuracy and reliability), convenience and frequency of use, and the importance of integrating such tools into translator training curricula. The study revealed two key findings, “that translation students rely more on electronic resources than non-electronic ones ... and that the underlying reason is convenience, not accuracy” (Xu & Wang, 2011, p. 79). Although these findings likely support the suspicions of many FL instructors, their relevance to FL education contexts is limited since the subjects were translators in training, not typical FL students. In a

study more narrowly focused on FOMT, Niño (2009) surveyed 16 post-secondary Spanish students who had completed a ten-week course that involved the post-editing of MT output. These students were asked a handful of questions about MT, including whether they planned to use it in the future, if they believed it to be a useful language learning tool, and whether they thought MT post-editing had improved their Spanish in general and their L2 writing in particular. A group of 30 FL “tutors” also responded to questions about their awareness and personal use of MT and the degree to which they had integrated it into their teaching. Ninety-three percent of the students reported using FORTs for post-editing, and 69% said they planned to use FOMT in the future. While 70% of tutors reported using MT as a “learning/teaching tool,” only 23% had used it in their lessons (p. 250). Niño concluded that “overall, the use of MT and free online MT in FL learning was perceived as an innovative and positive learning experience both by language tutors and language learners” (2009, p. 253). She also noted an emphasis on the instructional value of introducing advanced FL students to MT in ways that encourage them to understand “the deficiencies of free online MT output” and raise their “awareness as to the complexity of translation and language learning.” (Niño, 2009, p. 253). Clifford et al. (2013) reported the first large-scale effort to collect data on FL learner and instructor use and perceptions of FOMT. In phase 1 of the study, researchers at Duke University asked 356 students enrolled in Spanish classes a few basic questions regarding frequency of MT use, reasons and purposes (assignment/task type) for using it, and beliefs about MT accuracy. Those inquiries were substantially expanded and refined in phase 2, which surveyed 905 students of Spanish and three other languages, as well as 43 FL instructors. Both groups responded to items about MT tool use, including questions relating to academic dishonesty, output quality, and implications for FL learning and teaching. Key findings included that students use MT on a regular basis for specific purposes, consider it to be helpful to their language learning, and are generally aware that it produces errors. Instructor responses confirmed that “faculty are skeptical of a positive impact on language learning” and that they see MT integration as being more useful in advanced courses (p. 116). In an effort to explore some of the issues addressed in these initial studies in greater depth and to examine others related to them, the following research questions were proposed for the present study:

- How do Spanish students use Google Translate and similar FOMT tools and what are their attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs regarding the quality of FOMT output, the ethicality of using these tools, and their implications for FL teaching and learning?
- How do Spanish instructors use Google Translate and similar FOMT tools and what are their attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs regarding the quality of FOMT output, the ethicality of using these tools, and their implications for FL teaching and learning?
- How accurate are student and instructor beliefs about each other’s use of and attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about FOMT use?

Methods

Participants

A total of 139 students and 41 instructors in university Spanish programs participated in this study. However, the results of 11 students and two instructors who did not answer all questions were excluded, yielding final groups of 128 students and 39 instructors. The researchers recruited participants by sending email invitations to instructors requesting that they complete the instructor survey and forward a link to the student survey to their students. Participants in both groups were offered compensation in the form of a chance to win gift cards through a random selection process.

The participants in the student group were 97 females and 31 males enrolled in Spanish courses at five U.S. universities. They ranged in age from 18 to 31, with a mean of 20.52. Their native languages were English (93.75%), Spanish (4.69%), and other (1.56%). The student group consisted of 127 undergraduate students and one graduate student, including 70 whose program emphases were language-related, and 49 Spanish minors. The breakdown in terms of formal, classroom study of Spanish was as follows: one to two semesters, 3.13%; three to four semesters 7.81%; five to six semesters, 10.16%; seven to eight semesters 10.94%; nine to 10 semesters: 23.44%; and 11 semesters or more, 44.53%. Thirty-eight students (29.69%) had taken a course with a significant focus on translation and 21 (16.41%) reported having received some training in CAT or MT tools.

The participants in the instructor group were 30 females and nine males from six U.S. university Spanish programs. They ranged in age from 24 to 69, with a mean of 35.21. Their native languages were English (66.67%), Spanish (28.21%), and other (5.13%). Highest degree attained varied as follows: bachelor's, 12.82%; master's, 53.85%; and doctorate, 33.33%. By area of specialization the breakdown was: generalist, 10.26%; literature, 33.33%; linguistics, 38.46%; translation, 2.56%; and other, 13.38%. Distribution for the group in terms of teaching experience (in years) was: less than five, 51.28%; five to 10, 17.95%; 11-15, 12.82%; 16-20, 7.69%; and more than 20, 10.25%. Fifteen of the instructors (38.46%) had taken a course with a significant focus on translations studies or translation theory, but just two (5.13%) had any training in CAT or MT tools.

Materials

Participants responded to one of two online surveys designed to collect data on each group's use of and attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about Google Translate and similar FOMT tools (see Appendices A and B for complete surveys). The student survey included 12 items designed to elicit the demographic and background information summarized in the preceding section, as well as the following: five items addressing student awareness and use of FOMT tools, four items addressing their assessment of FOMT output quality, four items addressing the ethicality or appropriateness of FOMT use, one multi-part item addressing the relationship between FOMT use and FL teaching and learning, one multi-part item asking them to characterize instructor views about FOMT, one open-ended response item, and two

items dealing with compensation. The instructor survey included 16 items designed to elicit the demographic and background information summarized in the preceding section, as well as the following: five items addressing their use of FOMT tools, four items addressing their assessment of FOMT output quality, four items addressing the ethicality or appropriateness of FOMT use, one multi-part item addressing the relationship between FOMT use and FL teaching and learning, four items asking them to characterize student use of and views about FOMT tools, one multi-part item focused on their own views regarding FOMT, and one open-ended response item; and two items dealing with compensation.

Procedures

Participants in the student and instructor groups described above were invited to take part in this research on a voluntary basis during the spring and fall semesters of 2014. The student and instructor questionnaires were built and administered via a commercial online survey platform (SurveyMonkey). Each survey included an informed consent form, which disclosed the purposes, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study and asked respondents to confirm that their participation was voluntary. The student and instructor questionnaires ran simultaneously. Data collection was managed through the online survey platform, which produced raw numbers and percentages for each option on every question. The data presented in the subsequent section were collected on October 10, 2014.

Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the survey results in relation to each of the three original research questions and their subcategories (e.g. use of FOMT tools and views regarding FOMT output quality, ethicality of use, and implications for FL teaching and learning) to which they were coded. To facilitate comprehension of the large amount of data generated, figures indicating the percentages of respondents who selected each option are included. Responses to the open-ended question on both surveys are provided in Appendices C and D.

4.1 RQ1: How do Spanish students use Google Translate and similar FOMT tools and what are their attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs regarding the quality of FOMT output, the ethicality of using these tools, and their implications for FL teaching and learning?

Student Use of FOMT Tools

Nearly all of the student respondents (97.66%) reported some use of FOMT tools, with a high majority of 74.22% reporting occasional (38.28%) or frequent (35.94%) use. In terms of frequency by assignment type, the highest percentage of students reported using FOMT tools occasionally or frequently for writing assignments (85.16%), followed by translation assignments (70.08%) and presentations (68.76%) (Figure 1). With regard to workbook or online lab exercises, 52.67% of students said they never

or infrequently use FOMT tools. Furthermore, approximately 30% of students use FOMT tools at least occasionally on all assignment types.

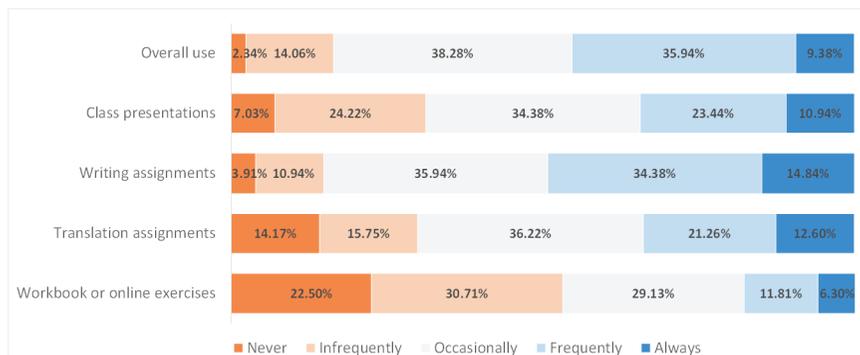


Figure 1. Student FOMT Use: Overall Frequency and Frequency by Assignment Type

In terms of frequency by purpose, high percentages of students reported using FOMT tools often (frequently or always) to verify hunches (70.31%) and for help with vocabulary or terminology (56.26%). Just 13.28% reported using FOMT tools with the same frequency for help with grammar structures, whereas 67.97% reported never or infrequently relying on FOMT tools for this purpose. In terms of translation unit length, students reported using FOMT tools most often (frequently or always) to translate individual words (65.08%). In contrast, very high percentages of students reported never or infrequently using FOMT tools to translate entire paragraphs (85.43%) or texts (88.28%).

Student Views on the Quality of FOMT Output

Students judged the overall accuracy of Google Translate to be higher (71.10% as somewhat accurate or accurate) than its capacity to convey the content or message of a source text (59.16%) or to handle grammatical structures (34.38%) (Figure 2).

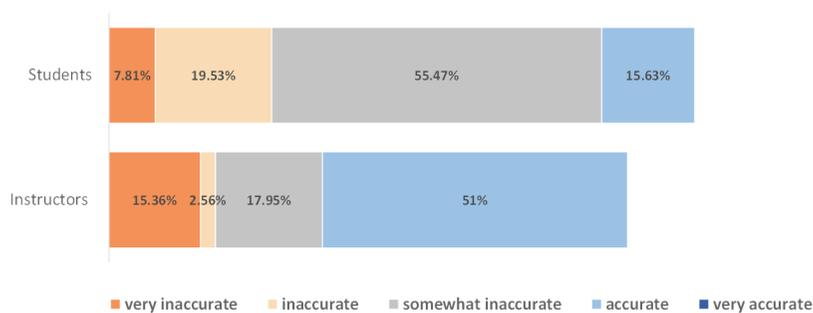


Figure 2. Student and Instructor Perceptions of Overall Accuracy of Google Translate (English to Spanish)¹

In terms of accuracy by genre or text type, 64.06% of students said FOMT tools could be used to somewhat effectively (48.22%) or effectively (14.84%) translate informative/technical texts. The percentages indicating the same degree of confidence were substantially lower for persuasive/advertising texts (41.40%) and artistic/literary texts (28.12%) (Figure 3).

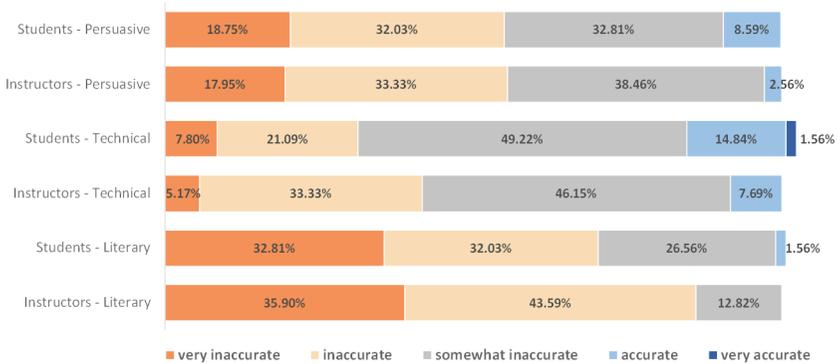


Figure 3. Student and Instructor Perceptions of Google Translate Accuracy (English to Spanish) by Genre

Translation segment length also affected students’ judgment of FOMT accuracy (Figure 4). For example, a 78.91% majority of students indicated that FOMT tools can be used to somewhat effectively (53.91%) or effectively (25.00%) render individual words, while similar majorities of 68.75% and 77.45% indicated that they are very ineffective or ineffective at rendering paragraphs or entire texts, respectively.

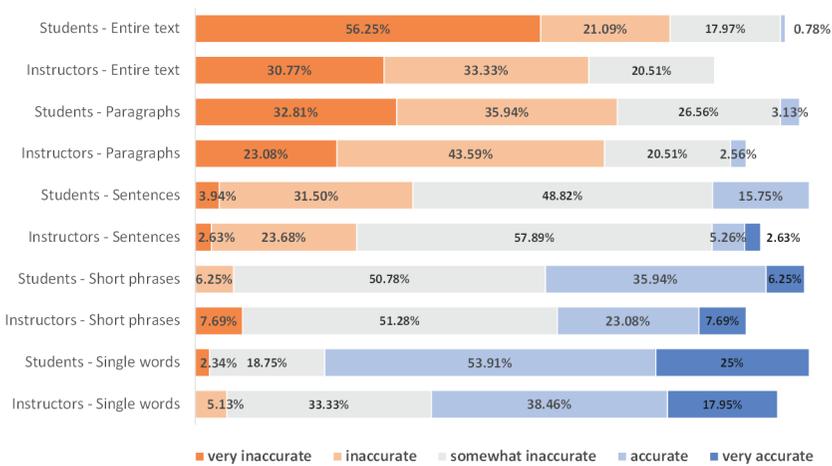


Figure 4. Student and Instructor Perception of Google Translate Accuracy (English to Spanish) by Segment Length

In addition to perceptions of accuracy, we asked students to assess the overall reliability of translations generated by Google Translate. A majority of students (65.52%) characterized them as somewhat reliable (57.81%) or reliable (7.81%), with a 34.48% minority judging them to be somewhat unreliable (28.13%) or very unreliable (6.35%). They rated the overall reliability of Google Translate-produced translations 3.67 on 0-5 point scale.

Student Views on the Ethicality of FOMT Tool Use

With regard to the ethicality or appropriateness of using FOMT tools to complete Spanish assignments, most students (86.72%) indicated that whether their use constitutes cheating depends on how they are deployed. Just 12.50% of students reported seeing nothing wrong with using FOMT regardless of use. Students' ethicality judgment varied by assignment type (Figure 5). For example, a combined 74.80% judged FOMT use on writing assignments to be somewhat ethical (44.09%) or completely ethical (30.71%), with presentations and workbook/lab assignments trailing at 68.51% and 65.63%, respectively. Just 38.28% judged FOMT tool use on translation assignments to be somewhat or completely ethical.



Figure 5. Student and Instructor Assessments of FOMT Ethicality by Assignment Type

Purpose and translation segment length also affected students' judgment of FOMT ethicality. High percentages of students reported that using FOMT tools to verify their own hunches (85.04%) or for help with vocabulary (78.91%) is completely ethical. Whereas 77.34% judged using FOMT to translate individual words as completely ethical, 32.03% and 51.56% indicated that using FOMT to translate paragraphs or entire texts is completely unethical. In terms of the relationship between frequency of use and academic dishonesty, students associated cheating with more frequent usage rates (Figure 6).

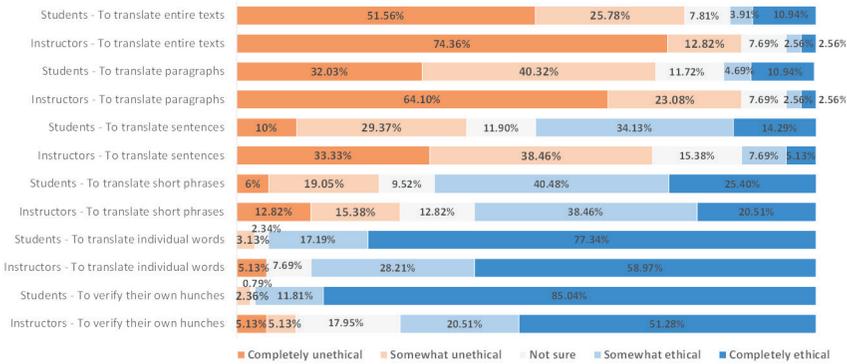


Figure 6. Student and Instructor Assessments of FOMT Ethicality by Translation Segment Length

Student Views on FOMT Tools and Language Learning

On the issue of how FOMT use relates to FL learning, a majority of students (55.47%) agree (40.63%) or strongly agree (14.84%) that use of FOMT tools has a positive impact on the language learning process. A majority (60.16%) also believe it would be helpful if instructors spent time teaching strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of FOMT tools.

Discussion of Student Use and Views

Despite a lack of training relative to MT or CAT tools, students use them frequently across a broad spectrum of assignment types. However, the results do not suggest that students are predisposed to use FOMT tools uncritically or irresponsibly. Their high degree of confidence in the overall effectiveness of FOMT is tempered by the view that FOMT tools are better at handling short lexical items than grammatical structures or longer segments. Likewise, students hold nuanced views about FOMT tool use and academic integrity. They see FOMT tools as less ethically problematic when used less frequently, for consultation or verification purposes, or to translate individual lexical items. The idea that students see frequent use of FOMT to translate entire paragraphs or texts as appropriate is not supported.

The data confirm that students use FOMT frequently on writing assignments but suggest that they generally do so in limited ways. However, it is somewhat surprising that students report using FOMT tools more frequently on writing assignments than on translation assignments, a purpose they are arguably better suited for. This may relate to students' lack of training in translation in general and with respect to MT and CAT tool use in particular. It is also important to underscore that most students see FOMT as having a positive impact on their language learning and want instructors to cover strategies for effective use.

4.2 RQ2: How do Spanish instructors use Google Translate and similar FOMT tools and what are their attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs regarding the quality of FOMT output, the ethicality of using these tools, and their implications for FL teaching and learning?

Instructor Use of FOMT Tools

A majority (82.05%) of the Spanish instructors surveyed reported FOMT tool use for personal or teaching purposes, with a combined 51.29% reporting occasional (23.08%) or frequent (28.21%) use (Figure 7). However, just 7.69% reported having given assignments that directed students to use FOMT tools.

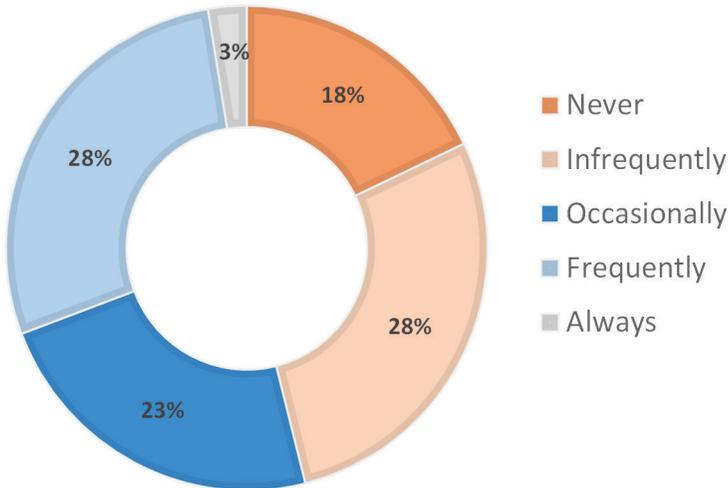


Figure 7. Frequency of Instructor Use of FOMT Tools

Instructor Views on the Quality of FOMT Output

As with the student group, instructors judged the overall accuracy of Google Translate to be higher (64.10% as somewhat accurate or accurate) than its capacity to convey the content or message of a source text (59.16%) or to handle grammatical structures (51.28%) (Figure 2). In terms of accuracy by genre or text type, 53.84% of instructors said FOMT tools could be used to somewhat effectively (46.15%) or effectively (7.69%) translate informative/technical texts (Figure 3). The percentages indicating the same degree of confidence were substantially lower for persuasive/advertising texts (41.02%) and artistic/literary texts (12.82%). As with the student group, translation segment length affected instructors' judgment of FOMT accuracy (Figure 4). For example, a 56.41% majority of instructors indicated that FOMT tools can be used to effectively (38.46%) or very effectively (17.95%) render individual words, but larger majorities indicated that they are very ineffective (66.67%) or ineffective (64.10%) at rendering paragraphs or entire texts. Regarding the overall reliability of translations generated by Google Translate, they

were less confident than students: 48.71% of instructors characterized them as somewhat reliable (46.15%) or reliable (2.56%), whereas a 41.03% minority judged them to be somewhat unreliable (30.77%) or very unreliable (10.26%). They rated the overall reliability of Google Translate-produced translations 3.21 on 0-5 point scale, also lower than students (3.67).

Instructor Views on the Ethicality of FOMT Tool Use

With regard to the ethicality or appropriateness of using FOMT tools to complete Spanish assignments, most instructors (82.05%) indicated that whether their use constitutes cheating depends on how they are deployed (Figure 8).



Figure 8. Instructor Beliefs Regarding the Ethicality of Student Use of FOMT Tools on Spanish Assignments

Later in the survey, 87.81% of instructors reported a similar view to a question worded slightly differently (compare questions 27 and 36 of Appendix B). As with students, the ethicality judgment of the instructor group varied by assignment type (Figure 5). The highest percentage of instructors indicating that FOMT tool use is somewhat or completely ethical corresponded to presentations (43.59%), whereas 31.77% rated FOMT tools use on both workbook/lab assignments and writing assignments somewhat or completely ethical. Just 23.08% judged FOMT tool use on translation assignments to be ethical or completely ethical. Translation segment length also affected instructors' judgment of FOMT ethicality (Figure 6). A high majority of 87.18% judged using FOMT to translate individual words as completely ethical, but the exact same percentage indicated that using FOMT to translate either paragraphs or entire texts is completely unethical. In terms of the relationship between frequency of use and academic dishonesty, instructors associated cheating with more frequent usage rates.

Instructor Views on FOMT tools and Language Learning

On the issue of how FOMT use relates to FL learning, just 30.77% of instructors agreed (none strongly agreed) that FOMT tool use has a positive impact on the language learning process. However, a majority (64.10%) believe it would be helpful if instructors spent time teaching students strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of FOMT tools (Table 1).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
It would be helpful if <u>we</u> instructors would spend more time teaching students strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of using FOMT	5.13%	7.69%	23.08%	33.33%	30.77%
It would be helpful if <u>us</u> instructors would spend more time teaching <u>us</u> students strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of using FOMT	6.25%	11.72%	21.88%	29.69%	30.47%

Table 1. Instructor and Student Beliefs Regarding the Usefulness of Instruction on FOMT Tool Use

Discussion of Instructor Use and Views

In many ways, trends in the instructor data aligned with those in the student data. For example, when judging the FOMT output quality, instructor views mirrored those of students in terms of the reliability of Google Translate translations by text type, and they agreed that FOMT is more accurate with the translation of individual words than longer segments. As with students, instructors generally do not consider the use of FOMT tools translate individual words as unethical, and they also equated less frequent use with higher degrees of appropriateness. Another coincidence was the instructor view that among the assignment types presented FOMT use on translation assignments was seen as least ethical.

Despite these broad similarities, however, differences in percentages between the two groups indicated that instructors use FOMT less frequently than students, are generally less confident in the reliability and accuracy of FOMT output, are more prone to see its use as unethical, and more skeptical about its potential in FL learning contexts. Two key differences in particular are worth noting: (1) students and instructors expressed significant disagreement over the ethicality of using FOMT tools to complete writing exercises and (2) students were much more confident than instructors that FOMT tool use has a positive impact on their language learning.

4.3 RQ3: How accurate are student and instructor beliefs about each other's use of and attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about FOMT use?

Because of the potential for misperceptions to interfere with the development and adoption of sound pedagogical practices in this arena, the researchers were interested in gauging the general accuracy of student and instructor beliefs regarding each other's views on FOMT use. To that end, a series of questions were posed to facilitate comparisons between student predictions and instructor responses and vice-versa. The most salient results are summarized below.

Student Characterizations of Instructor Views Compared to Actual Instructor Responses

The data revealed a disconnect between students and instructors regarding awareness of MT policies and instructor views on MT output quality. The

percentage of students who reported being aware of instructor policies relating to MT use (32.03%) was well below the percentage of instructors who reported clearly articulating such policies (61.54%). Similarly, just 46.09% of students reported awareness of instructor views on the effectiveness of MT tools, while 61.54% of instructors indicated that they share such views with students. Students underestimated instructors' interest levels in FOMT tools and overestimated the percentage who view FOMT use as always being unethical. For example, just 12.06% of students said they thought instructors were interested in FOMT tools, yet 56.41% of instructors indicated they were interested in FOMT tools and would like to learn more about them. On the issue of ethicality or academic integrity, 26.77% of students said that instructors consider FOMT use to be cheating under all circumstances, whereas just 5.13% of instructors reported that view. Likewise, instructor views about the pedagogical potential of FOMT tools were much more positive than students predicted. For instance, 76.92% of instructors agreed that FOMT use may be helpful to the language learning process, but just 40.16% of students attributed that view to instructors.

One of the most striking contrasts involved the question of whether students thought instructors favor encouraging or discouraging FOMT use. Whereas just 37.80% of students said that instructors would be interested in encouraging students to learn to use FOMT tools in effective and appropriate ways, 69.23% held that view. Interestingly, that figure is actually higher than the combined percentage (60.16%) of students who agreed (29.69%) and strongly agreed (30.47%) that it would be helpful if instructors would teach them strategies for maximizing the effectiveness of FOMT use.

Instructor Characterizations of Student Views Compared to Actual Student Responses

Instructors overestimated the frequency with which students report using FOMT tools in general (Figure 9).

For instance, 51.28% of instructors said students use FOMT tools frequently, compared to 35.94% of students reporting that behavior. Instructors also overestimated the degree to which students view MT output as reliable, with 76.92% of respondents indicating students consider FOMT output to be accurate and reliable, compared to a combined 65.62% of students who deem it somewhat reliable (57.81%) or reliable (just 7.81%).

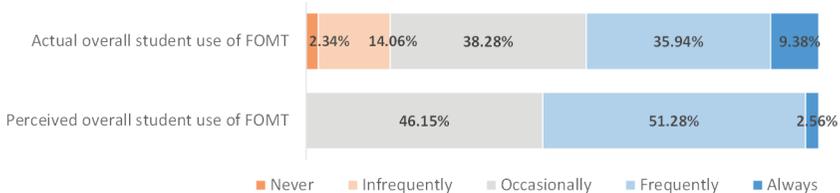


Figure 9. Comparison of Instructor Beliefs and Reported Student Use of FOMT

On the question of the ethicality of FOMT tool use by students, nearly the same percentage of instructors and students indicated that whether or not usage constitutes cheating depends on how the tools they are used (instructors: 87.18%; students: 86.72%). However, the percentage of instructors indicating that students see nothing unethical or inappropriate about FOMT tool use (74.36%) was substantially higher than the percentage of students who expressed that view (12.50%). Instructors also overestimated the extent to which students believe FOMT tools to be helpful to FL learning: 69.23% of instructors thought students see FOMT tools as helpful to the language learning process, well above the combined total (55.47%) of students reporting that they agreed (40.63%) or strongly agreed (14.84%) with that view.

As these data reveal, student and instructor characterization of each other's views about FOMT tool use were largely inaccurate, suggesting that misconceptions abound in both groups. In general, students characterized instructor views of FOMT tool use as being more negative than those reported by instructors. Likewise, instructors were quick to characterize students as overly reliant on MT and ambivalent regarding issues of academic integrity. There were, however, two significant points of common ground: (1) the near consensus that the issue of ethicality or academic integrity hinges on how FOMT tools are actually used and (2) clear majorities in both groups which favor training by instructors on appropriate and effective uses of FOMT tools in FL learning contexts.

Recommendations

The foregoing discussions clarify a number of issues concerning student use of and views about FOMT tools that provide a better foundation for formulating responses than mere anecdotal evidence and assumptions. Taken collectively, the study's results strongly suggest that recommendations for successful pedagogical responses to the reality of FOMT tool use by students must take into consideration the fact that students have almost no training in the use of these tools, that they nevertheless use them quite frequently, that they are confident—perhaps overly so—in their accuracy and reliability, that they do, in fact, associate certain types of uses with academic dishonesty, and that they are willing to look to their instructors for direction.

The first issue that emerged in this study is the need for a framework that addresses the pedagogical implications of FOMT tool use. Only very low percentages of both groups reported having ever received any training in the use of MT or CAT tools. This kind of training is certainly provided in specialized translator training programs but is generally not incorporated into FL teaching methods courses, a serious oversight given the frequency with which students use FOMT tools to support their language learning. Instructors should familiarize themselves with the intended purposes, features, strengths, and weaknesses of the most frequently used FORTs so that they are better equipped to address them with students. Student responses to the open-ended questions indicated that in addition to FOMT solutions they often consult P2P usage forms such as those hosted at WordReference.com. Once instructors have obtained a broader and

deeper understanding of FOTRs, they should thoughtfully and systematically consider how such tools relate to their own views on FL learning and begin to assess what roles, if any, FORTs might play in their teaching. Taking into consideration student behaviors and views such as those presented in this study, instructors should determine the kinds of FOMT tool use they will prohibit or allow in a given class, or even on certain types of assignments. They should clearly articulate rules and consequences to their students, both in course syllabi and during in-class discussions. Finally, to help students comply with established guidelines, instructors should help them to understand how different kinds of FORTs were meant to be used and demonstrate a variety of ineffective and effective applications or strategies, pointing out factors (e.g. unit or segment length and complexity, text type, task or purpose, assignment type, etc.) that may affect output quality.

Notes

1. The percentages of students and instructors who selected the option “not sure” on questions relating to perceptions of accuracy are not included in these figures.

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**Transforming Lives by
Transforming Approaches:**

**Exploring New Solutions to
Foreign Language Challenges**

10

A Corpus-Based Pedagogy for German Vocabulary

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Abstract

Contemporary foreign language textbooks used in the United States have been criticized for shortcomings both in their presentation and vocabulary exercises. The inclusion of authentic materials in the language classroom would seem to help alleviate this problem; however, the use of authentic materials at lower levels of language instruction poses its own set of practical challenges. This paper presents corpus-based exercises designed for lower-level language classes that are paper-based, thereby eliminating potential practical problems while offering students the opportunity to explore vocabulary as well as culture through authentic materials.

Introduction

Beginning in the late 1980s, corpus linguistics, or the study of language through collections of written or spoken language, experienced a renaissance due in part to the comparative ease of creating and managing large amounts of data with computers. Despite the widespread availability of increasingly large and sophisticated corpora of natural language, the application of corpus-based methods to problems in second language teaching has remained limited. Many teachers and learners are unaware of the corpus resources that exist and how they could be used to facilitate language teaching and learning.¹

The relative lack of corpus-based pedagogical treatments is unfortunate because they offer a number of features that stand in contrast to more traditional textbook pedagogies and can therefore serve as a useful supplement to them. Corpus-based activities involve exposure to authentic language data, encourage learner autonomy, and are compatible with an inductive approach in which the learners are encouraged to make their own discoveries about the language (Chambers, 2010; Gilquin & Granger, 2010).

Problems with the current state of vocabulary in foreign language textbooks

The current presentation of vocabulary in contemporary lower-level language textbooks widely used in the United States is problematic. Previous research has shown that the vocabulary chosen for presentation fails to include the most frequently used words (Lipinski 2010). Furthermore, the activities presented concentrate to an overwhelming extent on only some sub-types of vocabulary knowledge (Brown 2011; Neary-Sundquist, in press).

A number of previous studies have compared textbook vocabulary to natural language corpora and found substantial discrepancies between the two. Many of these studies have been conducted on materials for English language teaching (Carter & McCarthy 1995, Glisan & Drescher 1993, Gilmore 2004).

Research comparing the vocabulary found in U.S. foreign language textbooks with corpora has also been conducted, although this area is not as well developed as the English corpus-based textbook studies. For Spanish, Davies and Face (2006) compared vocabulary word lists from six college Spanish textbooks with frequency data from the *Corpus del Español*. They found that "...for whatever N number of vocabulary words a textbook includes, only 10-50% of those are among the N most frequent lemma in the language. For example, as Table 4 above indicates, if a textbook presents 2000 vocabulary words, only 10-50% of those words are among the most frequently used 2000 lemma in the language." In other words, the majority of the words covered in contemporary Spanish textbooks are not the most frequent words in the language according to language corpora. For German,

Lipinski (2010) compared the frequency of vocabulary presented in German textbooks with corpora or frequency lists for German. Lipinski (2010) compared the vocabulary presented in three first-year textbooks of German with the most frequent German words as presented in the *Frequency Dictionary of German*. She found that 29-44% of the words found in the three textbooks were in the 4000 and less frequent words. Only 24-36% of the words in the three books belonged to the 1000 most frequent word group. Although Lipinski notes that frequency alone cannot be the sole factor in selecting vocabulary for textbook presentation, she characterizes the results as "disheartening" and observes that this may contribute to cognitive overload on the part of the students.

In sum, studies on various foreign and second language textbooks have found a serious discrepancy between the vocabulary presented and the vocabulary frequently used by native speakers. A majority of the vocabulary items presented in textbooks is composed of relatively low-frequency words.

The comparison of the vocabulary found in language textbooks with that found in natural language corpora is only one aspect of textbook vocabulary instruction. Brown (2011) investigated another aspect, that of the types of vocabulary knowledge that textbook activities focus on. In this analysis, Brown (2011) examined textbook vocabulary activities using Nation's (2001) framework of the various aspects of vocabulary knowledge.

Nation (2001) proposed that vocabulary knowledge is not a matter of making a simple form-meaning connection. On the contrary, he identified nine aspects of knowledge that together make up what it means to know a word. Nation distinguished three overarching aspects of vocabulary knowledge, each with three subcategories: Form (spoken form, written form, word parts), Meaning (form and meaning, concept and referents, associations), and Use (grammatical functions, collocations, constraints on use). Nation pointed out that the psychological reality of these distinctions between form, meaning, and use aspects of vocabulary knowledge is supported by previous research (Ellis 1994; 1995, Aitchison 1994).

Brown (2011) analyzed the vocabulary activities in English as a Second Language textbooks using Nation's (2001) nine aspects of vocabulary knowledge. Brown found that textbook exercises overwhelmingly focus on the aspects of form and meaning and grammatical function. Spoken form was given moderate attention, but the other six aspects of vocabulary knowledge (written form, word parts, concept and referents, associations, collocations, constraints on use) were largely neglected. A similar study of German textbooks (Neary-Sundquist, in press) found results that were largely similar to those of Brown (2011). The aspects of vocabulary knowledge that received the most attention were form and meaning and grammatical function, while collocations and constraints on use received the least attention.

Practical difficulties with integrating corpus-based exercises in the language classroom

There are a number of practical difficulties that have most likely contributed to the fact that the use of corpora in the classroom as language learning tools has not become widespread. First of all, language classes are not usually conducted in classrooms that have a computer for every student. This is possible, but requires access to a computer lab, which in turn requires advance planning and limits the amount of time available for the learning activity. Once in the computer lab, the set-up of the room may make it difficult to work on other types of activities. In other words, a teacher cannot simply work a corpus exercise into a class on an ad-hoc basis, but must more-or-less plan for an entire corpus-based lesson. Once the issues surrounding computer lab access have been dealt with, the next hurdle involves becoming proficient at using the technology. Although we may think that we are living in the digital age in which all of our students are comfortable with anything computer-based, this is not always the case. It has been my experience that students' familiarity with technology is often limited to particular programs, and that they are just as intimidated by new and unfamiliar technology as those who are not avid users of the Internet might be. They are unsure of how to do

things and fearful of pressing the wrong button. Thus using corpora in the language classroom requires training time for the students as well as troubleshooting time. This may further discourage teachers from bringing corpus-based activities into the classroom. The time needed to teach the students how to use the corpus combined with the time that the students will actually be accessing it makes this a time-consuming pedagogy. It is not surprising that teachers might choose to employ a more traditional approach; they might ask themselves if using a corpus to illustrate the difference between two words is really worth it. It is easier, simpler, and less time-consuming to simply tell the students when to use two words, such as *studieren* ‘to study (a discipline)’ and *lernen* ‘to learn’. An inductive approach will likely take more time, and initially definitely more preparation on the part of the teacher. Teacher preparation is another issue that disfavors corpus use. As in the case of students, teachers are often not comfortable with new technology. Especially when faced with a situation in which they must become expert users and in turn teach others in a relatively short time, it is easy to understand why teachers might avoid bringing natural language corpora into the classroom.

One of the biggest challenges of making the use of language corpora more widespread, however, may simply be that the teachers lack familiarity with the resources and a lack of ideas of how to use them. The only way to solve this problem is to educate teachers through presentations and articles in order to make the entire process of accessing a corpus less intimidating and to offer suggestions and examples of how this can be integrated into their teaching. This paper aims to promote teacher awareness of the utility of integrating corpus based activities into their curriculum and offering practical suggestions for how to make their own activities that align with their own teaching units and pedagogical goals.

A paper-based, alternative approach to corpus exercises

Boulton (2010) argues persuasively that corpus exercises that are paper-based have a number of advantages. Following Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006), Boulton notes that paper-based materials may be particularly appropriate for lower-level learners. A relatively free activity in which learners interact with the corpus without much supervision may be too demanding for lower-level learners and overload their working memory capacity. Paper-based corpus exercises also allow learners to get used to the idea of the corpus and how it works, serving as an entry point into corpus-based pedagogy. Boulton notes the following:

In other words, learners may find it easier to graduate from “soft” to “hard” DDL (Gabrielatos, 2005) or from what Cresswell (2007) called “deductive DDL” (i.e., starting with teacher-led exercises) to fully “inductive DDL” (i.e., starting with the data on their own). (p.539)

The corpus: *Das Digitale Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache (Digital Dictionary of the German Language)*

The activities for this project use corpus data and online features of the *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (Digital Dictionary of the German

Language), or DWDS. The DWDS is an online corpus project sponsored by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (German Research Society) and the *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences), available online at www.dwds.de. The project's main purpose is to provide an online, digital dictionary and a massive repository of searchable 20th- and 21st-century German-language texts that serve as sources for the dictionary. The DWDS is based on several dictionaries and aggregates information from the *Wörterbuch der deutschen Gegenwartssprache* (Dictionary of Contemporary German), the *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm* (German Dictionary by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm), and its updated edition, as well as the *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen* (German Etymological Dictionary) by Wolfgang Pfeifer. The main reasons the DWDS was used for this study are that it is one of the largest German-language corpora available online, but it is also balanced and representative, with many different sources and its interface is relatively easy for both students and teachers to learn to use with little experience using corpora.²

In addition to providing definitions, synonyms, etymologies, and all other lexical information about each word gathered from the various dictionaries, the DWDS provides examples and data from a large, balanced, and representative corpus of texts. These texts make up the *Kernkorpus* (Core Corpus) that was used in the design of activities for this paper. The *Kernkorpus* consists of over 125 Million words in 7 Million sentences found in 79, 830 documents from various genres and text-types written in the 20th century, including literary works, scientific texts, non-fiction and newspapers. The corpus is annotated for parts of speech and is lemmatized to allow for searches of various grammatical forms of each word.³

Although there are several features of the DWDS and the *Kernkorpus* that can be used in the design of classroom activities, this study focused only on one, namely, the *Wortprofil 3.0*, or Word Profile. After the user enters a word in the DWDS, the *Wortprofil* panel appears automatically among several DWDS panels as a default that display different aspects of the original entry and its lexical characteristics. The *Wortprofil* panel displays a word cloud, or a graphic display of words that are associated with the entry word based on co-occurrences with it in the corpus. The user can choose to display between two and 250 associated words in the word cloud; the associations are displayed with varying sizes and boldness based on the frequency with which they co-occur with the lexical entry, as in the popular word clouds generated online by sites such as www.wordle.com. When the user clicks on any associated word in the cloud in the *Wortprofil*, sentences appear in a panel below the cloud that provide examples of real examples from the corpus in which the word its associates. Other features of the *Wortprofil* include searches for various grammatical forms that occur along with the entry word, including attributive adjectives that often occur with the word or other words that often occur in coordinated constructions with the original entry. In addition, the user can enter a *Vergleichswort* (comparison word) so that the set of associated words for two entries can be displayed in the panel at the same time. Moreover,

quantitative data are available for all associations along with the strength and frequency of these associations.

Two corpus-based exercises for lower-level learners of German

The two exercises presented below (in Appendix A) were created using data from the DWDS corpus. They are entirely paper-based and could be printed out and used in the classroom as is. The only additional materials needed to work through the exercises is a dictionary of some kind, and even this is optional if the teacher would rather translate some words for the students.

The exercises first introduce the students to the idea of a corpus as a collection of language. They are then introduced to the first word cloud, which has the fairly intuitive feature that the larger a word is, the more frequent it is used. Students are initially asked simply to find three of the larger (=most frequent) words or phrases that occur with the word *Kaffee* 'coffee'. This is a simple exercise that could be done even in the first semester of study. Similarly, the rest of the exercises also only ask the student to find words or phrases, write them down, and look up their meanings or ask their instructor as necessary.

Exercise E takes the learners a little further, asking them to try to decipher some full sentences from the corpus regarding coffee drinking habits of various nationalities. Likewise, this activity was designed to keep the burden on the learner relatively low by giving them simple true/false questions in English regarding the content. The phrasing of the true/false questions gives a clue to the content of the sentences if a learner is completely lost. If this particular exercise were judged to be too demanding for very low-level beginning students, it could of course be omitted or moved to the end of the exercises and treated as optional.

The final activity asks learners to compare the results from the DWDS search with results for the same word in a corpus of American English, the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). This last step allows the learner to consider the potential cultural connotations of the word and idea of coffee in both German and American cultures. Part of the intent here is to notice the co-occurrence of *Kaffee* and *Kuchen* 'cake' in the German corpus, which could in turn lead to a discussion of this afternoon ritual. Similarly, the final question in the pizza exercise asks the students to compare collocates of pizza in the German and American corpora. Many of the words that occur most frequently with pizza in the American corpus relate to the names of chain restaurants or to words that have to do with pizza delivery. However, the goal of this part of the activity is open-ended and designed to go beyond the author's expectation. It has been my experience that students often make connections and observations that escaped me when I designed the activities. This is to be welcomed in this type of exercise.

The final comparison activity could also lead to a discussion how arguments are constructed and what constitutes evidence. This undoubtedly involves higher-order thinking skills that some might find challenging to incorporate into language classes. However, it is mentioned here as an example of how language learning can build critical thinking skills, which is of particular relevance for university language programs that are increasingly called upon to justify their existence. An

example of this type of evaluative skill would be to ask the class what it might mean that *aus Pappbechern* 'out of paper cups' is mentioned in the German but not in the English corpus. Does this indicate that Germans drink coffee out of paper cups more than Americans do? Not necessarily--it could also be the case that this phrase co-occurs with coffee in the German corpus because it is a practice that is being discussed in the media more frequently and has a particular cultural significance. In contrast, it might not be mentioned as much in the American sources because it is an accepted fact of life that is not worth remarking on. To resolve this question, the corpus itself must be consulted to see how the expression is used in context. But even if this is not done inside or outside of class, it is important to highlight that the co-occurrence of one word or phrase with another may signify different things.

These example exercises expose learners to authentic vocabulary, but they also put an emphasis on words that occur with the vocabulary word under investigation and ask the student to identify the superordinate categories to which the words belong. Both of these aspects of vocabulary knowledge were identified by Brown (2011) as receiving very little attention in textbook exercises. These activities therefore supplement the textbook focus on the form-meaning connection and grammatical use of vocabulary items.

An additional advantage found in these materials is that they allow for varying levels of interest and ability. Some students may feel comfortable doing the minimum required of filling in the blanks, while others may eagerly look up everything in the word cloud and later proceed to access the corpus itself online. The use of materials that offer something for different levels of proficiency and interest is not a trivial consideration. In classes that may contain 15-25 students, it is not possible for the teacher to target lessons for every level; they must by necessity try to reach the middle level of students with most of their planned activities. One potential solution to this problem is to include minimum and maximum levels of achievement within one exercise so that learners at either extreme do not feel either overwhelmed or bored with the activity. In the exercise presented here, a closer look at the word cloud should offer a challenge for more proficient learners.

Other advantages: Data Driven Learning and Learner Autonomy

The activities presented above were created to help correct the fact that contemporary German language textbooks often present relatively low-frequency vocabulary. These activities are designed with the every-day classroom teacher in mind, with a goal of making the incorporation of corpus-based authentic materials more accessible and less prone to practical or technological problems. But aside from utility, there are indications in the previous research that working with these types of material can increase both learner motivation and learning.

Johns (1988, 1991) first suggested what he termed data-driven learning. In this method, learners examine a set of examples of a vocabulary word (or other grammatical feature) taken from natural language by native speakers. They explore the material themselves, and discover how the language works inductively. Johns likened the learner's role to that of Sherlock Holmes; each learner is an active

language detective. I think that this approach is both appropriate to the vocabulary-learning problem outlined above as well as empowering for the students. I think that our students' natural curiosity and desire to learn is sometimes deadened by the way we present material to them in the traditional classroom environment.

The type of inductive approach to learning stands in contrast to the typically deductive approach favored by traditional pedagogy and textbooks. The switch from a teacher-led, deductive approach to a learner-centered, inductive approach has important consequences for the role of both the learner and the teacher. Sripicharn (2012) characterizes the learner's role in this type of data driven learning as a researcher, detective, or traveller, and notes that this role is particularly well-suited to corpus exploration. In this type of pedagogy, the learner has direct access to real language data without the mediation of the teacher. This may be intimidating to some learners, but it can also build confidence in their abilities and develop their critical thinking skills. Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan 1985) argues that autonomy is a key component of learner motivation. The role of learner autonomy in language learning has received increasing attention in recent years, and has been shown to increase motivation and active participation as well as a greater sense of the learner's own responsibility for their learning (Nguyen & Gu 2013). Corpus exploration using a data driven learning approach has the potential to increase learner autonomy.

An increase in learner autonomy also affects the role of the teacher. It allows the teacher to reduce the extent to which they are seen as the authoritative and final source of knowledge about the language being taught. This role is burdensome for the teacher and has been called the "Atlas complex" in reference to the Titan Atlas, who held up the sky, literally bearing the weight of the world on his shoulders. By familiarizing learners with the use of a corpus, the teacher is able to show students another source for knowledge about the language and answers to their questions, one that they can use themselves and one that does not always give simple answers. The more complex answers found when searching real language data may sometimes make students uncomfortable, but they also reflect the complexity of language.

Conclusion

Best practices in language learning technology advocate a "pedagogy first, technology second approach", in which a pedagogical problem is identified, and then a solution is sought that may or may not involve technology. Technology is never applied simply because it is available or seems to be cutting-edge. Rather, it is used only when it is the best tool to solve a pedagogical problem.

This paper has argued that corpus-based exercises are an appropriate tool to solve the pedagogical problem of the lack of natural and frequent vocabulary in contemporary foreign language textbooks. The state of affairs in current textbooks is unlikely to change anytime soon, nor is their widespread use in language classrooms. The textbook is entrenched as a given in both secondary and university classrooms, providing an established and familiar framework for language learning.

Since textbooks are unlikely to be replaced or extensively revised anytime soon, the aim of this paper has been to raise awareness of resources that are available to augment them. A corpus-based inductive model could be brought into any classroom as a counterpoint to the traditional presentation-practice-production model. This will serve to expand both the students' and teacher's knowledge of what constitutes language and will allow them to see the textbook as one resource, rather than as the ultimate source of knowledge about the language.

Notes

1. For an overview of the use of corpora in language teaching, see Vyatkina (2012), O'Keeffe & McCarthy (2010) and Sinclair (2004).
2. Vyatkina (2013) provides useful information on using the DWDS for teaching purposes. Her project focuses on advanced-level students who use the corpus for collecting data on grammatical constructions.
3. In addition to the *Kernkorpus*, the DWDS includes several other sub-corpora that weren't used in this study. They include a journalistic corpus with articles from *Bild*, *Welt*, and *Die Zeit*, and several other newspapers; the *DDR-Korpus* with 9 Million words from texts written in the German Democratic Republic between 1949 and 1990; the *Wendekorpus*, which includes transcriptions of 77 interviews with East and West Berliners' experiences with the Fall of the Berlin Wall; and the *Korpus Gesprochene Sprache* (Corpus of Spoken German), or 2.5 million tokens from speeches and interviews from the 20th century. The DWDS displays information from these other corpora, but only the *Kernkorpus* was used here.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Sample Exercises

Example 1: *Kaffee*

Below you will find a word cloud for the word *Kaffee* in German. A word cloud shows the words that commonly occur with the word *Kaffee*. The larger the word in the box is, the more often it occurs with *Kaffee*. The data used to make this list comes from a collection of German language, Das Digitale Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache. The DWDS is composed of over 1.8 billion words. A large collection of natural language like this is referred to as a corpus.



Now we will do some exercises to learn more about the word *Kaffee* in German.

A. Look at the words in the box. Write three of the biggest (=most frequent) words or phrases below:

Do you know what these words or phrases mean? If not, take a moment to look them up or ask your instructor.

B. Look at the box again. Find three other food words (not drinks) that are mentioned. If you are not sure whether something is a food word, you may need to look it up.

C. Some of the words above are containers for holding coffee. Can you find three?

D. Some of the phrases in the box start with the word *wie* (=like). These expressions often indicate a category to which *Kaffee* belongs. Find three of them and write them below. What do they mean?

E. Look at the top left corner of the word cloud, and you will see the following expressions: *als Bier* and *als Tee*. What does *als* mean, and why do you think these expressions commonly occur with the word *Kaffee*? What kinds of sentences might they be a part of?

Here are some sample sentences that show how the expressions *als Bier* and *als Tee* are used with *Kaffee* in the corpus. Take your time and see if you can figure out what the sentences are saying about the consumption of coffee versus other beverages in Germany, the U.S. and the U.K., then answer the questions below.

*Mit durchschnittlichen 160 Litern im Jahr trinkt der Deutsche mehr **Kaffee als Bier** und Mineralwasser.*

*Zum ersten Mal in der Geschichte des Vereinigten Königreichs wird mehr **Kaffee als Tee** konsumiert, schrieb kürzlich der Guardian.*

*Zwar wird heute in den USA mehr **Kaffee als Tee** getrunken, aber ganz vergessen die Amerikaner den Tee sicher nicht.*

Germans drink more coffee than beer.	True	False
Americans drink more coffee than tea.	True	False
In Great Britain, they drink more tea than coffee.	True	False

E. Below is a box that shows similar information for the word coffee in American English. This data comes from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), which consists of 450 million words. In this sample, the words are ranked rather than in a word cloud. This sample shows the 15 most frequent words that occur with coffee in English. What similarities and differences do you notice between the German word cloud and the English word list. What could this suggest about the differences between how and when coffee is consumed in German vs. American culture?

CORPUS OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN			
450 MILLION WORDS, 1990-2012 [DOWNLOAD ALL 190]			
DISPLAY		<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT
	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	CUP
LIST	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	TABLE
HART	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	SHOP
KWIC	4	<input type="checkbox"/>	CUPS
OMPAP	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	DRINKING
EARCH	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	TEA
TRING	7	<input type="checkbox"/>	MORNING
WORDI	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	DRINK
COLLO	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	POT
POS	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	HOT
IST	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	MUG
RANDC	12	<input type="checkbox"/>	COFFEE
ECTIOI	13	<input type="checkbox"/>	SHOPS
SHOV	14	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIP
IGNC	15	<input type="checkbox"/>	SIPPED

Example 2: Pizza

▼ Überblick zu 'Pizza'

aus Holzofen aus Steinofen ausfährt backen
 Backmischungen Baguettes bestellen Burger Currywurst
Döner essen **gebacken** gegessen Gyros Hamburger
 Kebab Lasagne mit Champignons mit Schinken
 neapolitanische Nudelgerichte Nudeln ofenfrische Paella **Pasta**
Pizza Pommes Pommes frites Pudding Sandwiches Sushi
 tiefgefrorene tiefgekühlte Verzeahr vom Lieferservice

A. Several of the words and phrases above refer to other kinds of “fast food”. Can you find three of them?

B. Another group of words that occur with *Pizza* in German are foods that are not of German origin. Can you find three of them?

C. Several of the expressions that occur frequently with *Pizza* refer to how the pizza is baked, *aus Holzofen* and *aus Steinofen* (in the upper left area of the word cloud). Do you see a word you recognize in either of these words? Can you guess what they mean? If you do not know, look them up.

aus Holzofen =

aus Steinofen =

D. Towards the middle of the word cloud, you can see two expressions that start with *mit* (=with), *mit Champignons* and *mit Schinken*. What do these expressions mean, and why do you think that they occur frequently with *Pizza*?

E. Can you find three verbs that occur commonly with *pizza*? What do they mean?

F. Below is a sample from the COCA corpus of American English for the 15 words that occur most frequently with the word *pizza*. How many of the words relate to ordering *pizza* for delivery? Can you find the phrases above in the German word cloud that relate to *pizza* delivery? What are the most common toppings in the American corpus, and how does this compare to the German results? Can you make any guesses about differences in how Americans and Germans consume *pizza*?

	<input type="checkbox"/>	CONTEXT
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	HUT
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	PIZZA
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	DOUGH
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	CRUST
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	CHEESE
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	SLICE
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	PARLOR
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	DELIVERY
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	ORDER
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	EAT
11	<input type="checkbox"/>	PEPPERONI
12	<input type="checkbox"/>	DOMINO
13	<input type="checkbox"/>	OVEN
14	<input type="checkbox"/>	PASTA
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	BOX

You can search the corpora yourself. Here are the sources:

DWDS is available online at: <http://www.dwds.de>

COCA corpus is available online at: <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>

Grammar Teaching Approaches For Heritage Learners Of Spanish

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Abstract

Little has been said about the most effective teaching approaches to facilitate the grammar acquisition and development of Heritage Learners (HL). Can those strategies used for L2 grammar acquisition be applied to HL? HL have a clear advantage in processing meaning which would seemingly render L2 grammar teaching techniques more effective for this population. This article explores three L2 approaches that can be implemented in the HL classroom that hold promise in enhancing grammar acquisition: (1) processing instruction, (2) input-output cycles and (3) interactional feedback.

Introduction

According to Potowski (2005), Spanish classes for Heritage Speakers (HS) should be centered on literacy development and grammatical knowledge. Regarding grammatical knowledge, several scholars have identified linguistic aspects that do not seem to be completely acquired by HS (Montrul, 2008), that differed from or are similar to those of second language learners (Montrul, 2007; Silva-Corvalán, 1994) or that are simply different from monolinguals' linguistic knowledge (Cabo, D. Y., & Rothman, 2012). However, little has been said about the appropriate, or most effective teaching techniques to facilitate the grammar acquisition and development of HL. Can those used for L2 grammar

teaching be applied to HL? Perhaps one of the limitations in the use of current teaching techniques is L2 learners' struggle to attend to both form and meaning, particularly at lower and intermediate levels of linguistic development. However, there is an observed HL advantage in the relative ease of processing meaning due to their early naturalistic acquisition (Montrul et al. 2014). Therefore, we suggest that this would render L2 grammar teaching techniques more effective for this population. Under this assumption, we will address the ways in which three well-known L2 teaching techniques for grammar development can be implemented in the classroom for HL: (1) processing instruction, (2) input-output cycles and (3) interactional feedback. We will describe each of the techniques, briefly present their theoretical and empirical rationale and provide examples and guidelines for use in the classroom. We begin with an overview of research on L2 grammar instruction and then report recent findings on Spanish heritage grammar instruction.

Grammar instruction

Explicit knowledge is acquired through conscious processes, but implicit knowledge is acquired through subconscious processes. Whether grammar must be taught explicitly is under debate. Traditionally, grammar teaching involved the explicit presentation and practice of grammatical structures (Hedge, 2001; Ur, 2008, among others). In recent years, much has been written about ways of teaching grammar in a more effective manner that minimizes traditional explicit instruction. Ellis (2006) provides a more holistic definition that summarizes current trends in SLA: "Grammar teaching involves any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize it." (p. 84)

Does grammar have to be taught explicitly?

Traditionally, grammar has been taught explicitly following the presentation-production and practice model (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). This traditional model is not recommended since explicit presentation of grammar and practice through drills do not engage the necessary cognitive processes for grammar acquisition. More effective ways to teach grammar include comprehensible input that provides students the opportunity to use L2 in meaningful, communicative ways (Fernández, 2011).

According to input processing theory developed by VanPatten (1996, 2003), learners are strategically focused on the target structure(s) while form and meaning connections are emphasized. Students have to be exposed to large amounts of comprehensible input so that acquisition can take place. However, since meaning takes most of their attentional and cognitive resources, there is a limited amount of input that they can attend to and therefore, process, above all, at the beginner levels. At this point, corrective feedback is more advisable than explicit instruction.

What is grammar?

Grammar is “the underlying, implicit, and abstract knowledge that humans have in their minds regarding the morphology and syntactic rules of their mother language(s)” (Fernández, 2011, p. 156). This is the kind of knowledge required for L2 acquisition. Recently, Geeslin and Long (2014) proposed an alternative definition: an understanding of grammar that includes variation, or an, “appropriateness” of forms that are context-dependent.

Grammaring

According to Perez-Llantada and Larsen-Freeman (2007), teachers need to change their conception of grammar teaching. The term “grammaring” was used to convey that grammar should be taught as the fifth skill (added to reading, writing, speaking and listening). In order for students to be able to use grammar accurately (since they need this knowledge to become successful L2 learners), we have to provide students with the opportunity to do so through meaningful and engaging activities. Although knowledge of grammar requires forced output, Perez-Llantada and Larsen-Freeman claim that most of SLA research focuses on input processing. Consequently, there is a need to work on output processing and to make output practice strategically engaging.

Larsen-Freeman (1992) sees grammar as a resource for speakers to communicate in accurate (form), meaningful (meaning) and appropriate (use) ways. “Form” has to do with the morphosyntactic properties of a construction, “meaning” with the semantics of the construction and “use” with the appropriate context for that structure. Larsen-Freeman (2003) maintained that the “use” dimension is the one that teachers must implement through effective pedagogical activities. Teaching grammar as a skill will enhance communicative accuracy and as such the consideration of grammar as a skill will lead to increased communicative competence.. Additionally, grammar cannot be separated from vocabulary and thus the teaching of grammar should seek to extend students’ lexical knowledge. Even though grammar can be acquired implicitly in natural contexts, classroom instruction could accelerate the learning process.

Grammar correction

Regarding oral grammar correction, research has revealed this as largely ineffective even though it is still a common classroom practice and contributes little to the development of grammatical speech (Truscott, 1999). Truscott (1996) further claimed that grammar correction in L2 writing classes should be abandoned because it has been proven to be ineffective and to have harmful effects. Students tend to follow their own intuitions instead of following teachers’ corrections. Teachers’ challenge is to be aware of their limited ability to influence developmental sequences and ineffectiveness of correcting grammatical errors that naturally arise due to developmental sequences. Ferris’ (2004) research disputes Truscott’s claim and supports positive learning effects of error correction

on writing skills.. Students need to notice and attend to their errors so that they can avoid fossilization.

Research Supporting Grammar Teaching

Noticing (attention to form) is necessary for language learning (Schmidt, 1990, 1992; Schmidt and Watanabe, 2001). It has been documented that L2 learners go through developmental language learning sequences. Pienemann (1984) developed the teachability hypothesis, which proposes that certain developmental sequences cannot be affected by grammar teaching but others can benefit from it. This would be the case when grammar teaching coincides with the stage of acquisition. The potential influence of grammar teaching on development sequences supports the strategic and purposeful instruction of grammar in the language acquisition classroom.

According to Mitchell (2000), grammar teaching should be planned and systematic. Grammar teaching should take place often, yet in brief segments that are purposefully redundant. Feedback is important in grammar teaching, as it promotes learners' control of grammar. All of this has to be embedded in meaning-oriented tasks.

Focus on form is necessary specifically if one wishes to develop higher levels of accuracy in the L2. Relying solely on communicative language teaching in the absence of grammatical instruction could be insufficient for achieving higher levels of accuracy (Ellis, 1997). According to Norris & Ortega (2000), explicit instruction of grammar results in important gains in the learning of form, and these gains are durable over time. Nassaji and Fotos (2004) suggest that learners need opportunities in the classroom to produce structures that have been taught both explicitly (grammar lessons) and implicitly (frequent exposure).

Fernández (2011) studied how postsecondary textbooks presented grammar, and she found that some of the textbooks follow several approaches at the same time: 1) acquisition-based approaches, where grammar is learned through input processing, 2) meaningful interaction and 3) product-oriented approaches, where grammar is learned through controlled oral practice. There is a strong tendency towards the latter, which indicates a strong prevalence of traditional instruction with explicit instruction of rules that are practiced in contrived contexts. Most textbooks ignore the central role of input in the development of L2 grammar. This conservatism in the profession has been attributed to instructors' expectations and prior experiences with language learning and does not reflect findings in SLA (Borg, 2003). However, there are some signs of change towards input processing and meaningful interaction (Fernández, 2011).

Teaching Grammar in Spanish for Heritage Speaker Courses

Who are heritage speakers? Differences between heritage learners, native speakers, and foreign language learners: Implications for grammar instruction.

Heritage learners are those students of language who “are raised in a home where a non-English language is spoken, who speak or merely understand the

heritage language, and who are to some degree bilingual in English and the heritage language” (Valdés, 2000, p. 1). Heritage language learners are those individuals who work on maintaining or expanding their knowledge of their heritage language in a formal classroom (Kondo-Brown, 2006).

There are some characteristics that HL have in common with second language learners: neither of them are monolinguals so they make the same English transfer errors. However, manner and context of acquisition are different so heritage learners may require less instructional time than second language learners to develop the same skills (Correa, 2011). Regarding Spanish literacy skills, heritage learners have less experience.

Advanced L2 learners and heritage speakers do not differ much from each other but heritage speakers have more advantages at low and intermediate proficiency levels (Au et al., 2002, 2008; Montrul, 2005). All this evidence leads us to believe that some L2 methods can be applied in the heritage learner’s classroom. Montrul (2010) raised the question of whether explicit instruction is also beneficial for these learners.

In terms of skills, heritage learners outperform L2 learners in oral skills and L2 learners excel in written tasks (Montrul et al. 2008). Acquiring a language from birth brings advantages in phonology and morphosyntax. In terms of vocabulary, it is context specific and depends on experience (Montrul, 2010). Regarding grammar, heritage speakers tend to struggle with subject verb agreement, gender agreement in nouns (Lipski, 1993; Montrul, Foote and Perpiñan, 2008), null subject pronouns (Montrul, 2004, Silva-Corvalán, 1994), the subjunctive (Montrul, 2007, Silva-Corvalán, 1994) and the conditional. Research showed that they control the present and past tenses but they confuse aspectual distinctions between perfective and imperfective forms (Montrul, 2002, Polinsky 2007, Silva-Corvalán, 1994). Due to their reduced input conditions and their limited use of the heritage language, their grammatical systems show a tendency toward simplification and overgeneralization of complex morphological forms. Both L2 and heritage learners will benefit from form-focused instruction for better grammatical accuracy. However, L2 learners should be given more opportunities for oral production whereas heritage learners should focus more on written tasks (Montrul, 2011). It has been found that heritage speakers may not have advantages over L2 learners with grammar that is acquired in later stages in life, or that require significant amounts of input (Montrul, 2008). This seems to be the case of the overt subject pronouns as found in a study conducted by Keating, VanPatten and Jegerski (2011). Heritage speakers do not show any advantages in the resolution of pronoun ambiguities but they do in nominal and verbal agreement, or in clitic pronouns (Montrul, 2005, 2006; Montrul, Foote and Perpiñan, 2008) because they have been exposed to the language since childhood.

Even though heritage learners acquire their first language in a naturalistic setting, not all the features they acquire are like native like. In fact, many do not develop the full spectrum of sociolinguistic registers or academic literacy achieved by monolingual native speakers (Valdés and Geofrrion-Vinci, 1998, among others). Some of them are more similar to L2 learners in terms of errors, such

as transfer errors or fossilization. Like L2 learners, they need motivation but also their identity plays a crucial role in the acquisition of the language. Since they are very aware of their weaknesses, many experience shyness tending to avoid interaction with native speakers (Krashen, 1998). Overall, they have high levels of communicative competence but they need to increase their vocabulary and improve their grammar (Montrul, 2010). HS benefit from exposure to instruction on reading and writing while L2 learners have an advantage on these registers as Montrul's work has shown.

How to teach grammar to heritage learners

Jeffries (1985) found that students who begin instruction with some explicit metalinguistic knowledge are most likely to perform as teachers expect in terms of production. The metalinguistic knowledge that students have acquired should be taken into consideration when selecting a teaching approach.

In the same vein, regarding explicit instruction, Colombi (2009) proposes a curriculum that builds on thematic clusters of texts where instruction explicitly focuses on language embedded in a text where the lexico-grammatical features of the text help in the realization of the content. All texts should be authentic and reveal different Spanish dialects to represent the diversity of the Hispanic world. Correa (2011) concludes that beginner level students benefit from explicit and implicit knowledge, but intermediate and advanced learners benefit more from explicit (metalinguistic) knowledge. In fact, acquisition of some linguistic items (complex structures) are best acquired through explicit instruction while others through a more naturalistic exposure with no focus on form (no-complex). (Alderson, Clapham & Steel, 1997) Moreover, Han and Ellis (1998) found that metalanguage plays an insignificant role in general language proficiency but analyzed explicit knowledge might play a more significant role. Thus, teaching explicit knowledge might emphasize the development of analyzed knowledge.

Heritage Learners are usually confused by grammatical terminology but some focus on form might be beneficial for them (Anderson, 2008). However, the goal of grammar instruction should not be the focus for learning a foreign language. Grammar lessons empowered these students to reconsider their feelings for the language (Mikulski, 2006). They are considered tools for reflection, awareness and empowerment. Potowski (2005) proposes that classes for heritage learners should be considered Language Arts courses instead of Foreign Language ones, centered on literacy development and grammatical knowledge. However, according to Lynch (2008) this could be beneficial for advanced students but might be problematic for low proficiency levels since there are linguistic similarities between L2 and heritage learners. He proposes to focus on the verb system, *tú* and *usted* distinction, copula usage, subject-verb agreement, articles, prepositions and pronouns. In terms of an effective teaching approach at this level, he suggests a communicative theoretical framework (input and output) with integrated explicit instruction.

Montrul (2008) explained that heritage language acquisition is an incomplete language acquisition process taking place in a bilingual environment. Therefore, heritage grammar acquisition follows the path of L2 learners. Nonetheless, having

these students in traditional L2 classrooms would be a disappointing experience for them since the heritage classroom deals not only with grammar but also with spelling, accent and vocabulary emphasis in terms of linguistic objectives as well as with important identity and cultural and personal issues (Carreira, 2004).

There are several differences between Language Arts courses and Foreign Language courses that include different points of departure and some focus on form even though students are confused by grammatical terminology.

Correa (2011) compared heritage learners (HL) and foreign learners (FL) performance of subjunctive accuracy and metalinguistic knowledge. FL learners outperformed HL learners in metalinguistic knowledge (MK) and HL learners outperformed FL learners in subjunctive accuracy. As students learn MK in Spanish, some transfer into English might take place. In FL, MK and subjunctive accuracy are related but this is not the case for HL. For FL learners, MK has an impact on their subjunctive accuracy performance. HL, however, do not need to have this MK to perform accurately. This is due to their naturalistic manner of acquisition. By young adulthood, HL's competence resembles that of L2 learners since their grammar has not reached the full attainment of their L1 counterparts. Also, knowing the rules is unrelated to accuracy in actual language production by these learners. What works for FL does not necessarily have to work for HL. Focus on grammar has to be addressed through different approaches. For HL, grammar teaching should reflect how it works from a descriptive perspective versus the prescriptive perspective adopted in FL courses.

Potowski and Carreira (2004) point out that heritage language teaching should respond to more issues than the linguistic ones such as academic deficiencies and affective factors that might negatively influence their study of Spanish. As mentioned before, bilinguals are not like monolinguals so expectations should vary; that is, we cannot expect that they will speak, write and use grammar like monolinguals. Therefore, there are several opinions about what HS should acquire in the Spanish classroom: Valdes (1997) proposes a focus on language maintenance, the acquisition of a prestigious dialect, the transfer of literacy skills from English to Spanish, and the expansion of their range. Others think students should be prepared to confront linguistic and cultural prejudices. Clearly, heritage language learners face a problem of language loss. The main purpose of current textbooks on the market aims to maintain learners' heritage language and to raise awareness about the importance of the language for the cultural health of their nations and students' overall well-being. Therefore, these Spanish classes focus on cultural connections between American and Latino cultures as the path to educational success (Carreira, 2007).

Educators have to decide what grammar uses should be focused on in the classroom and how HL acquire these forms (Carreira and Potowski, 2011). Teachers should have a good understanding of their students as bilingual individuals and not confuse a lack of metalinguistic knowledge with linguistic limitations. According to Montrul (2011), existing theories of L1 and L2 acquisition and bilingualism can be extended to make predictions about heritage language learners' grammar: what they do know and what they have not acquired completely.

Another question that arises among instructors is what dialect of Spanish should be the target language of instruction. According to many researchers, the home variety has to be taught since it is a cultural marker for the Spanish-speaking population in the US (Villa, 1996; Bernal-Enríquez & Hernández Chávez, 2003). The ideal curriculum would offer a heritage track where students could maintain their dialects while acquiring the academic one (Mrak, 2011). However, sometimes there is a struggle between the goals of instructors and students, while instructors want to introduce the standard register, the students may want to reunite with their dialect and culture (Benjamin, 1997).

These students have vocabulary limitations since their terminology is restricted to the domestic domain. Therefore, instructors should provide them with more spheres of use to amplify their knowledge (Valdés & Geoffrion-Vinci, 1998; Fairclough & Mrak, 2003). Regarding morphology and syntax, students tend to use the most stigmatized forms (Hidalgo, 1997) so they need to compare these forms with the academic ones. Any teaching must be within current teaching approaches in Heritage Language Education, in an environment of additive bilingualism where the home variety is respected and maintained and the academic one is presented as an option for other registers (Mrak, 2011). By involving the students in this process of discovering new dialects this can become a liberating and empowering experience (Colombi, 2009). Instructors' positive attitudes towards students' home dialect will increase language acquisition and the promote the benefits of bilingualism (Tse, 1997). Therefore, instructors trained in linguistic variation are the most qualified to inform these students on the validity of their dialects and to help them extend their linguistic repertoires (Mrak, 2011).

It has been proposed that students' attitudes may be used as a starting point for class planning (Carreira, 2003). Carreira surveyed HLs and found that students associated the English language with employment opportunities and the Spanish language with their Latino identities (diglossia). By assessing students' attitudes, instructors can get feedback from students to be able to accomplish the following goals: to increase the chances for maintenance of the heritage language and reconnecting students with the heritage background. The results showed students have a high regard for the Spanish language, but they had a lack of confidence in their linguistic abilities and the validity of their dialect. Therefore, instructors should aim to create an environment of confidence and one that cultivates pride in their cultural and linguistic heritage.

Current approaches to teaching grammar

Traditional grammar presents rules with a focus on form while communicative approaches present grammar with a focus on meaning and form. Focus on form addresses the students' attention to grammar in communication. According to Long (2000), this approach is effective for teaching grammar because it is learner-centered. What is crucial is to integrate grammar and communication in effective ways. Form- focused instruction involves providing students with explicit grammar by an explanation, or negative evidence as corrective feedback (Sanz and Morgan-Short, 2004).

There are a host of grammatical techniques that are successful for both FLLs and HLLs. As previously addressed, some focus on form, and others focus on natural acquisition of grammar, and still others combine a focus on meaning and form. Since one of the main differences between L2 learners of Spanish and HLLs is the greater ability for HLLs to attend to meaning—it follows naturally that techniques that stress a focus on form will be of particular benefit. What follows are three techniques that can be utilized to explore grammar in the language classroom. These are particularly useful for HLLs, but they can also be utilized by teachers of FLs. These are three of the most important form-focused techniques in grammar instruction: processing instruction, input-output cycles and interactional feedback.

Processing Instruction

Processing Instruction is an input-based technique for grammar instruction. VanPatten is the originator of this approach (1996). The main principles of input processing are the following: 1) Learners process input for meaning before they do it for form. 2) Learners make form-meaning connections so that acquisition occurs (VanPatten, 1996, 2004).

Within this model, structured-input activities are designed to facilitate acquisition by helping input become intake. For example, a multiple-choice question-answer format to teach Spanish direct object pronouns when describing a photo of the relationship between members of a family. Students have to make the referent-pronoun correspondence in order to select the right answer. As Ertürk (2013) revises, learners are not asked to produce the target form during the instructional phase, but they process sentences and interpret them correctly at the same time they are attending to form.

VanPatten et al (2009), researched object pronouns and word order in Spanish using two techniques: processing instruction and dictogloss. They found that processing instruction is generally superior to dictogloss as an instructional technique for these target forms. However, Nassaji and Fotos (2011) note a few limitations: it can only address specific linguistic forms with clear form-meaning relationships and it does not make learners produce output. Lyster and Salto (2010) also caution that processing instruction only allows us to “notice” target forms, it does not necessarily develop certain metalinguistic awareness; students need to have opportunities to elaborate. Teachers may consider the combination of processing instruction with other output techniques such as output tasks or corrective feedback.

In terms of the heritage language classroom research, Potowski, Jegerski and Morgan-Short (2009) examined traditional and input processing techniques to assess L2 and heritage learners of Spanish in the acquisition of past subjunctive. They found improvements in comprehension, production and grammaticality judgments for both groups in both techniques but this technique seemed to be more beneficial for L2 learners since they achieved more gains.

Input and Output cycles

In addition to comprehensible input, comprehensible output is needed for fluency and accuracy. Izumi (2002) researched the noticing function of output of directing attention to form in order to acquire form and meaning in an integrated way. According to Swain (1985), when students are pushed to produce output, they notice the gaps in their ability to express what they want to express.. Input and Output cycles ensure purposeful inclusion of both input and output in the design of instruction.

Input and output cycles consist of activities in which students listen to a text and jot down words and try to reconstruct a text by focusing on form. In input and output cycles, output focuses on attention in carefully planned tasks (Izumi & Bigelow, 2000). Learners are pushed to produce output and compare it to input they previously received (they are exposed to the text again). This way, students are pushed towards paying attention to accuracy in order to convey meaning (Thornbury, 1997).

The basic format of this technique could be a text-reconstruction task or a guided-essay writing task. The reconstruction task seems to be more effective in helping learners to notice the gap when the target is a specific form. For example, 1. Input: Students listen twice to a story of the last trip of a fellow American college student to a Latin American country last summer. Meanwhile, they have to record the main ideas. 2. Output: Then, they have two to three minutes to write with a classmate what they remember of the story in chronological order. 3. Input: Afterwards, they listen to the story again. 4. Output: Finally, they have one more chance to revise and rewrite their reconstruction of the story.

Input and Output Cycling helps learners process input in an efficient way since it becomes an attention focusing device (Leeser, 2008). Pushed output affects learner's noticing of the target grammatical form on the subsequent input (Basterrechea et al. 2014). Re-exposure to input after production makes learners aware of the gaps in their learning.

To my knowledge, there are no studies for Spanish heritage learners using the input-output cycles grammar instruction technique. Future research could test this technique to obtain accurate results and compare the findings to the other two techniques presented in this article.

Interactional feedback

When a teacher provides corrective feedback during a meaningful conversation with a student, he or she is engaging in interactional feedback. Interactional feedback allows teachers to provide students with information about language production while focused on non-linguistic content that motivates them to use the target language (Lyster and Salto, 2010). This strategic provision of feedback is very effective but there are factors to be considered: feedback type, instructional setting, age and linguistic targets. Examples of common feedback are recasts (negative evidence by indicating the error), explicit correction or prompts (positive evidence by providing the correct form).

Table 1. Feedback types: Recasts and Prompts

Recasts: Negative evidence	Student: <i>Tengo una problema.</i> [I have a problem.] Instructor: ¿ <i>Una problema?</i> ¿ <i>Seguro?</i> [A problem? Are you sure?]
Prompts: Positive evidence	Student: <i>Tengo una problema.</i> [I have a problem.] Instructor: <i>51 ¡Ah!</i> ¿ <i>Un problema!</i> [Ah! A problem!]

Oliver (2000) found that younger learners benefited more from interactional feedback while older learners take more responsibility in their learning and consequently benefit from all kinds of feedback. Finally, Lyster and Salto (2010) claim that interactional feedback plays a key role in instructional input. It might work best when combined with other form-focused activities like explicit instruction (Lyster, 2004).

Montrul (2010) examined dative-marking in heritage learners using positive and negative evidence through explicit instruction, practice and corrective feedback. She found some focus on form was beneficial for heritage learners. Montrul and Bowles (2009) found that the omission of the dative marker could be due to the interference of English, or the lack of salience. This marker does not interfere with communication because of its limited communicative value. All these techniques are expected to be effective in the heritage classroom in the same way they are in the second language classroom. However, it appears that more metalinguistic awareness and explicit instruction might be beneficial for HL as stated earlier. Therefore, despite all the benefits of each technique, interactional feedback may be the most beneficial for HL..

Conclusion

Research on L2 grammar instruction found that several techniques with a focus on form have proven effective in the classroom. This article is an attempt to present an overview of three well-known grammar instruction techniques that may prove beneficial for L2 Spanish learners: processing instruction, input-output cycles and interactional feedback., Research has revealed positive findings regarding the integration of input processing instruction in the HL classroom. However, to my knowledge there are no studies of input-output cycles for HL. More research is needed to identify what techniques work best for HLs and how to integrate and implement input-output cycles in mixed classrooms of L2 and HLs.

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12

Going Online: Spanish Composition and Conversation Research-based Course Design

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Abstract

This descriptive study details the design of an online intermediate Spanish composition and conversation (210W) course at Minnesota State University, Mankato and discusses the theory, research, and design strategies utilized in its development. The 210W course design addresses challenges to online language instruction such as limited focus on oral proficiency development and lack of interaction. Evaluation of the implemented design solutions revealed that SPAN 210W maintained pedagogical rigor providing an immersive, interactive, and competency-based learning environment online. A proposed assessment strategy for continuous improvement is discussed, including targeted student feedback questions, regular review of computer-assisted language learning (CALL), e-learning, and second language acquisition research, and assessment of the alignment of course learning activities, assessment tools, and learning outcomes. This study concludes with a discussion of general recommendations for online language instruction and how this design might be applied to flipped or hybrid classrooms.

Introduction

In 2011, growth in the number of college and university students enrolled in at least one online course was almost 20 times that of overall enrollment growth;

expansion of online education is predicted to continue (Parker, Lenhart, & Moore, 2011). The exponential increase of online learning is attributable, in part, to meet the needs of learners in a rapidly evolving globalized world, particularly the call for more flexible and accessible education models (MacKeogh & Fox, 2009). Furthermore, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2007) identified the study of languages as an essential component in preparing students to meet 21st Century challenges. However, the boom in online learning has not necessarily brought about innovative or effective educational practices; in many cases, online course design is little more than a transfer of classroom materials to a digital environment (Pachler & Daly, 2011). Careful investigation and implementation of methodologies, media, and course design principles that enhance learning are necessary to maximize the benefits of e-learning. “Learn Languages, Explore Cultures, Transform Lives,” the theme of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSCTFL) 2015 Conference, highlights essential 21st Century skills that are developed through online language education. Second language educators that “go online” with a course design grounded in theory and research have the potential to offer flexible, effective, and accessible courses that also prepare learners for success in today’s globalized world.

The Course: Composition and Conversation

SPAN 210W: Composition and Conversation is an intermediate composition and conversation course required for all Spanish majors and minors at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The “W” indicates it is a writing intensive course. SPAN 210W serves as the gateway course to higher-level Spanish course offerings aimed at developing the oral and written proficiency necessary for success in advanced courses. At Minnesota State University, Mankato, making progress toward a Spanish minor or major is frequently a challenge for double majors in highly structured programs and for student athletes because of scheduling conflicts. Teaching SPAN 210W online was proposed as a way to increase access and help learners make progress towards Spanish program completion. In the case of 210W, teaching composition online seemed to pose little threat to pedagogical rigor; however, teaching conversation online seemed much more dubious. This echoes the doubts of many second language educators about the effectiveness of teaching a second language in an online environment (Blake, 2007). The challenge of developing an online course that could dispel my personal doubts about the practicality and feasibility of teaching an online Spanish *conversation* course was the impetus leading to the design and assessment of Spanish Composition and Conversation online (SPAN 210W). The course was initially developed for Fall 2013 and was reviewed and modified in 2014.

Why Go Online?

An initial survey of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) research provided evidence that technology tools, such as those that could be used in an online language course can provide language learning benefits such as fostering

negotiation of meaning interactions and reducing anxiety. Furthermore, examination of 21st Century learners' needs and characteristics demonstrated alignment of online language education with 21st Century essential learning outcomes, such as development of global knowledge and healthy risk taking skills.

Online Language Learning

Past research has reported challenges to online language education including low participation, difficulty in design (e.g. creating appropriate scaffolding), a lack of interaction, and an unbalanced focus on reading and writing skills (Andrade & Bunker, 2009; Hampel & Pleines, 2013). In spite of these challenges, there are also many benefits to teaching languages online. Lai and Li (2011) report that classroom-based language instruction presents many space and time-bound limitations that, in part, can be addressed using technology, for example: passive learning style, large class sizes, mixed proficiency levels in the classroom, and learner use of their mother language (L1). Further, Blake (2013) argues that the number of time-on-task hours (600 – 1000+ hours) necessary to gain second language proficiency is rarely achievable within the contact hours feasible in classroom-based instruction. Blake argues that technology use has the potential to create economical and efficient opportunities for contact with the second language that will lead to proficiency gains. For example, behaviors associated with language acquisition, such as negotiation of meaning, recasting based on feedback from an interlocutor, and conversation maintenance strategies have been observed in video conferencing and synchronous text-based chat sessions (Jauregi & Bañados, 2008; Peterson, 2008). Further, learners are able to engage in these effective language-learning activities without a commute to a physical campus, lowering the overall time and resource cost. Lai and Li also assert technology can provide a “natural and authentic venue” for implementing language learning (p. 499). For example, social media promises to be an authentic space for learners to engage as users (rather than learners) in an informal target language community (Sockett & Toffoli, 2012). Research on the use of voice-based computer mediated communication (CMC) has indicated its potential for improving pronunciation and increasing social presence (Bueno-Alastuey, 2010; Yaneske & Oates, 2011) Although the research is conflicting, lowered anxiety, an important factor in language acquisition, has been correlated with the use of synchronous and asynchronous CMC in language learning (Blake, 2013; Jauregi & Bañados, 2008; Ko, 2011; Lai & Li, 2011; Peterson, 2008; Yaneske & Oates, 2011).

Meeting 21st Century Learners Needs

In many ways, what learners need for the twenty-first century world does not align well with the generalized characteristics of the current generation of students (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007; Levine & Dean, 2012). For example, employers desire prospective employees who have global knowledge and intercultural competence, but the learners coming into the university today

usually lack a world knowledge base (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007, Levine & Dean, 2012). Further, businesses seek candidates who are innovative and flexible, but the current generation of college students tend to be rule-followers and to avoid risk-taking (Levine & Dean, 2012). These learners also tend to demand more effective technology use in the classroom (Levine & Dean, 2012). Engaging learners in a quality online language learning experience fulfills learner's demand for effective technology use, allows learners to develop global competence by experiencing cultures other than their own, and holds the potential to develop healthy risk-taking skills, as language learners often have to take risks in target language production.

Theoretical, Pedagogical, and Technological Considerations

Part of the online language educator's challenge, then, is to design curriculum with 21st Century skills, learner characteristics, and effective language learning in mind. When embarking on the design of any online course, it is tempting to first begin by choosing the technology; however, Clark (2012) asserts that content and methodology, rather than media (which alone has not been found to have a significant learning effect), are more important factors in learning. It follows that establishing a theoretical foundation and strong pedagogical approach is an essential first step in any course design. The TPACK model of technology use in education asserts that the complex interactions of pedagogical, content, and technological knowledge guide decisions about curriculum, course design, and delivery (Koehler, Mishra, & Cain, 2013). These three inter-related areas of knowledge are addressed in the design of SPAN 210W. Several theoretical frameworks and pedagogical approaches informed course design including: student-centered teaching, self-regulatory learning, input hypothesis, output hypothesis, and interaction theory. Past CALL research informed the selection of technology, particularly choices regarding the use of synchronous and asynchronous CMC in the design 210W. Decisions regarding the content knowledge included in SPAN 210W are addressed in the sections Course Outcomes and Curriculum and Organization.

Student-Centered Teaching

Traditional, teacher-centered models are not highly effective in responding to 21st Century demands such as problem solving, creativity, and teamwork (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007). In contrast, student-centered approaches have the potential to promote these skills, as they place more responsibility on the learner and promote active learning, aligning well with online language education in which the learners are typically more autonomous (Bown, 2009; Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2012). Doyle (2011) explains learner-centered approaches as simply: "The one that does the work does the learning" (p. 7). Doyle asserts that student-centered teaching is supported by neuroscience in that student-centered tasks promote activity in the pleasure center of the brain, encouraging students to repeat the learning behavior. A central aspect of student-centered teaching is a role shift from teacher-as-lecturer to teacher-as-

facilitator, allowing the student to do the work of learning guided by a facilitator (Doyle, 2011; Simonson, et al., 2012). From the perspective of student-centered teaching, online course design should place the student in this active learning role while the teacher serves as guide, providing feedback and helping learners gauge their own learning. In the case of SPAN 210W, the classroom-based instruction was adapted to the online environment using student-centered approaches. For example, learners were expected to engage in scaffolded learning activities individually and respond to instructor feedback designed to guide improvement. The learners are relied upon to “do” their own learning, which can be an effective education practice, but one that can also pose challenges to students accustomed to a passive learning style.

Self-Regulatory Learning

Self-regulation refers to the processes that allow learners to monitor their thoughts and behaviors and enact strategies to accomplish a goal, and it has been studied across a wide range of disciplines (Zimmerman, 2005). In the context of education, self-regulated learning (SRL) relates to the processes learners use to monitor and direct learning activities to meet academic goals (Rowe & Rafferty, 2013). Because SRL is a multifaceted construct that includes motivational, cognitive, and metacognitive factors, SRL is an effective model for describing the complexity of factors that contribute to distance language learning success (Andrade & Bunker, 2009; Ranalli, 2012). Past research has indicated that students who have higher levels of self-regulation are more academically successful (measured by course grade or performance in a particular academic task) than those who are lower self-regulators and furthermore, SRL interventions (i.e. embedding reflective prompts, skills training) has the potential to improve academic performance (Andrade & Bunker, 2009; Bergamin, Werlen, & Seigenthaler, 2012; Çelik, Arkin, & Sabriler, 2012; Chang, 2007; Ranalli, 2012; Rowe & Rafferty, 2013). Some SRL processes include setting goals, effective time management, seeking help, self-reflection, regulation of feedback, monitoring, and modifying and employing learning strategies (Rowe & Rafferty, 2013). In the case of SPAN 210W, SRL prompts and training helped promote self-regulation, especially important for learners accustomed to passive learning. A highly structured design and frequent interaction (weekly, in the case of 210W) also supported self-regulation and learner autonomy (Andrade & Bunker, 2009). See “Course Design” for a detailed description of implementation.

Input, Output, and Interaction

Language learning theory indicates that both comprehensible input and output are important to second language acquisition (SLA) (Krashen, 2008; Long, 1996; Swain, 2005). The comprehensible input hypothesis, developed from a psycholinguistic perspective (i.e. language learning occurs exclusively within the mind of the learner), states that we acquire language by being able to understand what is read and heard (Krashen, 2008). Output hypothesis, stemming from the

sociocultural perspective (i.e. language learning occurs as an internalization of collective behaviors through interaction with others and the environment), states that the act of second language production under certain conditions is the language learning process itself (Swain, 2005). Interaction theory posits that neither internal nor external processes alone can account for language learning, and asserts that it is more likely that a complex interaction of these factors (input and output; psycholinguistic and sociocultural) accounts for SLA (Long, 1996). Interaction theory emphasizes the need for interactive and communicative activities that provide comprehensible input and opportunities for output during which “negotiation for meaning” occurs (Long, 1996, p. 414, emphasis theirs). The curriculum designed for 210W attempted to maximize the opportunities for exposure to comprehensible input and interaction (including opportunities for output and negotiation of meaning) in the target language. For instance, both asynchronous and synchronous voice-based interaction was included in the initial course design. See the section on “Course Design” for a detailed description of design and development of communicative and interactive activities in SPAN 210W.

Virtual Learning Environment

A virtual learning environment (VLE) refers to the website or learning management system (e.g. Moodle, Desire2Learn, Blackboard) that an instructor uses as a classroom space in online language learning. These systems offer a wide range of both synchronous (e.g. text chat or audio conferencing) and asynchronous (e.g. text discussion boards, blogs) technology tools. In many VLEs, external web-based tools can be integrated within the system. In the case of SPAN 210W, course design used Desire2Learn, an enterprise VLE adopted university wide. Desire2Learn offers various technology tool options for instruction: synchronous text chat, quiz and survey functions, asynchronous discussion boards, blogs, and a content repository for sharing files, videos, and other content. Desire2Learn also has a number of course management tools: a drop box for electronic file submission, customizable widgets and homepage, a checklists function, a newsfeed, and a grade book. The number of technology tools available for use within a single VLE such as Desire2Learn as well as the numerous web-based tools available, makes choosing among them a challenge.

Asynchronous tools.

Benefits. One of the principal advantages of asynchronous media is that it allows anytime, anyplace access to course materials and activities (Simonson, et al., 2012). Specifically, voice-based asynchronous CMC provides advantages such as flexibility in pacing, relaxed time pressure for response, reduced learning anxiety, and has the potential to improve pronunciation (Gleason & Suvorov, 2012; Yaneske & Oates, 2012). Text-based asynchronous CMC may promote more accurate, complex, and lengthier second language production than synchronous CMC (Lai & Li, 2011). Further, there is evidence to suggest that text-based

asynchronous CMC is an “accessible and a non-face threatening” way to tackle challenging topics, and can promote learner-centered inquiry and socialization among learners (Kosunen, 2009, p. 348; Saritas, 2008).

Drawbacks. Although convenience is maximized for the learner using asynchronous CMC, if a question arises during study, feedback from the instructor may be delayed (sometimes for days), thwarting the learner’s efforts (Simonson, et al., 2012). Low participation and social loafing, correlated with a lack of facilitator participation, has also been associated with asynchronous CMC (Hampel & Pleines, 2013; Kosunen; Saritas). In order to counter some of the challenges to using asynchronous CMC in SPAN 210W, a clear policy on when learners could expect feedback was developed and participation in the VLE-based asynchronous discussion was required (graded) which, at least anecdotally, seemed to promote engagement.

Asynchronous CMC and 210W. Use of asynchronous CMC aligns with the learning outcomes of SPAN 210W regarding accuracy and complexity of language production in both written and oral production. The design of SPAN 210W included use of VLE-based asynchronous text-discussion board and quiz functions as well as additional asynchronous tools such as Screencast-o-matic and YouTube and an asynchronous online workbook (iLrn Advance) developed by the publisher. See the Course Design section for a discussion on the implementation of these tools.

Synchronous tools.

Benefits. Synchronous media has been associated with negotiation of meaning interactions (beneficial to acquisition) and production of language that is similar to face-to-face discourse; audio conferencing even more so than text chat (Bueno-Alastuey, 2010; Lai & Li, 2011; Peterson, 2010). Other potential advantages of synchronous CMC include the promotion of a sense of social presence and the development of intercultural competency (Gonzalez-Lloret, 2011; Jauregi & Bañados, 2008; Ko, 2012). Hampel and Stickler (2012) in their study of multi-modal videoconferencing found that new patterns of communication emerged in the multimodal environment, such as the combined use of the audio and text modes to contribute to the conversation without interrupting the speaker, for example, providing feedback or requesting clarification. These unique functionalities meant participants had “multiple modes for making meaning” and interacting with the target language (Hampel & Stickler, 2012, p. 134).

Drawbacks. However, factors such as technical difficulties, a lack of visual cues in text-based synchronous CMC, or pressure to perform may lead to negative perceptions, higher learner anxiety, and lowered motivation (Bueno-Alastuey, 2010; Ko, 2012; Hampel & Stickler, 2012; Stickler & Hampel, 2010). Further, lack of knowledge in necessary computer skills, such as typing accuracy and speed, in text-based synchronous CMC could limit participation (Ko, 2012). Synchronous CMC also requires a designated time and day. That can present a time management challenge for distance learners that are balancing home, work, and educational pursuits.

Synchronous CMC and 210W. Despite these challenges, synchronous tools align with the learning outcomes of SPAN 210W related to spontaneous language production (the “conversation” in Composition and Conversation). Multi-modal video conferencing (Anymeeting.com, Skype) was chosen to supplement the tools available in the VLE to promote face-to-face like discourse, social presence, and provide multiple opportunities for engagement in the target language. A discussion of how this was designed and implemented can be found in the section on Course Design.

Course Learning Outcomes

After the theoretical foundation and pedagogical approach had been established, course outcomes were written that would later guide curriculum development. The course outcomes for SPAN 210W were developed from Minnesota State University, Mankato standards for General Education Category 8: Global Perspectives and Writing Intensive (“W”) courses. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) World Readiness Standards for Learning Languages: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities were also central in learning outcome development. The outcomes were generated from a competency-based perspective, focusing on what the students would be able to do by the end of the course (Pérez Cañado, 2013). As the curriculum for each weekly unit was created, module-level objectives were written and alignment with the course level objectives was assured. See Table 1 on the next page for an example of module- and course-level outcome alignment.

Course Design

Composition and Conversation (210W) was designed around theoretical, pedagogical, and research-based frameworks in second language acquisition and distance learning such as student-centered teaching, self-regulatory learning, input hypothesis, output hypothesis, and interaction theories. The design was also informed by the research-based evaluation rubric for online and hybrid courses developed by Quality Matters. The most recent edition of the Quality Matters Rubric for Higher Education is based on a review of 21 peer-reviewed journals and five academic databases journals that publish educational and e-learning research (Shattuck, Freise, Lalla, Mickalson, Simunich, & Wang, 2013). The rubric focuses exclusively on course design, is non-prescriptive, and generalized to apply to a wide range of subject matters. In addition to the general course design elements described by the Quality Matters rubric, an effective and quality online language course founded in second language acquisition methodology and theory must include three central considerations, immersion, interaction, and competency-based activities.

Designing Immersion

Carefully designed immersion experiences are essential to language learning, as they can provide an ample source of comprehensible input necessary for SLA

Table 1. Alignment of course learning objectives and module one learning objectives

General Course Outcomes	Specific Course Outcomes	Module One Outcomes
1. You will be able to demonstrate intermediate language proficiency.	1.a. You will be able to demonstrate an increase in vocabulary in Spanish.	1. You will be able to... recognize vocabulary related to the topic of stereotypes.
	1.b. You will be able to express opinions, pose a variety of questions, and answer questions with direct uncomplicated responses in Spanish.	2. Narrate personal experiences and opinions, describe yourself and others, ask and respond to questions in Spanish, especially in the present tense.
	1.c. You will be able to apply understanding of Spanish grammar, spelling and punctuation norms.	3. Apply understanding of Spanish grammar and spelling norms in written and spoken Spanish, particularly the present tense.
	1.d. You will be able to produce written and oral Spanish in major time frames with some breakdown in understanding.	2. Narrate personal experiences and opinions, describe yourself and others, ask and respond to questions in Spanish, especially in the present tense.
	1.e. You will be able to show general, but not detailed, understanding of written and oral Spanish.	4. Demonstrate understanding of a text and a video regarding the topic of stereotypes in Spanish.
2. You will fulfill the “W”: Writing Intensive requirement of the course.	2.a. You will be able to engage in effective writing processes, including the ability to generate ideas, draft, revise, format and edit your own work	-
	2.b. You will be able to use writing to learn.	2. Narrate personal experiences and opinions, describe yourself and others, ask and respond to questions in Spanish, especially in the present tense.
	2.c. You will be able to produce appropriate texts for an intended audience, purpose and context.	-
	2.d. You will be able to locate, evaluate, analyze and use source material in your writing.	5. Apply understanding of MLA format and citation.
3. You will fulfill the General Education Category 8: Global Perspectives requirement of the course.	3.a. You will be able to describe and compare and contrast political, social, economic, cultural and humanistic elements.	-
	3.b. You will be able to demonstrate knowledge of cultural, social, religious and linguistic differences.	6. Discuss stereotypes and cultural norms.
	3.c. You will be able to analyze specific international problems and illustrate the cultural, social, economic, political and religious differences that affect their solution.	-

(Krashen, 2008). SPAN 210W is an immersive course, in that all of the learning activities and content are exclusively in Spanish (the target language) with the following exceptions. Neither the university-wide VLE nor the publisher's workbook allow for changes in the navigation language, so all of the pre-set navigation titles and functions were in English. Furthermore, because the course was online and the instructor was not present to quickly resolve questions regarding course format or organization, select organizational activities in the first three weekly units such as video overviews, syllabus, course and unit schedules, unit study plans, and instructions for the first three weeks of the course were in English (most learners' first language). In the following two weeks of the course, only instructions and organizational activities, such as assignment checklists, were in English. The content and learning activities, such as videoconferencing, were in Spanish. After the first three weeks of the course, all course activities (both organizational and learning) were presented entirely in Spanish. The organization, format, and instruction language of the course was mirrored in each unit so that when learners entered the fourth week of the course (full immersion) they could more easily interpret instructions and navigate through the course based on their previous exposure.

Designing Interaction

According to interaction hypothesis, language learners must have opportunities to receive input, produce in the target language, and negotiate meaning in order to promote SLA (Long, 1996). Interaction, particularly in synchronous CMC, can also promote social presence and a sense of belonging that is an essential component in rich learning experiences (Pachler & Daly, 2011; Ko, 2012). SPAN 210W was designed for instructor-learner and learner-learner interaction through asynchronous discussion boards (text and voice) and synchronous conversation (video conferencing). Although artificial and temporally disjointed, this asynchronous interaction was designed to lower the pressure to perform (by giving ample time to post and respond; one week per discussion), promote practice in formulating questions, and assure learners participated relatively equally in the dialogue. Grammatical, phonological, and orthographical accuracy were a secondary focus in asynchronous discussions. The videoconferences were designed to promote spontaneous language production and listening comprehension skills. Emphasis was placed on equal participation, peer-to-peer interaction, and communication, whereas error correction was minimal and only implemented when meaning was obscured.

Designing Competency-Based Instruction

Competency-based language instruction focuses on aptitudes the learner can demonstrate or perform, simply put—knowledge, skills, and behaviors students should have at the end of a course (Pérez Cañado, 2013). SPAN 210W is a competency-based course. The course- and unit-level learning outcomes are designed to be concrete and measurable behaviors, skills, or knowledge. The course activities are designed with

these competencies in mind. For example, course outcome 3.a. states, “You will be able to describe and compare and contrast political, social, economic, cultural and humanistic elements.” The module-level learning outcome associated with the first composition states, “You will be able to compose a composition that describes and compares and contrasts a Spanish or Latin American cultural tradition with your own.” The first composition asks students to describe and compare and contrast a Spanish or Latin American holiday with their own cultural practices and traditions. Based on what is written, it will be clear if learners have met their module-level objective and have, in part, fulfilled the aligning course level objective. All learning activities were designed to align with one or more module-level competencies (outcomes) in this way. See Table 2 for an outline of the general alignment between course learning activities and learning outcomes.

Table 2. Alignment of course outcomes and learning activities

General Course Outcomes	Detailed Course Outcomes	Learning Activities
1. You will be able to demonstrate intermediate language proficiency.	1.a. You will be able to demonstrate an increase in vocabulary in Spanish.	Compositions, <i>Diario</i> (Journal) Activities, iLrn Advance (publisher’s online workbook)
	1.b. You will be able to express opinions, pose a variety of questions, and answer questions with direct uncomplicated responses in Spanish.	Conversations (asynchronous and synchronous, text and voice based), <i>Diario</i> Activities
	1.c. You will be able to apply understanding of Spanish grammar, spelling and punctuation norms.	Compositions, <i>Diario</i> Activities Conversations
	1.d. You will be able to produce written and oral Spanish in major time frames with some breakdown in understanding.	Compositions, <i>Diario</i> Activities Conversations
	1.e. You will be able to show general, but not detailed, understanding of written and oral Spanish.	Compositions, Conversations, <i>Diario</i> Activities, iLrn Advance, Quiz Activities
2. You will fulfill the “W”: Writing Intensive requirement of the course.	2.a. You will be able to engage in effective writing processes, including the ability to generate ideas, draft, revise, format and edit your own work	Compositions, <i>Diario</i> Activities
	2.b. You will be able to use writing to learn.	Compositions, <i>Diario</i> Activities
	2.c. You will be able to produce appropriate texts for an intended audience, purpose and context.	Compositions
	2.d. You will be able to locate, evaluate, analyze and use source material in your writing.	Compositions
3. You will fulfill the General Education Category 8: Global Perspectives requirement of the course.	3.a. You will be able to describe and compare and contrast political, social, economic, cultural and humanistic elements.	Compositions, Conversations, <i>Diario</i> Activities, iLrn Advance
	3.b. You will be able to demonstrate knowledge of cultural, social, religious and linguistic differences.	Compositions, Conversations, <i>Diario</i> Activities, iLrn Advance
	3.c. You will be able to analyze specific international problems and illustrate the cultural, social, economic, political and religious differences that affect their solution.	Compositions

Online Learning: Preparation and Support

A number of design strategies prepared and supported learners. These strategies were designed to teach and promote SRL behaviors and were embedded into the course as part of the weekly activities.

Some organizational strategies used to support online learners included using video guided tours or overviews. For example in the first week of the course, a “Course Tour” video guided learners through the different functions they would be using in the VLE as part of the week’s activities. In each of the next two weeks of the course, a video guide walked learners step-by-step through the learning activities for the week. Because the structure, instructions, and organization remained relatively constant throughout the course, additional video guides were unnecessary after the initial few weeks of the course. Each week an assignment checklist was also included to help learners monitor their progress.

The course curriculum also contained embedded self-regulation training and prompts. For example in the first week of the course, the *diario* (journal) activities served a training function that promoted SRL behaviors, focusing specifically on time management and language learning strategies. As a general introduction, students reviewed Minnesota State University, Mankato technical requirements and skills necessary for online learning. Learners watched a short informational video on time management and created their own time management plan for the next week. Time management was an important focus because one of the most frequently cited reasons for failing to complete an online course is falling behind and not being able to catch up (Fetzner, 2013). Students also went to a website (e.g. StudySpanish.com/topten_tips.htm) with a list of cognitive, affective, and behavioral language learning strategies, chose three, and reflected on how they might be beneficial in 210W. In this way, even low self-regulating learners would be exposed to some techniques for success in an online language-learning course. Throughout the course, learners reflected on their language learning strategies (with a focus on conversation) after each weekly real-time conversation. See Table 3 for the list of reflection prompts used.

Table 3. Instructions for Real-Time Conversation Reflection

1. **Summary.** Give a brief summary (3 sentences) regarding what you found out or learned during your conversation.
2. **Evaluate.** Indicate your level of comfort with conversation this week:
 - 1 - The conversation was very challenging and I was very nervous.
 - 2 - The conversation was somewhat challenging and I was nervous.
 - 3 - The conversation was not challenging nor was it too easy and I was not nervous at all.
 - 4 - The conversation was somewhat easy, and I was mostly relaxed.
 - 5 - The conversation was very easy and I was relaxed the whole time.

Answer: Why do you think you felt the way you did?
3. **Analyze.** Identify three words or phrases you had trouble with or learned during the conversation. Write their definition or translation here.
4. **Reflect.** State one thing that was a challenge and one thing that was easy for you. Answer: What do you think you could do in order to feel more comfortable or feel more successful in the next conversation? What strategies can you use next time? Mention three specific things.

Note. The instructions were provided to students in Spanish (the target language), they have been translated here.

Taking time for socialization (e.g. providing opportunities for quality communication and collaboration) is important for creating a sense of belonging that fosters meaningful learning (Pachler & Daly, 2011). Thus, during the first week of the course, the text discussion served as a space for getting to know each other. The discussion prompted learners to share some information about themselves in Spanish. The instructor's introduction served as a model for the activity as well as a way for learners to get acquainted with their teacher. The instructor included a photo in the self-introduction and encouraged, but did not require learners to do so as well. An asynchronous discussion forum was also created as a place for learners to ask (and respond) to questions related to the course or to interact with their classmates.

Curriculum and Organization

The curriculum for SPAN 210W was based around the textbook *Senderos: Comunicación y conversación en español* (Pathways: Communication and conversation in Spanish) published by Heinle Cengage Learning (Doutrich & Rivera-Hernández, 2013). The course curriculum includes seven of the eight chapters in the text. Themes explored (by chapter) included: stereotypes and diversity, the changing notion of family, environment and consumerism, immigration, human rights and indigenous populations, technology, and health and eating habits, all framed within the context of the Hispanic world. The text was chosen based on the variety of topics and their pertinence to building language skills and intercultural competence essential to success in a globalized, quickly evolving world.

SPAN 210W was divided into weekly units with weekly deadlines for all assignments. Each week was designed with the same structure and organization to support SRL and minimize confusion. These components were found under each week's module in the Content section in the VLE: (1) study plan, (2) checklist, (3) *diario* (journal) activities (4) asynchronous text and voice conversation, (5) real-time conversation (6) compositions and composition revisions, (7) iLrn Advance, (8) quiz learning activity, and (9) an optional music or film exploratory. Occasionally, these activities varied from week-to-week. For example, during certain weeks a vocabulary review activity (in Quizlet.com) was included and in other weeks there was no composition activity. Some of these components, such as the study plan and checklist, served an organizational function to promote SRL. The other learning activities (compositions, conversations, *diarios*, iLrn Advance, and quiz activities) contributed to one or more course outcomes. See Table 4 on the next page for a list of organizational and learning activities through week four.

Study plan. The study plan included a brief introduction to the course work of the week, indicated how much time students should plan to spend on work that week, gave a due date, outlined the materials needed that week, and provided a list of the weekly learning outcomes. A suggested weekly homework schedule was also provided to support time management.

Checklists. The checklist is a feature in the VLE that allows learners to digitally check off items as they complete them. Each week a list of the required course

Table 4. Fall 2013 SPAN 210W Organizational and Learning Activities through Week Four

Week	Dates	Activities	
		Organizational Activities	Learning Activities
Orientation Week	28 August – 1 September	Course Video Tour, Study Plan, Checklist, Tutorial Video for Quiz Function, Syllabus Scavenger Hunt Quiz, Registration in iLrn Advance	<i>Diario</i> Activities, Text Conversation: Meet your instructor and self-introduction
Week 1	2 September – 8 September	Week Overview Video, Study Plan, Checklist	<i>Diario</i> Activities, Text Conversation, Real-Time Conversation: Complete the availability poll, Quiz: MLA Citation & Format, iLrn Advance
Week 2	9 September – 15 September	Week Overview Video, Study Plan, Checklist	Vocabulary Review Activity, <i>Diario</i> Activities, Text Conversation, Real-Time Conversation: First meeting, Composition 1, iLrn Advance
Week 3	16 September – 22 September	Study Plan, Checklist	<i>Diario</i> Activities, Text Conversation, Real-Time Conversation, Quiz: Revising a Composition, Composition 1 Revision, iLrn Advance
Week 4	23 September – 29 September	Study Plan, Checklist	Vocabulary Review Activity, <i>Diario</i> Activities, Text Conversation, Real-Time Conversation, Quiz: Connector Words for Composition, iLrn Advance

work was provided to students so they could easily monitor their own progress throughout the week.

***Diario* activities.** These activities were designed to address learning outcomes regarding accuracy of language production, vocabulary building, writing skills, and occasionally global knowledge. The *diario* activities included two components, a brief instructional video and a written assignment. The instructional videos were instructor created presentations (using PowerPoint) that corresponded to the vocabulary or grammatical lesson of the week. The narrated videos were created with Screencast-o-matic, uploaded to YouTube, and then embedded into the VLE. The instructional videos also included comprehension checks that allowed learners to gauge their understanding. The written *diario* assignment included three or four written exercises (typically from the textbook) that required the

learner to respond in complete sentences to questions or writing prompts related to the material covered in the video, or to the theme of the unit.

Text and voice conversation. These conversations were designed to address learning outcomes related to accuracy and comprehensibility of both written and oral language production as well as global knowledge. The text and voice conversations were asynchronous discussions created in the VLE discussion board. Learners were provided with a conversation prompt or a list of questions and were asked to create an initial post. The conversation prompts typically focused on giving an opinion about a thematic topic in order to stimulate interaction. Learners were required (graded) to respond to two other classmates' posts with a comment and a question, and answer at least two questions posed to them by classmates. These conversations were text-only the first four weeks of the course to allow learners to become accustomed to the discussion board procedure. The remaining weeks incorporated voice posts. Learners created an initial post using Vocaroo.com and included either the link to their voice post or attached an .mp3 file to the discussion post. The procedure otherwise remained the same.

Real-time conversation. The real-time conversations addressed course competencies related to spontaneous oral production and interpreting spoken Spanish. These conversations were synchronous discussions hosted in a videoconferencing site and led by the instructor or a teaching assistant. The VLE discussion board served as the springboard for these meetings. A list of questions or conversation prompts, instructions for access to video conferencing, and a reflection assignment were available in the VLE discussion board.

Compositions. The compositions (each about two or two and a half pages long) addressed several learning outcomes, including: developing global knowledge, proficiency in written Spanish, and general effective writing skills such as planning, organizing, revising, and citing sources. The topics of the compositions are as follows:

1. Describing, comparing and contrasting a Spanish or Latin American holiday with your own country's holiday.
2. Defining and describing an environmental problem, identifying results and consequences, and examining the potential solutions across cultures and societies.
3. Defining privacy across cultures, identifying challenges to maintaining privacy in the digital age, and analyzing actions taken by various countries to protect privacy.
4. Discussing globalization, identifying and analyzing the benefits, drawbacks and impacts of globalization.

Each composition cycle involved three steps: (1) the student wrote, revised, and submitted the composition, (2) the instructor graded and gave feedback on the composition, and (3) the student revised and re-submitted the composition based on their instructor's feedback. The cycle for each composition was two weeks long: one week to compose and submit and a second week to revise based on instructor feedback. A correction code, indicating grammatical and orthographical errors

as well as omissions, gave learners the opportunity to notice their writing errors with the help of scaffolding provided by the code. Errors relating to content, organization, or format were inserted as comments in the document. Learners were provided a copy of the correction code guide to assist them in revisions.

iLrn Advance. The iLrn Advance exercises from the publisher's workbook addressed learning outcomes related to vocabulary building, grammar use, and interpretation of spoken and written Spanish. The VLE served as a jumping off point for iLrn Advance exercises. A written document within each week's module outlined the exercises due on iLrn Advance and directed learners to the website for completion.

Quiz activities. The quiz activities were created to primarily address course learning outcomes related to writing skills and accuracy in written Spanish. Rather than tests, the quiz activities (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, short and long answer questions) were available an unlimited number of times to allow learners multiple opportunities to review and apply their knowledge. The quiz activities included topics such as MLA format and citation, writing processes, connector words for composition in Spanish, composition revision, rules of accenting and their connection to pronunciation, and review of particularly challenging vocabulary or grammatical structures, among other topics.

Optional activities. The optional activities were based on music or film from the Spanish-speaking world. These activities related in some way to the topic of their respective units. They included reading biographies of artists, directors, and actors, listening to music with lyrics, watching film trailers, and reflecting on the information presented. These activities were designed to give learners an opportunity to expand on the theme of that particular unit and build cultural knowledge.

Assessing Design

After the first delivery of SPAN 210W in Fall 2013, the online course design was informally and formally assessed. The assessments included a formal peer-review process, student evaluations of the course, assessment of course outcomes, and instructor reflection and notes.

Formally, a Quality Matters peer review team evaluated and certified SPAN 210W as a quality course design in February of 2014. In a formal Quality Matters review, three reviewers evaluated the course, one of whom is a subject matter expert. Reviewers assessed whether the design met the Quality Matters standards for quality course design outlined in the rubric at the 85% level or better (Quality Matters Program). The reviewers looked at eight general standards related to general design elements that are important for student success, for example: course overview and introduction, learning objectives, assessment, instructional materials, course activities and learner interaction, navigation and technology, student support services, and accessibility (Quality Matters Program).

A non-anonymous mid-term survey and an anonymous end-of-semester course evaluation survey were conducted to gather learners' perspectives on various aspects of the course. The end-of-semester evaluation was a standardized

evaluation for online courses provided by the university. At mid-term, learners (n=5) expressed difficulty in meeting multiple deadlines a week and with uneven distribution of course work. For example, one learner wrote: "I think having less of a load of coursework for each week. Maybe don't assign a diario on the weeks that compositions are due. Or perhaps only do one or two iLrn Advance activities a week." In general, learners responded positively to the course in the mid-term evaluation, for instance, many mentioned they enjoyed the opportunities for interaction and the quality of feedback from the instructor.

On the end-of-semester evaluation, students were asked to evaluate: the course as a whole, grading techniques, instructor's contributions, use of technology, interaction and discussion, and strengths and weakness of the course among other items. Responses on the final course evaluation (n=3) were generally positive with an average rating of 4.8 out of 5 (five is high, one is low) for all categories. Learners were also able to write in comments regarding the course, one learner wrote:

"I think the writing portion was incredibly beneficial. I have picked up on a lot more vocabulary (especially commonly used words) because I used them a lot in the papers that I wrote. It also helped to have discussions with students because you had to listen to what they were saying and understand what they were saying to be able to respond, and seeing the written words has really helped my translating and speaking skills in spanish [sic]."

One learner also wrote that they felt their mid-term suggestions had been incorporated in the course and that those changes had made the course more beneficial to their learning. Overall, learners found the systematic organization of the course, the opportunities for interaction, timely and quality feedback (usually within three days of the due date), weekly video overviews, the wide range of topics and assignments that helped build vocabulary, clear rubric and assessment techniques, and the flexible once a week deadline helpful. Other learners perceived the synchronous meeting time negatively, principally due to scheduling constraints or technical difficulties, while others mentioned it was difficult to find out how to start the course because some of the first week organizational activities were in Spanish.

Final oral exam scores, an ACTFL Modified Oral Proficiency Exam (MOPI) conducted by the instructor, and composition grades were examined to evaluate whether learners had met the outcomes of the course. Examination of the MOPI revealed that all learners in the Fall 2013 course had an oral proficiency score of intermediate-low or higher on the MOPI at the end of the semester, indicating they had likely met the learning outcomes for oral proficiency (n=6, one native speaking learner was excluded from this discussion). In this iteration of the course, there was no oral exam pre-test so it was not determined if this proficiency level was directly correlated with engagement in the course activities or due to previous experience or other factors. Evaluation of composition grades revealed a change from a class average of 83.86% on the first composition to an average of 87.86% on the final composition (n=7). All learners successfully completed (with a grade of C- or better) all five compositions and composition revisions and demonstrated a

grade improvement from the first to the last composition, indicating students had likely improved their writing skills and met the learning outcomes regarding the “W” requirement.

The instructor kept a log of reflections and notes based on observations and interactions with students. The log included information regarding a number of topics including organization, technology tools, activities, and course content. Changes to the course design were made based on this log of notes, feedback from learners, and the formal review team comments. Table 5 outlines the changes and rationale from the 2013 to the 2014 course.

Table 5. Rationale for Changes to Course Design Based on Formal and Informal Assessments

Original Course Design (2013)	Changes to Design (2014)	Rationale
Unsupervised peer-to-peer real-time discussions.	Real-time discussions are facilitated by an instructor or teaching assistant.	Informal feedback from learners indicated some felt lost during conversations and felt they couldn't rely on their peers to make sure they were making sense. Evidence that suggests non-native speaker (NNS-NNS) pairs may limit noticing of errors (Bueno-Alastuey, 2010).
5 Compositions	4 Compositions	The first cohort of SPAN 210W online wrote well over 10 pages (minimum requirement for “W” courses) with 5 compositions. The composition load was reduced as a result.
Anymeeting.com was used for videoconferencing.	Skype was used for videoconferencing.	Reports of technical difficulties using Anymeeting. Skype was chosen for its usability and reliability. Muting the microphone when not speaking and/or turning off the video feed to minimize audio disruptions was also implemented.
Text and Voice Conversations every week.	All but the very first week's text and voice conversations were eliminated.	Evidence to suggest that asynchronous boards are perceived as “tedious, isolating, and dry” (Capra, 2014, p. 112). Learners already engaged in conversational experience in synchronous CMC making the activity somewhat redundant.
Multiple due dates throughout the week (first half of the semester only).	A single deadline on Sundays (also implemented the second half of Fall 2013 semester).	Feedback from learners that indicated a single deadline would clarify responsibilities.
Multiple video activities in iLrn Advance per week.	A single video activity in iLrn Advance per week.	Feedback from learners regarding unbalanced workload on certain weeks of the course.
Some instructions and organizational activities in Spanish the first week of class.	All instructions and organizational activities in English the first week of class.	Learner feedback regarding confusion about how to start the course, particularly in regard to deciphering Spanish instructions.

A proposed ongoing assessment strategy for SPAN 210W includes continued analysis of oral exam and composition data, use of the mid-term and end-of-semester student course evaluations, re-evaluation of alignment between course learning objectives, unit learning objectives, and learning activities, and maintenance of an instructor log. In addition, a review of the literature (approximately every two years) regarding CALL, e-learning pedagogy, and SRL would help inform beneficial changes in design, technology tool use, and content. Possible questions for student evaluations might focus on general course design elements (such as proposed by Quality Matters), as well as aspects specifically regarding language learning. See Table 6 for a list of potential student evaluation questions.

Table 6. Possible Questions for a Student Evaluation of Online Language Courses

1. Thinking back to the first week of the course, was it clear how to begin the course and how to complete your activities? If so, what was the most helpful in making this clear? If not, what would have helped it be clearer?
2. Are the instructions for participation and how to complete course work clear? If so, why or how was it made clear? If not, what could help this be clearer to you?
3. Was it clear how you would be graded? Were the criteria for how your course work is evaluated clear? If so, what was the most useful in making it clear? If not, what could make this clearer?
4. Do you feel you have had many opportunities to measure your learning and progress in the course? What activities or feedback (like instructor comments, auto-graded exercises, quiz activities, discussions, etc.) have been most helpful for your learning?
5. Do you think that this course has been interactive and promoted active learning (learning by doing)? If so, what activities were the most helpful for this? If not, what do you think would help make the course more interactive or promote active learning better?
6. Do you think that the various tools and media used in the course were effective and engaging? If so, which were the most helpful (discussion boards, videoconferencing, etc.)? If not, what suggestions do you have for making this course more interactive or engaging?
7. Comment on the instructor's contribution to this course. Comment on your own contribution to your learning. Do you have any other suggestions for improving the course experience?

Note. These questions were modified from the mid-term course evaluation given to learners in the Fall 2013 cohort of SPAN 210W.

Conclusion

Going online presents multiple challenges to implementing effective second language pedagogy (Andrade & Bunker, 2009; Hampel & Pleines, 2013). However, the design and assessment of SPAN 210W has dispelled my doubts regarding the feasibility of teaching an immersive, interactive, and competency-based language course online. Based on their course work (compositions and oral exams), learners met the central language learning outcomes of the course. Whether meeting outcomes was directly correlated to the 210W course work or to other factors is unknown. Future research, such as the use of a pre- and post-course oral exams, the comparison of writing samples pre- and post-course, interviews with students regarding their learning, or analysis of course evaluation responses may provide evidence to clarify the factors that were most important in student learning. The course design and assessment experience has further underscored

the importance of maintaining an immersive, interactive environment that also is flexible and supports online learners' needs. Consistent organization, embedded support for SRL, once a week deadlines, clear and timely feedback, and requiring synchronous interaction have been identified as particularly important to online language learner success, specifically in SPAN 210W and in any online language course. Going online with language learning is a challenge. However in the case of SPAN 210W, these obstacles were overcome using pedagogically sound practices and instructional design principles.

The strategies proposed here have potential applications to the design of flipped or hybrid courses, in addition to other online language courses. In the simplest form, hybrid or flipped classroom models could replace the synchronous real-time conversation meeting described here with face-to-face class meetings. For example, at Minnesota State University, the face-to-face SPAN 210W meetings typically include a review of previous material, a brief content presentation, focused practice exercises, and conversation practice. In a hybrid and flipped classroom model, the *diario* instructional video and written exercises and iLrn Advance exercises described here would take the place of the content presentation and practice exercise portions of the traditional meeting and would be completed online, outside of the course meeting time. The weekly face-to-face course meeting(s) would include review, but primarily focus on conversation skill development.

Like the general enrollment trend in online higher education, enrollment in online Composition and Conversation has increased significantly even over the course of a single year (Parker, Lenhart, & Moore, 2011). In Fall 2013, there were seven students enrolled in SPAN 210W, and in Fall 2014, there were 18 students enrolled. Several students in the current 2014 cohort virtually commute to videoconferencing conversations from other area cities and many others are busy student athletes or double majors. These learners, who perhaps otherwise would not be able to study languages, have been able to develop increasingly important global knowledge and intercultural competency because 210W was offered in a flexible and accessible medium in which learners were able to "Learn Languages, Explore Cultures," and "Transform [their] Lives." Therein lies the benefit of going online: access. Specifically, students have been able to increased access to quality learning and transformational experiences through the study of languages and cultures.

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