Diverse by Design

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2009 Report of the
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

Diverse by Design

**Selected Papers from the 2009
Central States Conference**

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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 editors 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 editors and two other members of the review 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that the article (1) be published in its current form, (2) be published after specific revisions have been made, or (3) not be published.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 the reviewers' ratings are received, the editors make all final publishing decisions.

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Contents

Preface

Diverse By Design

The 2008 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages focused on learning about the diverse backgrounds and needs of today's students. The 2009 Conference continued that focus and added diversity by instructors in using a variety of teaching methods, strategies, themes, technologies, and assessments. Presenters from all 17 states that make up the Central States Conference offered a diverse program, including "Best of…" sessions selected by their respective states. "All-Star" 2008 sessions chosen by the Central States Conference Board were invited to share their expertise again with 2009 conference attendees. There were workshops and sessions for language professionals at all levels and languages.

The keynote speaker for the 2009 Conference was John De Mado, whose insights on diversity in language learning by students and diversity in instruction by teachers was sprinkled with humor. Through his entertaining and thought-provoking message, Mr. De Mado was able to help attendees understand the nature of language and the necessity of reconsidering instructional techniques and constructing classrooms that are "diverse by design."

The authors of this 2009 *Report* also reflect diversity in themes of foreign language instruction in their contributions to this publication. It is our sincere hope that readers of this edition of the *Report* will find the research, theory, data, and anecdotal information useful and that it will continue to refresh their memories and support their efforts as foreign language professionals after the conference.

Lori Winne, Ph.D.
2009 Program Chair

Introduction

Carolyn Gascoigne
Melanie Bloom
University of Nebraska at Omaha

This year's volume of the *CSCTFL Report* is entitled Diverse by Design and offers a varied set of articles representing some of the best practices and innovations in language teaching and learning stemming from the 2009 conference. Topics range from technology to travel, and should offer something of interest to all members of the readership.

Diverse by Task

In the opening article, Aleidine J. Moeller, Olha Ketsman, and Leyla Masmaliyeva discuss the importance of target-language vocabulary knowledge for all second language learners and provide examples of research-supported tasks and techniques designed to improve vocabulary retention. Using a what, why, and how format, the authors explore best practices for teaching vocabulary and provide useful examples for readers. Javier Coronado-Aliegro and Theresa A. Minick offer a discussion of the importance of task-based instruction in the world language classroom and describe how authentic tasks can be used to foster a cosmopolitan perspective among students. In order to help students think beyond the classroom and appreciate the relevance of learning a second language, the authors propose the use of real world tasks that connect to a broader range of disciplines and contexts. Finally, Heather Lawnicki, Mandy Madderom, Lynn Sessler, and Susana Gorski offer a look at the infusion of task-based sequences in an elementary, content-based instruction context. They suggest a possible framework for task-based instruction in content-based classes and provide a model lesson exemplifying their framework.

Diverse by Technology

The articles in this section tackle the issue of technology integration on a programmatic-level. First, Rosalie Cheatham examines how technology can enhance a university-level French curriculum by providing authentic materials and by requiring authentic tasks. She suggests that these types of enhancements may help to better motivate and retain iGeneration students in the study of world languages. Second, Stephanie Dhonau and David McAlpine present one example of a foreign language teacher education program with a technology-enhanced curriculum. They present a detailed description of the curriculum and how it prepares pre-service foreign language teachers for the rigors of teaching in the digital age.

Diverse by Design

The final selection of articles treat such diverse topics as teacher education, dialogue journals, study abroad, and French culture in the shape of gastronomy. While they may defy categorization, these articles offer valuable information and insight into matters of interest and importance to many educators. Marat Sanatullov stresses the significance of pre-service field experiences in the professional development of future foreign language educators. Sharing his own experiences, along with objectives and rubrics, Sanatullov offers suggestions to help ensure the quality of teacher candidates' preparation and future success. Teresa Bell's discussion of dialogue journal use in the German language classroom expands upon the traditional use of the dialogue journal to include individualized grammar instruction. She provides detailed description of how dialogue journals can be used both to foster interpersonal communication and to encourage students to focus on grammatical form. In the article entitled, "How to Execute Your Own Trip to Puerto Rico" Sean R. Hill and Niki Battjes demonstrate step-by-step how readers can offer an inexpensive travel and learning opportunity to students. In addition to a rich description of the island, its landscape, culture, and people, the authors provide a timeline, an itinerary, and a wealth of practical tips. Finally, Anne Lair presents an historical discussion of gastronomy as it evolved in Paris from the late 1700s to the present. Stressing the importance of culinary art in French society, Lair outlines the evolution of the restaurant in Paris and frames this discussion using the many accurate representations found in the recent Disney film, *Ratatouille*.

1

The Essentials of Vocabulary Teaching: From Theory to Practice

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Introduction

Vocabulary is central to the learning and teaching of a second language as it affords learners access to all forms of oral and written communication that includes literature, music, and content knowledge. Word knowledge is power as words serve as building blocks to learning. Vocabulary building often occurs through reading; however, in the foreign language classroom due to the heavy concept load involved in reading a second language it is unlikely that students will acquire the essential vocabulary needed to comprehend the content and information they encounter in many texts. One of the major roles of the teacher then becomes to assist students to learn vocabulary as well as to equip them with strategies for learning words.

This article addresses the following questions: How can vocabulary be taught efficiently in a way that engages the learner and promotes long-term retention for easy retrieval for future communication? What types of input and tasks can the teacher provide her learners in order to move vocabulary from input to intake and into the developing system in order to retrieve this information as needed for output? How is vocabulary best introduced and practiced to ensure optimal retention?

Learning vocabulary begins in a learning environment that is rich in oral and written language, one in which incidental learning and direct teaching opportunities are provided to acquire and practice language. Van Patten and Lee's (2003) model of process oriented instruction emphasizes the importance of presenting and practicing language structures in the form of input in order to ensure that it becomes intake on the part of the learner before attempting language output. While this model is

proposed for the teaching of grammar, the same process can be applied to vocabulary acquisition. In order to quickly and easily access vocabulary as needed in oral and written communication, language learners must internalize the vocabulary and store this information in long-term memory. Research has provided evidence of how such long-term retention occurs and classroom-based studies have provided insights into how vocabulary can be effectively taught in the language classroom to ensure language retrieval and enhance oral and written communication.

This article summarizes research-based best practices for teaching vocabulary that the language educator can implement to increase vocabulary retention and improve language proficiency among language learners. The organization of the article follows a what, why, and how format. The vocabulary principles are defined in the *what* section, the research-based evidence is summarized under the *why* section, and the *how* section contains exemplars for classroom application.

Learning with Multimedia

What: Multimedia refers to a combination of words, sound, and pictures. Words refer to printed or spoken texts, pictures include both still and dynamic graphics, video, photos, maps, and illustrations while sound includes aural input provided via radio, television, films, podcasts, and music.

Why: Teaching with multimedia increases speed and enhances retention of vocabulary when words occur in a variety of contexts such as animated images and images supported by text (Duquette, Renie, & Laurier, 1998). Oral speech, written text, and visual cues increase listening comprehension (Baltova, 1994; Secules, Herron, & Tomasello, 1992) and promote L2 vocabulary acquisition (Duquette 1993; Jylha-Laide & Karreinen, 1993).

The integration of sound, pictures, animations, and video in addition to text plays an important role in vocabulary acquisition (Chun & Plass, 1996; Chun & Payne, 2004). When lexical items are presented together with images it fosters numerous cues and increases retention because the image and word are dually coded. The mind encodes information enhancing the learner's ability to recall information. The combination of a text and visual is more effective in facilitating vocabulary learning than definitions of words alone (Akbulut, 2007; Nikolova, 2002; Jones & Plass, 2002). Multimedia can compensate for memory limitations among students with a lower capacity for remembering phonological information while reading an L2 text (Chun & Payne, 2004).

Multimedia provides easy access to glosses and online aids designed to assist the learner in decoding the meaning of the word through images, explanations in the L1 or L2, or L1-L2 translations. Students with access to computer mediated text glosses yielded consistently better measures of vocabulary and reading comprehension (Lee, 2008; Lomicka, 1998).

Higher gains in vocabulary acquisition were reported when students themselves authored a multimedia module (Nikolova, 2002). With the shift from Web 1.0, where consumers largely accessed data and resources from the Internet, to Web 2.0, where consumers are placed in a participatory role as producers

of resources, the opportunities to author multimedia modules has increased exponentially allowing students to share their products in the public domain.

Multimedia can provide students with options for viewing material in either visual or verbal modes, or both, in order to address individual learning styles. For example, learners who possess high spatial abilities benefit more from multimedia than those who have low spatial abilities (Mayer & Gallini, 1990; Mayer & Sims, 1994). Low verbal ability students especially benefit from visual aids and input (Peek, 1993).

How: One of the most effective ways to integrate multimedia in the language classroom is through the use of PowerPoint and Apple Keynote. Students create a presentation based on reading and information gleaned from a text and then process this information by summarizing and interpreting it through images, words, and sound, thereby creating a multisensory learning environment (Nemtschinova, 2004). Teachers can flash a culturally authentic picture on the screen when introducing new vocabulary, click to hear a native pronunciation of the word, and click to see the written word in the L2. These PowerPoint presentations (PPTs) can be posted on the school or course website making them available for students to practice. By having students create PPTs, the learning process is deepened as they skim and scan documents to locate information, choose the appropriate images, add features (sound, text), and present the results to their peers.

Cyberbuch, an interactive multimedia program available commercially, promotes the development of higher level reading skills and provides learners with information on decoding vocabulary using multiple modalities. *Cyberbuch* uses authentic literary texts that allow students the option to select the modality in which they want information to be presented according to individual learning preferences. A student uses a drop and drag function to obtain various forms for information such as a definition of the word in the target language, the pronunciation of the word, a still picture, or a video illustrating the object, action, or concepts. A learner is also presented with the option of hearing the text read by a native speaker while the text being read is highlighted, combining the aural and textual input. Learners have several online assessment options and can access background information about the author, text, and historical context of the short story.

CD-ROMs containing children's stories offer multilingual options and contain several features described above. These interactive stories can be used effectively in learning stations where students are provided with headphones to listen to the story while completing a series of tasks prepared by the teacher that focus on developing language skills and fluency. By using stories the students know in their L1, students have a context, or background knowledge of the story, and can focus on vocabulary decoding and practice. The dynamic and interactive options (click on a picture of the bird and then it sings a few lines from a famous aria) offer humor, opportunities for oral and written descriptions, and promote summary and interpretation skills as well as circumlocution strategies. These inexpensive CD-ROMs provide aural, visual, and textual input and can easily be adapted to the language classroom by theme, content, or grammar structure.
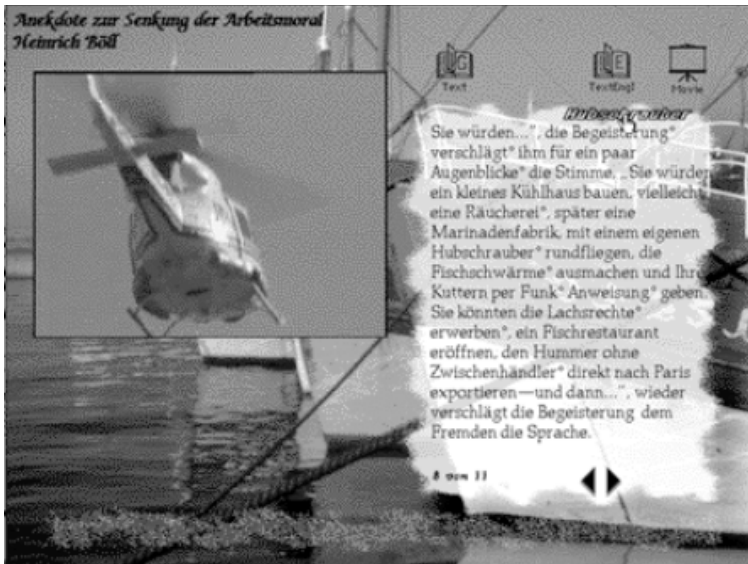
Figure 1. *Cyberbuch* screen shot
(Source: http://www.gss.ucsb.edu/faculty/dmchun/cyberbuch/CBI.gif)

Chunking Language

What: Miller (1956) introduced the concept of "chunking" in his paper entitled *The magical number seven, plus or minus two*. Chunking refers to a strategy for making more efficient use of short-term memory by breaking down large amounts of information into smaller chunks. Chase and Simon (1973) suggested that the capacity of short-term (working) memory is limited to seven items, or chunks, hence the formula 7 ± 2.

Even though it is believed that short-term memory is limited to seven items only, the notion of vocabulary items or chunk varies. Chunking can mean both the breaking down of large amounts of information as well as grouping small chunks into larger categories. It does not necessarily mean that our mind can process only seven words at a time. A chunk can represent seven sentences, seven verses, or seven lines.

Why: The ability to break large language chunks into smaller ones, and to group small chunks into larger ones extends the process of retention of information and allows for greater compression of information in working memory (Kalivoda, 1981). Such compression enhances the limited capacity of working memory and allows the learner to retain more information.

Shaffer et al. (2003) demonstrate this using the example of a phone number. Even though the phone number 2354827 consists of seven items, it is much easier to remember if we further divide it into 235-4827 rather than trying to remember it as 2 3 5 4 8 2 7. Although, this example "suggests that chunking does not need an underlying meaning associated with the elements that were chunked" (p. 4). The authors conclude that retention is significantly enhanced if chunks are created

in association with meaning. To support this claim, they suggest memorizing Voltaire's quotation chunked as follows:

"Vers esth atdo notte achme nnew andtou ching trut hsdon otdes erveto bere ad" (p. 4).

However, once chunked differently the quote is very easy to remember:

"Verses that do not teach men new and touching truths do not deserve to be read."

How: Arranging vocabulary into semantic clusters of seven to ten related items rather than presenting a list of unrelated words in isolation will enhance retention. For example, when introducing vocabulary in preparation for a reading text, students should receive a list of vocabulary words that are related (e.g., carpenter, wood, tools, building, saws, construction) by content or context. Students quickly associate the words with a theme or context and more easily store the vocabulary in long-term memory. In order to assist students in actively manipulating vocabulary, the teacher can present a long list of vocabulary drawn from the last several chapters and students can be asked to place these words into meaningful categories and share their rationale for the categories. Students often generate extremely creative categories that illustrate how differently individuals think and learn.

Semantic maps, or visual representations that connect a key concept with related events and ideas, are excellent ways to determine the background knowledge of students and to organize this knowledge in a way that connects what they know to the new concepts and vocabulary they will be learning. For example, the teacher writes the word Grimm Brothers on an overhead transparency and collects associations and knowledge about these individuals from the students. Once all associations have been recorded, categories are formed to summarize the knowledge students have about the Grimm Brothers. Students, in pairs, receive an information gap activity where one partner has information about the Grimm brothers and the other partner has information about fairy tales. Both have questions on the bottom of their sheet that they need to ask their partner. Students do the reading, listening, speaking, and writing about content that may be new or build on what they already know. Once the activity is completed, students return to the semantic web and add the newly acquired knowledge and information according to the appropriate categories. Students actively manipulate the vocabulary several times in various contexts promoting long term retention of the words and concepts.

Authentic Visuals and Oral and Written Texts

What: Authentic materials are generally defined as "those written and oral communications produced *by* members of a language and culture group *for* members of the same language and culture group" (Galloway, 1998,

p. 133). They provide an appropriate sociocultural context for language learning and allow students to read, see, and feel real language purposefully.

Why: Authentic materials are used to create "as close an approximation as possible to the world outside the classroom" (McDonough & Shaw, 1993, p. 43), capturing multiple nuances of a word that cannot otherwise be recorded and conveyed by an absolute meaning of a word provided in a dictionary. Words reflect the culture in which the language is spoken and do not always capture the meaning associated with the concept.

Moreover, every person possesses his or her own "user's model," the mental model of the way things are supposed to look that is developed "through interaction with the system" (Norman, 1990, p. 16). Since different people interact with different "systems" this mental model is not universal. Bringing your own understanding of how things should look in another culture can create confusion and frustration since this mental model is not always transferable. Bush (2007) provides several examples of such non-transferable mental models:

> A student who learns that "pain" is the French word for bread might easily conjure up an image of soft, squishy Wonder bread, causing one to question whether the student adequately understands the concept represented by the word "pain." Consider a few other examples. A French "pâtisserie" in no way resembles a typical American iced cake. Nor does a small "hôtel" in Paris look like a Holiday Inn. And almost no French "fromage" is like cheddar or even close to mozzarella, the closest that most American students have come to "foreign" cheese. Based solely on their experience, would it be unreasonable for students from New York to expect a "taxi" to look like a Yellow Cab? Finally and predictably, perhaps these students, when encountering the word "lycée," might think of an American high school and guess that a "lycée" would resemble the mental image evoked by their personal experience. (p. 729)

How: The integration of multimedia technology into teaching language gives students access to authentic video footage and other cultural materials that can help them understand sociocultural contexts in which the language is used (Kramsch & Andersen, 1999). Classroom teachers can select video clips, music videos, DVDs, and movie trailers from the Internet that are tied to the content or language structures related to the chapter or unit content that provide language learners with authentic visual input. The following serves as an example of a classroom application of authentic video integration:

- Students grouped in pairs fill out a Venn diagram noting the unique characteristics observed about Spanish dining practices as they view a video.
- With their partner they record the unique features of U.S. dining practices on the other side of the Venn diagram circle.
- The dining practices are compared and the overlapping circle space is used to record similarities shared by both cultures. This places the learners in the role of observers of their own and the target culture and helps to suspend

personal judgment concerning which cultural practices are correct and which are not.

The visual element of a target culture bakery that reveals a variety of breads and how they are wrapped and carried home is much more effective in communicating cultural practices than explaining this through words. The visual element immediately presents a real picture without the interference of what students already know and imagine. They can quickly adjust their schema. It is important to provide a pedagogical task, such as the Venn diagram, that actively involves learners in making sense of this visual input. In pairs, students can negotiate meaning and create a product (Venn diagram) that reveals the level of understanding of the concept presented.

A Counterbalanced Approach between Form and Meaning

What: A counterbalanced approach is one of the instructional strategies promoted in content-based instruction. It is defined as a systematic integration of content-based and form-focused instruction that requires students to shift their attention between content and target language features (Lyster, 2007).

Why: Establishing a form-meaning connection is the first step in vocabulary acquisition. However, the vast majority of vocabulary materials and activities in a content-based classroom seem to view learning the meaning of a word as a more significant aspect of vocabulary acquisition and either disregard or downplay the form element (Schmitt, 2008). In the more traditional language classroom, form is the focus and content seems to be a secondary concern. A counterbalanced approach advocates for equal attention to both word meaning and word form (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Counterbalanced approach to form and meaning

How: By creating true/false statements that force learners to attend to both form and content students are actively engaged in determining the accuracy of statements. The following serve as examples:

Ronald Reagan is a good politician (T/F)
Nancy Pelosi is the U.S. Vice President (T/F)

The first instinct is to answer "yes" to the first statement, but upon closer attention to the form of the verb, the response has to be deemed false as Ronald Reagan is no longer alive, hence the statement should read: Ronald Reagan was a good politician. This requires deeper processing on the part of the learner. The

second statement forces attention to form and content, but the content message is incorrect. This engages students cognitively in decoding the meaning while paying attention to form to assist in determining the accuracy of the statement.

By choosing content from other areas such as mathematics, literature, science, political science, art, or history, students learn or re-learn knowledge that will activate their background knowledge and build upon that knowledge through the medium of a second language. Through carefully scaffolded problem-solving tasks, the language teacher can challenge students cognitively even though their linguistic output may be limited. The key to successful tasks is to use texts, visuals, and graphics that allow students access to content. For example, when teaching vocabulary for food, the teacher can use the food pyramid to promote healthy eating habits and information regarding nutrition. (See Figure 3) By using authentic visuals and graphics from the target culture, students learn incidentally about the variety of foods specific to this culture. A variety of learning tasks associated with this topic may include:

- The teacher has students create a graph indicating (based on this visual) which food groups should be eaten in greater quantity and which should be eaten sparingly. Their findings can then be confirmed via an article accessed through the Internet listing all the foods included in each group and how many servings are suggested.
- A list of foods in the target language can be provided and students can categorize these according to food groups.
- Students record their eating habits for three days, create a table of food consumption and determine if they are meeting the guidelines of good nutrition.
- Locate or provide a graphic on the Internet that compares countries by the number of calories that are consumed. This also allows the teacher to address geography, issues of world hunger, consumption, eating disorders, and eating habits.

Real tables, graphics, visuals, and texts from the target culture serve as authentic informational documents that engage learners in real world tasks and are taken seriously by students enhancing the value of language learning.

Align with Standards and Develop Modes of Communication

What: Language instruction must align with the five goal areas (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) as outlined in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* and prepare students to develop their abilities across the three communicative modes: Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational (ACTFL, 1998).

The Presentational mode is defined as one-way communication (one-to-many) that does not provide an opportunity for negotiation of meaning. Performance in the presentational mode is usually rehearsed and involves speaking and writing. The Interpretive mode also represents one-way communication with no access to active negotiation of meaning. Meaning is usually interpreted by means of

inferencing, i.e., drawing inferences via generalizations, prior knowledge and personal background (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). The Interpersonal mode, on the other hand, is characterized by active negotiation of meaning by means of clarifications and adjustments to convey meaning and intentions (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). Unlike the rehearsed Presentational mode, the Interpersonal mode is usually spontaneous.

Figure 3. Vegetarian food pyramid
(Source: http://consumerbrigade.com/veganlife/files/2008/08/vegan-pyramid-800x600.jpg)

Why: Using all three modes of communication will enhance language learning since the Interpretive mode facilitates comprehension and interpretation of a text as well as acquisition of new information; the Interpersonal mode encourages students to share the inferences they drew in the Interpretive mode and their reactions; and the Presentational mode allows students to use newly acquired knowledge as they create a final product (Shrum & Glisan, 2005).

How: When planning a lesson on the topic of friendship, for example, which can be based on a literary text, short story, newspaper article, or film, the teacher has students:

- interview a class member about their best friend and how that friendship began, what characteristics are endearing, which ones are less endearing, and how long the friendship has lasted (Interpersonal spoken).
- in groups of four the students prepare a written list of positive and negative characteristics of "friends" and prioritize them on a continuum supported

by arguments as to why some characteristics are more important than others (Interpersonal written).

• students listen to an interview with famous individuals who describe their best friends (Interpretive spoken), or read interviews with famous individuals who describe their best friends (Interpretive reading).

• students compare their list of valued characteristics with the written or spoken interviews and create a graphic that depicts similarities and differences.

• students prepare a Power Point in which they describe their best friend (Presentational spoken) or write a letter to their friend describing why they value their friendship (Presentational written).

Such context-based activities are inclusive of all skills and provide a variety of input opportunities that enhance vocabulary retention.

Promote a Deeper Level of Processing

What: A deeper level of processing occurs when tasks require higher degrees of need and evaluation and create a higher involvement load, resulting in better word retention (Keating, 2008). Deeper learning requires learners to follow multiple rules of operation to complete the task, such as assembling a bicycle, improvising a recipe, or preparing a syllabus (Feldman, 2000). The learning of information does not result from a mere reading of the content but from processing, thinking about, or reflecting on the content (Jensen & Nickelsen, 2008). Using a variety of strategies to process information helps learners explore and retain the information long term.

Why: Effective learning will occur when a deeper level of semantic processing is required on the part of the learner. Students have higher chances for long-term retention when they have more opportunities to engage with new vocabulary (Schmitt, 2008). The Depth/Levels of Processing Hypothesis implies that the more attention and manipulations a word receives, the higher the chances of storing the vocabulary in long term memory are (Craik & Lockhart, 1972). When students are asked to manipulate words, relate them to other words and to their own experiences, and then to justify their choices, word associations are reinforced. The Involvement Load Hypothesis states that "the amount of mental effort or *involvement*" induced by a task facilitates vocabulary retention (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001, p. 366). Classroom activities that demand deeper processing can be time consuming. However, critical thinking and problem solving skills are greatly enhanced as a result.

How: Information-gap activities are effective in promoting deeper processing and make use of higher level thinking skills like analysis, synthesis, and paraphrasing. The essence of this type of activity is that one student has information that another student needs to accomplish a task. For example, students might be asked to find the missing information from a train schedule, when one student is placed in the role of a passenger and the other in the role of a train station employee. Another example may ask students who are preparing for a party, each possessing a copy of his or her monthly schedule, to determine when the other

person is free so that they can organize the party together. Students must negotiate a time that works for both of them.

Jigsaw cooperative learning encourages interdependence through small group activities and promotes deeper thinking and processing by bringing together students in expert groups who discuss and interpret information through individual lenses resulting in rich discussion and a deeper level of processing. Each member of the group has an active role in working with the members from another group who have the same assignment, forming "expert" groups. Once the information has been reviewed and summarized the students return to the "home groups" and discuss the acquired information. They synthesize the results in the form of a presentation to be shared with peers.

Word-puzzles are also used to reinforce deeper processing and force students to think and synthesize information. Various examples of word-puzzles such as criss-cross puzzles, double-puzzles, mazes, letter tiles, cryptograms, hidden message puzzles, and fallen phrases can be designed using the following web-site: http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/.

Provide Opportunities for Incidental Learning as well as Direct Vocabulary Instruction

What: There are two main sources of meaningful vocabulary learning: *incidental learning* from context and *direct vocabulary instruction* (Sadoski, 2005). Incidental learning generally refers to "learning without intent to learn" (Lyster, 2007, p. 27). *Direct vocabulary instruction* refers to systematic demonstration of ways to determine the meanings of unknown words.

Why: Input-oriented language acquisition theory implies that learners will be able to connect meaning and form if the input is meaningful and contextualized (Min, 2008). Therefore, vocabulary should be acquired incidentally through extensive reading (Krashen, 2004). A specific threshold of vocabulary size is necessary for successful acquisition of vocabulary through extensive reading (Nation & Waring, 1997). Some define this threshold as 98% (8,000–9,000 word-families) of the words in the text (Hirsh & Nation, 1992; Hu & Nation, 2000; Nation, 2001), while others suggest that the threshold is around 3,000-5,000 words (Nation & Waring, 1997). Word retention in incidental learning tasks is very low when the goal is reading comprehension. The probability that a word would be learned upon first exposure ranges from 5 to 15 percent (Coady, 1993). Chun and Plass (1996) noted that "new annotated words that occurred in the reading text were remembered with 24.1%-26.5% accuracy" (p.187).

Oftentimes the "Matthew effect" occurs, underscoring the biblical adage "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" (Stanovich, 1986). The more competent readers, who already possess the foundational vocabulary needed to benefit from incidental learning, will read more and increase their vocabulary while the less competent readers, who read less, will make fewer gains. This is due in part to the background knowledge that learners possess and use to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words in a given text (De Bot, Paribakht, & Wesch, 1997; Lee & Wolf, 1997; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999), linguistic information or knowledge of

the code they have available, and their knowledge of the world. Relationships exist between L1 reading proficiency and L2 incidental vocabulary acquisition for intermediate and advanced learners (Knight, 1994; Haynes & Baker, 1993). L2 reading proficiency has a consistently strong positive impact on incidental vocabulary gain and retention through reading (Pulido, 2003). Students with a low level of second language proficiency do not transfer their L1 reading strategies to L2 reading as students of high and intermediate levels do (Taillefer, 1996).

Explicit vocabulary instruction was found to be more effective in vocabulary acquisition than incidental learning since it resulted in greater and faster gains and better retention (Schmitt, 2008). Intentional vocabulary instruction was proven especially beneficial for older and more advanced learners (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Vocabulary growth has been shown to be higher when reading is supported by vocabulary-focused activities (Knight, 1994; Laufer, 2000, 2003; Luppescu & Day, 1993; Paribakht & Wesche, 1997).

How: To optimize vocabulary learning, both direct instruction and incidental learning should be promoted and a variety of vocabulary exercises should be provided before, during, and after the reading of the text. This focuses students on specific words and exposes them to the words in numerous contexts. A list of tasks for classroom integration may include:

- highlight words in the text that are the focus of the lesson
- include vocabulary learning exercises that require the students to refer to the new vocabulary and use it in various ways
- identify which word does not belong (from a list of 5 words) according to the content of the story
- place action verbs in order according to the chronology of events in the story
- select a character from the story or text and fill in a spider graphic that delineates adjectives used in the text to describe this character, e.g., actions of the character and the results of this action, a physical description of the character drawn from the text, or an emotional or personality description of the character according to self and others
- half the class captures the plot of the story chronologically on a graphic organizer consisting of nine squares through drawings, while the other half does the same using words. Students who prepared a word graphic partner with someone who prepared a graphic organizer using pictures and the pair must negotiate until they reach agreement on the major events and their chronology. Students choose and prepare a final summative product based on several options: write a summary of the story, prepare an aural audiotape in which the story is retold, prepare a video or PPT in which they retell the story.

Conclusion

This article summarizes and analyzes important research in vocabulary teaching and learning and translates this research into best practices for the

foreign language classroom. Equipped with the knowledge of what, why, and how students best acquire vocabulary and language in the foreign language classroom, teachers can clearly articulate and illustrate to students, parents, and other constituents why they employ these pedagogical practices designed to increase language proficiency efficiently and effectively. Through the integration of multimedia, language acquisition and learning theory, authentic texts and visuals, and alignment with standards, language learners will feel more success and competence and grow more confident in their ability to communicate in their second language resulting in increased learning and self-motivation.

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2

Diverse by Task: Task-based Instruction in the World Languages Classroom

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Defining the Issue

As the world continues to become rapidly more connected, it is necessary to prepare ourselves and the learners in our classrooms to better understand the diversity of cultures as well as to promote intercultural awareness and sensitivity. Currently world language teachers are faced with the challenges of internationalizing our curriculum in a meaningful manner. This should start with an examination of our pedagogies and whether they effectively include meaningful language learning experiences and cross-cultural themes. Members of the next generation will have to function effectively not only in their own societal environment but also in international contexts. Knowledge of languages, other cultures, and the ability to function in cross-cultural situations become critical components of a 21st century skill set (Pegrum, 2008).

Our goal as language teachers is to create a language learning environment in which students develop the language skills, abilities, and dispositions that are necessary in order to appreciate and value different points of view and to have the cross-cultural competencies in order to interact with a diverse community beyond academic borders.

However, there are many challenges in trying to meet this goal. A traditional basic language classroom is often a closed community and very often homogeneous regarding background knowledge, cultural awareness, shared experiences, perspectives, and worldviews. There is often little incentive to get to know other communities and the people that inhabit those communities outside of the

classroom walls. In addition, many traditional classrooms focus more on accuracy in the production of language than on meaningful communication. Also, students do not often see the possible applications and usefulness of the language they are learning, as they never move beyond classroom practice so learning remains static.

Implementation and Learner Outcomes Via Real World Tasks

We have recognized that there is a gap in the way task-based methodology is applied and the way it is connected to learner outcomes. We believe that a possible problem could be the lack of explicit connections between the way learners see the foreign language they are learning and the way it can be used as a tool in a broader range of disciplines and contexts.

We need to prepare our students and help them process the information that we are providing in the foreign language classroom. Instructors need to help learners develop the skills of thinking globally and looking at situations from multiple perspectives. Learners need to learn how to communicate through a variety of media and take into account the cultural references of the native speakers of the language they are learning and be more aware of the native speaker's worldview and its impact on their own lives. In this way the learner will see both an application for what they are learning and hopefully be more aware of the differences that may arise when interacting with the target culture whether it be in a personal or professional way. Therefore, to achieve our goal, we must provide learners with opportunities to: (1) recognize that language is useful and meaningful to them as individuals and in their future professions, and (2) facilitate movement towards becoming part of an expanded and diverse community.

Examination of Our Pedagogy

By helping students move beyond the classroom and see the relevance of learning a foreign language we emphasize the ability to communicate in the target language. For us, communication is a continuous process of expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning (Savignon, 1997). Learners do not first acquire language as a structural system and then learn how to use this system in communication, but rather actually discover the system itself in the process of learning how to communicate (Ellis, 2003). According to the communicative approach, language should be thought of as a tool for communication, not only as a set of grammatical, lexical, and phonological items that students need to memorize. Language should be seen as a dynamic resource for the creation of meaning (Nunan, 2004). In other words, the communicative approach emphasizes helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts and emphasizes learning language functions. It focuses on helping learners create meaning and also on assessing how well learners have developed their communicative competence.

Similarly, as the definition of communication has changed, so has the methodology and the approach to teaching world languages. As methodology and approach have changed, so has the definition of communicative activity

(Rubdy, 1998; Skehan, 2003). During the 1980's, the term "task" replaced the term "communicative activity." According to Ellis (2003), a task could be seen as a blueprint that would help learners to process language in a pragmatic way, which would lead them to achieve a communicative goal. Based on Skehan (1998), a well-designed task should encompass five characteristics: (1) meaning should be considered as primary, (2) learners should create their own meaning and not regurgitate teacher language, (3) classroom tasks should connect to the real world, (4) completion of the task is integral to the learning process, and (5) the tasks should be assessed according to the outcome and overarching goals. Communicative in nature, tasks build performance as well as competence.

Task-based language teaching has been a central issue for methodology for several decades. More recently Nunan (2004) stated that task-based language teaching has strengthened some principles and practices such as following a needs-based approach to content selection, communicating in the classroom in the target language, utilizing authentic texts in the learning experience, providing opportunities for learners to focus both on language and the learning process itself, enhancing the learner's own personal experience as valuable components of the learning process, and linking classroom language learning with language use outside the classroom.

According to Nunan (2004) there are six components of a well-defined task: goals, input, procedures, teacher role, learner role, and settings. Goals, input, and procedures are essential to task planning and implementation. Goals refer to the general intentions behind any task and provide a link between the task and the curriculum. Input refers to the data (spoken, written, or visual) that learners use in the process of completing the task. Procedures specify what learners will do with the input.

Task-based learning focuses on the learner's use of the language, not the teacher's (Lee, 1995). Savignon (1997) agrees with this point of view stating that two essential concepts in task-based instruction are: (1) the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning, and (2) the need for at least two participants with interaction taking place between learners, not between learners and the teacher.

A well-designed task uses authentic language and usually integrates the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking in a cultural context. Learners use higher-order thinking skills in order to accomplish real-life activities. There is an outcome, tangible or intangible, that is generally unique to an individual student or group of students. The successful completion of a task results in the transferability of skills and abilities (Leaver & Willis, 2004). For the purpose of this article, we will consider that the components of a task-based lesson are warm-up (pre-task), guided performance (during task), and closure (post-task) (Ellis, 2006).

Constructing Pre-Tasks

A task is generally preceded by information collection or other forms of preparation, often labeled as pre-task. A pre-task is usually anything that one would do in real life prior to accomplishing a task. It provides learners with

the information needed for completing a task and may include research, data collection, surveying, and listing, among others. Researching the weather would be a pre-task for planning a one-day excursion. Surveying friends about what they like to do and investigating entrance fees for museums would be pre-tasks for creating a "Things to Do Brochure" for a city.

Engaging learners in real-world activities means that students interact with texts that are prepared by native speakers for native speakers. These authentic materials are in an unabridged format for real-life purposes. An online menu from a restaurant, an article from an online newspaper, a podcast of an interview of a native speaker exemplify authentic materials.

Students Working During Tasks: Guided Performance

We should draw learners' attention to cultural schemas and paradigms using discussion and analysis (Pegrum, 2008). The presentation, practice, production (PPP) teaching style (Willis, 1996) must be enhanced in order to improve development of student interlanguage and help students see the usefulness of what has been learned. In this sequence, free production may not be achieved because learners may not use the target form at all or may apply it to the wrong situation (Willis, 1996). To achieve more real-world goals, which result in more meaningful use of language for the students, presentations should be more student-centered, and practice should be dynamic and authentic. Another characteristic is that the production component varies and produces diverse and unique outcomes.

We want students not only to show their creativity and research skills but also to use language well at an appropriate level of accuracy and with topics to which they can relate, which fosters transferability of skills and abilities. These skills will also help learners to navigate culturally diverse terrains more comfortably, which is necessary in the global contexts that they will experience in their professional lives. As professionals, they will need to research information from a variety of sources in the target language, and be able to use it to solve problems as well as to interact in the real world. Classroom practices during this stage include activities in which students make cultural comparisons to help them appreciate that each culture, even their own, is a valid construct, and is one of many (Crozet & Liddicoat, 2000).

What kind of task can we create where students acquire intercultural competency and intercultural literacy? As Kumaravadivelu (2006) defines it, intercultural literacy refers to the skills students would need to "read" cultural events and activities in their own and other cultures and reflect on them critically. Through this process, it is expected that learners would develop the global skills and abilities for real-world application that are meaningful to them personally and relevant to their future professional career goals.

One approach to developing these intercultural competencies is through the use of computer-mediated communication and current technologies that connect students with native speakers and that foster and facilitate collaboration. Shrum and Glisan (2005) discuss how technology can be used to help learners enhance their competencies and skills in the foreign language. Blogs, wikis, Google

docs, Facebook, voice chat, and videoconferencing are examples of some of the available computer-mediated communication tools that can connect our learners with an expanded community.

Learners should understand how the target cultural world influences their own. Mitchell and Myles (2004) state that learning is socially mediated and depends on face-to-face interaction and shared processes, such as joint problem solving and discussion. The authors also assert that this mediation is essential to the use of language as a tool for thought. Lantolf (2000) wrote that mediation is embedded in and emerges from the experiences of others in the present through a social process, the experiences of others from the past through culture, and also from the experience of the individual with these others and with the artifacts they construct.

Constructing Post-Tasks

Learner outcomes, whether tangible or intangible, can help students be more prepared to work effectively in a globalizing world by being able to think globally, communicate effectively, and participate actively in an expanded community beyond their classroom. When learners think globally they are more geographically informed, they recognize human concerns as universal, they become more aware of the contributions of various cultures within and beyond their own culture, and of the interconnectedness of peoples and the cultures to which they belong.

According to Ellis (2003), a task should result in language use that resembles as close as possible the way language is used in the real world. By successfully completing the tasks, learners will demonstrate that they can communicate in the target language. This communication may utilize a variety of media and technologies while demonstrating critical thinking and problem solving in cross-cultural contexts. Learners must participate in multicultural experiences both in their local communities as well as internationally. Through this process learners develop respect and understanding for the 'Other' while embracing multiple perspectives.

Conclusion

As opposed to focusing on form with the expectation that learners will be able to produce the language accurately when needed, task-based instruction recognizes the need to include accuracy and fluency within a complex and meaningful cultural context. Task-based instruction enables students to interact with others by using the target language as a means to an end (Lee, 1995). It requires learners to use language, with an emphasis on meaning in order to attain an objective (Swain, 2001). Therefore, learners are using the language with a purpose and not just using it for a drill (manipulation and transformation). Communicative in nature, task-based instruction improves performance as well as competence. As shown in the Appendix, creating tasks that help learners to think globally and look at situations from multiple perspectives should not be a difficult chore for the instructor. By creating tasks like the ones we propose, instructors will help learners communicate through a variety of media while taking into account the

cultural references of the native speakers of the language they are learning. All the while, they could also become more aware of the native speaker's worldview and the impact it could have on their own lives. In this way learners will see both an application of what they are learning in the classroom and hopefully be more aware of the differences that may arise when interacting with the target culture whether it be in a personal or professional way in the future.

There are many benefits to task-based instruction. It appeals to a wide variety of learning styles and personality types, it helps connect students to a diverse community outside of the classroom, it is learner centered and meaningful to their individual interests, which results in personal motivation.

With a well-designed task, one can incorporate an array of technology tools in order to expand the learning community, which in turn helps bring together more diverse perspectives in order to successfully meet the challenges of a problem-solving task.

Task-based instruction allows learners to personalize their learning thus helping them recognize that foreign languages are a tool for personal growth. With the help of technology tools that help learners connect with the real world, learners become aware of and participate in an expanding global community and begin to understand that foreign languages can be beneficial in their future careers. Our goal as language teachers is to create a language learning environment in which students develop language skills, abilities, and dispositions that are necessary in order to appreciate and value different points of view and to have the cross-cultural competencies needed to interact with a diverse community beyond academic borders.

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Appendix

Los viajes.   **Nombre** _____

Nota gramatical _____

Polite single commands (*Ud.*)

Use the *yo* form of the verb in the present, take off the ending (o) and
with -ar verbs, add -e
-er / -ir verbs, add -a

Examples: *Firme* los cheques de viajero.
Pregunte al cajero el valor del dólar.
Diga la direccion al taxista.
Abra sus maletas en la aduana.

Tarea 1

Usted es un estudiante universitario. Prepare un itinerario para un estudiante de intercambio que viaja a Akron por un año. Hable del vuelo, del alojamiento y de las atracciones turísticas en el destino.

Quiero que usted **haga** un viaje a _____ .
Quiero que usted **salga** el _____ (día) de _____(mes).
Cuando llegue al aeropuerto, usted debe ir al hotel.
El hotel se llama _____

Tarea 2

Dé consejos y sugerencias al estudiante de intercambio.

Tengo algunos consejos y sugerencias para usted:

1. No olvide su pasaporte.
2. Traiga los cheques de viajero.
3. Tenga paciencia en la sala de espera del aeropuerto.
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Actividades:
Quiero que usted visite _____ .
Quiero que usted _____ .
Quiero que usted _____ .

Tarea 3

Lea la lista de instrucciones e indique con una X si la instrucción se dirige a un turista que visita Los Ángeles o a un turista que visita Nueva York:

	Los Angeles	Nueva York
Visite la Estatua de la Libertad.		
Dé un paseo por el Camino de la Fama en Hollywood.		
Vaya a la Isla Ellis.		
Vea un espectáculo en Broadway.		
Pase por las mansiones de Beverly Hills.		
Corra en el Parque Central.		
Asista a un partido de los Lakers.		
Levántese temprano y visite el zoológico del Bronx.		
¡Coma una pizza autentica!		

Tarea 4

Piense en lugares turísticos en Akron, Ohio que pueden ser interesantes para un estudiante de intercambio de Latinoamérica. Haga una lista de 6 lugares posibles.

_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____

Tarea 5

Trabaje en parejas: Usando algunos de los lugares de la Tarea 4, escriban seis actividades que un estudiante de intercambio debe hacer si vive en Akron, Ohio.

Ejemplo: Mire un espectáculo en el Teatro Cívico en el centro de Akron.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Tarea 6

Ahora ustedes deben pensar en descripciones para tres o cuatro de los lugares que seleccionaron en la Tarea 5.

Ejemplo: Nueva York

La estatua de la libertad: Es una estatua enorme que representa la libertad.
El zoológico del Bronx: Es un zoológico muy grande y tiene muchas especies de animales. El Parque Central: Es un parque que está en el centro de la ciudad. Tiene varios lagos y caminos.

A. _____ _____
_____
B. _____ _____
_____
C. _____ _____
_____
D. _____ _____
_____

Tarea 7

Usted va a crear un folleto para estudiantes de intercambio Latinoamericanos que vienen a vivir a Akron, Ohio. Combine la información de las Tareas 5 y 6.

Los viajes	Proyecto de final de unidad

*Objetivo***: Crear un 'blog' para estudiantes de intercambio Latinoamericanos que vienen a vivir a Akron, Ohio [**your region**].**

Tarea 1

Wiki (en casa):
Brainstorm what information you would include in a blog. Write down the places you would recommend in your city.

Tarea 2

En clase:
Tu maestro(a) trae una fotocopia de la página Wiki. En parejas, organicen las categorías que han creado en la Wiki. Incluyan los lugares y las actividades que pueden hacer en cada lugar. Compartan sus ideas con la clase.

Categorías	Lugares	Actividades

Tarea 3

En clase:

Vamos a usar la forma imperativa de *usted*. En parejas, escriban los verbos asociados con las categorías. Ejemplo, Deportes: jugar, mirar, ver, etc. Compartan sus ideas con la clase.

Categoría	Verbo(s)

Tarea 4

En clase:

Usen los verbos asociados con su actividad (Tarea 3) y los verbos en el banco de palabras y escriban sugerencias usando la forma imperativa de *usted*.

Ejemplo: Dé un paseo en el parque Sand Run.

Visite el museo de arte de Akron.

Escuche música en Blossom.

Visitar, Dar un paseo por, Ir a, Ver, Pasar por, Correr, Asistir a, Caminar, etc.

_____   _____
_____   _____
_____   _____

Tarea 5

En casa:

Think about a category you would like to use in your blog for exchange students. Write your selection in the Wiki. The person that claims the topic first can do that topic. Begin your research on the topic.

Tarea 6

En clase:

Trabajen en parejas. Para crear un breve artículo sobre su ciudad, deben usar el modo imperativo de usted (mandato) y deben incluir una descripción de los

lugares, las actividades, las horas, la dirección y su opinión de las actividades. Escriban sus ideas en los espacios debajo:

Ejemplo: Visite el Parque Central: Es un parque que está en el centro de la
ciudad. Tiene varios lagos y caminos. Esta abierto de nueve de la
mañana a diez de la noche. ¡Es gratis!

_____   _____
                                              _____
                                              _____
                                              _____

Tarea 7

En clase:
Después de escribir la primera parte de tu artículo, trabaje con al menos dos compañeros(as) de otro grupo. Las nuevas parejas comparten su artículo. Dé a sus compañeros su opinión y sugerencias sobre su artículo (solo hablando). Luego, vuelva donde su compañero(a) y compartan lo que han hablado con los otros estudiantes.

Tarea 8

En casa:
Type up your article and upload it with your images to your WIKI page for peer editing by another group. After peer editing and final revision, submit your article for teacher approval and for inclusion in the class blog "Guia para estudiantes de intercambio". If possible, students could create a video of themselves with details of the place and activities they are recommending.

Post-task:
Locate some exchange students in your community/school to leave comments on the blog for additional feedback.

Post-task:
Look for some travel/tourist blogs in the target language and compare them with what you have created. Share your findings with your class.

3

Content-based Learning Strategies

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Introduction

Within the United States there has been increased interest in Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) programs. States like Wisconsin have included language learning, beginning at the elementary level, in their outline of skills necessary for the 21st century. However, there is very little time available during the school day to introduce new subject matter. As school districts are constantly battling budget issues and world language programs have not been mandated at state or national levels, there is a desire to maximize learning time by incorporating content from other curricular areas into language classes.

The integration of content-based instruction (henceforth CBI) within traditionally structured FLES programs, normally 30 minutes three times a week, can solve problems with both funding and time constraints. However, this can be an enormous challenge, as programs must conform to best practices in language instruction and content delivery. This article outlines the theoretical background of CBI and task-based language teaching and presents a sample CBI lesson in Spanish from one FLES context that uses tasks as an instructional model.

Literature Review

CBI is an approach to language and content teaching that bases instruction on learning objectives for both areas. In the 1980s, within the area of applied linguists, there was substantial interest in integrated instruction. Although many educators were interested in integrating content area matter into second and foreign language courses, the widespread adoption of CBI at that time was met by many challenges including coordination between language and content instructors, administrative support, materials development, and program evaluation (Stoller, 2004). Assuring that the needs of both content area subject matter and language instruction are met presents another major challenge to effectively implementing CBI.

Thus, the unique challenges of CBI involve delivering curricular content while retaining focus on fluency and learning in a target language. A content-based FLES program is one in which one part of curricular content, for example math, science, or social studies, is taught in a second language (L2) normally two or three times a week (Gilzow, 2002). Studies have indicated that there is a tendency to amplify the needs of curricular content and dismiss important aspects of language learning and teaching (Stoller, 2004). In order to avoid this common pitfall, it is necessary to be conscious of the rigors and demands of effective CBI curricular design. To meet this end, task-based teaching and learning can be used as a lesson design model.

Many language instructors and methodologists consider task-based teaching and learning (TBT and TBL) to be a current best practice. However, before we discuss TBT and TBL, we must first define what we mean by a "task." Several researchers in the field of second language learning and teaching have defined the term "task" differently. For example, Nunan (1989) defines a task as, "a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is primarily focused on meaning rather than form" (p. 110). Willis and Willis (2007) consider a task something that "includes outcome by suggesting that task completion has priority"(p. 13). Finally, Skehan (1998) states, "a task is an activity in which, meaning is primary, learners are not given other people's meanings to regurgitate, there is some sort of relationship to comparable real world activities, task completion has some sort of priority, [and] the assessment of the task is in terms of the outcome" (p. 95). All of these researchers define task in a similar way. Tasks are generally communication-focused and outcome-based. These characteristics are essential to any definition of task.

Willis and Willis (2007) expand on the notion of a single task to discuss task-based sequences, which are sequences of related tasks. Willis (2008) describes task-based sequences as being, "built around a series of activities in which learners focus primarily on the exchange of meanings" (p. 1). There are three major stages within the development of Willis' task-based methodology: priming, the task itself, and reporting. Priming is any sort of activity that prepares the learners to participate in the upcoming language task; it provides them with the topic and vocabulary. An example of a priming activity is the use of a modified

text. The text could be simplified to the proficiency level of the students and include new vocabulary words, supported by pictures, for the students to use as a context for learning new words. This is followed by a task based on the topic introduced in the priming activity. For example, learners might use the vocabulary presented in the text to work in pairs to complete a vocabulary matching exercise in the target language. In the reporting stage, the students might present the target vocabulary to the class in the context of a picture. Thus, the task and the reporting activity often require different communicative modes, as the task may be more interpersonal, while the reporting is presentational. Willis (2008) notes that while the accomplishment of the task is relatively private, the final report is public.

The other applied technique is the use of focus on form. Focus on form is an addendum to the TBT and TBL movement. Focus on form is described by Long (1991) as, "the practice of isolating linguistic items, teaching and testing them one at a time" (p. 41). Within the context of classroom instruction, focus on form can be achieved via a pause in the communicative activities in order to isolate and explain a specific linguistic point. Several researchers (e.g., Ellis, 1994; Long, 1983; Van Patten, 1990; 1996; 2002; Willis, 1996) have suggested that through TBT and TBL alone learners often fail to internalize input of discreet grammatical and linguistic items. Thus, if used alone without a focus on form, learners may fail to observe and acquire L2 language structures (Long, 1991).

Willis (2008) describes a structure for planning task-based lessons. He begins each lesson with an Introduction-Questionnaire which is comprised of priming, mining, and rehearsal. Priming consists of supplying input in the target language. Mining, a technique of priming, is the process and belief that with time language learners are able to find and adapt structures in a written or aural text (Willis, 2008). Mining by students usually occurs in the process of reexamining an L2 text or oral activity to use a vocabulary item or grammar theme in a new and unique way. Rehearsal is a controlled teacher-driven practice.

The actual task portion of a task-based lesson plan follows the introduction. The Task-Planning-Report portion of the lesson project is where the action actually takes place (Willis, 2008). The ideal task involves multiple learners concentrating on an activity using the target language in order to achieve an assigned outcome. Task-based instruction seeks to initiate unscripted second language speech acts and therefore does not prioritize language structures and formal grammar. The report can be the assessment activity. It is appropriate to include a review or extension activity. Willis (2008), for example, places focus on form, or specific grammar-based instruction, at the end of the task sequence.

Many sequences in CBI are partially based on the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky as outlined in Krashen (1982). Sociocultural theory maintains that meaningful L2 input provides the necessary basis for second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Culturally-bound forms, such as language, develop in what Vygotsky (1978) calls the zone of proximal development (ZPD). All higher mental functions appear twice. They appear once internally, when the form is distributed in the intermental plane between the learner and another person or a cultural artifact — a text for example — and then again on an instrumental plane

where the activity is carried out by the individual (Antón, DiCamila, & Lantolf, 2003). Much of TBT and TBL is heavily influenced by sociocultural theory and the notion that mediated input, or experience with a language, will lead to L2 acquisition. Within TBT planning, it is possible to find a task with no follow-up or modular focus on form instruction. In fact, in many situations, explicit language instruction does not occur at all.

Focus on form was developed in response to the input-focused approaches of the late 1970s and early 1980s, such as the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Focus on form is beneficial because it takes the situational factors of classroom instruction into account, such as time limits and direct grammar instruction. Long (1991) is careful to point out four caveats to focus on form:

> (1) a focus on form serves as one of a range of relevant features that differentiate instructional program types, syllabus models, tasks or testing; (2) instructional environments that emphasize an overt focus on form may do so in a variety of ways, and to differing degrees; (3) learners will frequently fail to notice form in situations where instructors or materials encourage noticing and vice versa; and (4) Some degree of awareness of form and a focus on meaning may not be mutually exclusive on some tasks. (pp. 43-44)

Given the focus on form model and Long's caveats, it is important to include some type of language instruction as a follow-up to the content in order to encourage students' acquisition of L2 forms. Therefore, focus on form is included in many TBT and TBL programs' planning.

Stoller (2004) suggests that CBI is unique because of its dual commitment to both language and area content; specifically, other content beyond the language itself, such as, science, math, or social studies. CBI has attracted global attention at all levels from FLES to language for specific purposes courses for adults. At the elementary school level, there are many successful FLES programs identified by the U.S. Department of Education in the National K-12 Foreign Language Survey Project (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008) and the Improving Language Education in School Project (The World Bank, 2001). Among the identified programs, several were content-enriched and two were entirely content-based (Stoller, 2004). Content-enriched programs are directed by the curricular content of other areas of study, in order to reinforce content concepts and provide groundwork for language planning themes. Content-based programs are those in which the L2 is the only medium of content delivery.

Gilzow and Branaman (as cited in Stoller, 2004) identify four factors necessary to create and maintain a good content-based FLES program: flexibility, teamwork, leadership, and shared commitment. Flexibility, or the ability to adjust as the program develops and changes and new situations arise, is important for all of the members of the team including content teachers, language teachers, administrators, and community members. Teamwork is essential as all members of the process need to work together and rely on the individual expertise of others. If the program develops in isolation or with animosity, problems typically arise.

Leadership is integral in order to create a tranquil atmosphere where risks can be taken and the process of trial and error can occur. Finally, in our opinion and experience, the most important factor is a shared commitment to the vision of the program. With a committed team of teachers, administrators, and community partners, obstacles can be identified and overcome.

Combining content and language learning creates a number of challenges; many are the result of administrators' drive to ensure that content standards, as set forth by standardized testing, are met. Sometimes this need can outweigh interest in target language learning goals. Stoller (2004) notes some of the common challenges:

- The identified sequence and development of appropriate content
- The selection and sequencing of language items dictated by content sources rather than a predetermined language sequence
- The alignment of content with structures and functions that emerge from the subject matter (Short, 1999)
- The choice of appropriate materials and the decision to use (or not use) textbooks
- Faculty development that assists language instructors in handling unfamiliar subject matter and content area instructors in handling language issues
- Language and content faculty collaboration
- The institutionalization of CBI in light of available resources and the needs of faculty and students
- Systematic assessment to demonstrate (1) students' language content learning and (2) program effectiveness. (pp. 267-268)

The cooperation of language and content faculty members may be especially important in order to achieve an appropriate balance between language and content. For example, Short (2002) found in her research of CBI classroom practices that only 20 percent of teachers' utterances focused on language development. In addition, 95 percent of those utterances were related to pronunciation and vocabulary comprehension. In contrast, 35 percent of teacher-initiated oral interactions addressed content and 44 percent addressed task. It is of utmost importance to note that in these conditions 80 percent of teaching time was devoted to content, while only 20 percent was focused on L2 development. In other words, there was no balance between curricular content and language instruction. Short (2002) points out that this issue is not uncommon due to the external pressures of covering the standard curriculum and preparing students adequately for local and state standardized tests.

Integrated Lesson Plan and Theory

Within the context of existing research examining TBT, TBL, and CBI, any task created for classroom purposes must be designed while weighing all the factors affecting student teaching and learning. This requires a cognitive framework set by the constraints of the reality of the context and the desired learning goals. The

underlying cognitive framework used in the task example presented in this article appears in Figure 1.

The initial or fundamental consideration for task lesson planning must be the learners' proficiency level. The language used in the task-based lesson must be in a comprehensible form for the students. New vocabulary or grammar should be just above the students' current level and should be introduced in the introductory sequence of the lesson. This is the register of content delivery. The content-focused task sequence uses the new vocabulary or grammatical items in a meaningful activity. Student production, written or oral, is the part of the lesson that will be assessed. The assessment can be integrated or can be a separate language and content activity. Finally, any focus on specific language structures can be brought into the lesson sequence with a short focus on form activity.

Figure 1: Diagram of Framework for Task-based Second Language CBI
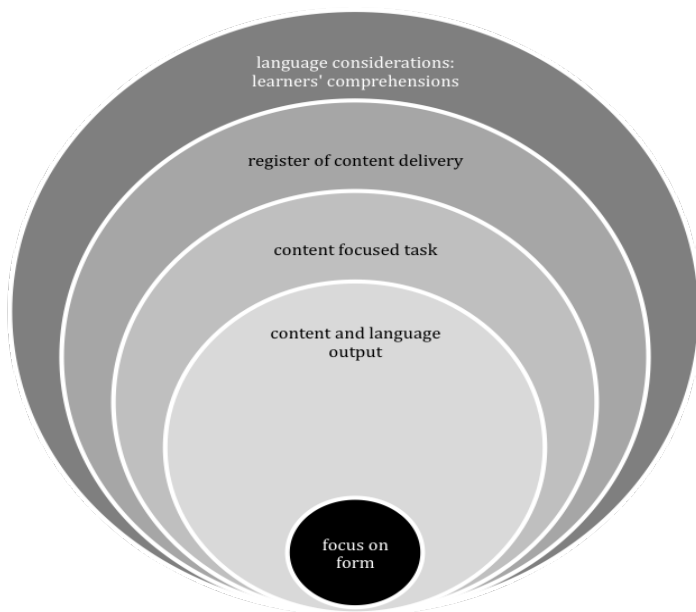
An actual plan based on this framework includes the target content concepts, content-specific vocabulary, and the broader receptive and productive language goals. The activities of the lesson would follow the outline of a task instruction sequence. This should not be confused with an activity. A task is designed to produce a specific language form or instruct a specific content subject. Activities can be and are extremely useful in language learning and teaching; however, it is important to note that a task is always a form of classroom activity, but an activity does not always fall into the parameters of a task.

The following lesson (see Table 1) was prepared for and delivered to a fourth grade CBI social studies class conducted in Spanish. The class is in the third

Table 1: Sample Task

SPANISH		
Unit Theme: Early People of Wisconsin		Week 2 of 3
Lesson 4: Paleo People		Grade: 4th
Social Studies Concepts	**Language Focus**	**Key Structures & Vocabulary**
- Native Americans - Archaeology - Effigy mounds - Artifacts, tools, homes, art, oral traditions - Paleo-Indians (13,000 to 7000 BC) - Archaic Indians (6500 to 800 B.C.) - Woodland Tradition (100 BC to 1300 AD) - Mississippi Tradition (700 to 1200 AD) - Oneotan Tradition (1300 to 1650 AD) - Early people of Peru (Incas)	*Receptive Skills:* - Eras of time (BC v. AD) - Paleo-Indians: nomadic, hunter-gatherer, stone tools, clothing, glaciers, mammoths/mastodons/ giant beavers - Archaic People: hunter-gatherer, tools, copper tools - Woodland: farming, pottery, burial mounds - Mississippi: shell pottery, platform mounds/plazas - Oneota: famers, pottery, longhouses - Inca: Peru, farming, city structure, government, pictorial glyphs, tools *Productive Skills:* - Paleo, Archaic, Woodland, Mississippi, Oneota - Verbs in past tense - Example of artifacts	*Receptive Skills:* *Paleo-Indios, Indios Arcaicos* *Herramientas: Lanza. hacha, flecha, punta de flecha y lanza, pedernal, atlatl* *Cazador – buscador, granjero* *Montículo, la efigie* *Canoa (corteza de abedul)* - Artifacts: *flechas* [arrowheads], *cerámica* [pottery], *montículos* mounds], *arte* [art], *jeroglíficos* [glyphs] *Productive Skills:* *cazar, cocinar, buscar, construir, matar, enterrar, vivir, hablar* [hunt, cook, search, build, kill, bury, live, speak]

Day 1 Activities:

1. Open *Buenos Días Song*.
2. Introduce modified Historical Society text. Pass out a copy of this text to all students as a read along.
3. Show a map of WI and mark large animal excavation sites with animal cut outs.
4. Use "paleo camp" image clips and introduce vocabulary. Have students try to discover what things were used for.
5. Discuss "camp" with a partner and describe. Name items in a matching guessing game by cutting out word piece & picture and then memory matching.
6. Close with *Hasta la Vista* song.

Day 2 Activities:

1. Open *Buenos Días Song*.
2. Review paleo vocabulary.
3. Have students label with their paleo camps.
4. Students will complete sentences with vocabulary/picture pieces. Use specific preterite structures for verbs: *cazar, cocinar, buscar, construir, matar, enterrar, vivir, hablar.*
5. If time allows use paleo drawing for a productive group description.
6. Close with *Hasta la Vista* song.

year of a FLES program. The proficiency level of the students is Novice with the exception of heritage speakers of Spanish. The goal of the lesson is to extend the students' linguistic capabilities, while also delivering historical and archeological content.

In this lesson, Willis' (2008) task levels are sequenced in the following manner. The introduction section of this task sequence is a mining activity designed around a read-along activity using a modified text on the content subject from a Wisconsin State Historical Society text. The introduction also includes priming and rehearsal, using vocabulary flash cards. The task activity of this sequence involves using an artist's rendering of a possible camp of a paleo people, the specific content subject, in conjunction with the target verb structure. Students will negotiate an oral exercise in Spanish about the content area subject. The review and extension is a fill in the gap activity in which students must place the correct term and verb form in a content-related L2 text. All of this is followed by a simple focus on form activity; the students underline the past imperfect suffixes.

This lesson based on a task sequence was successful in the fourth grade social studies classes in our CBI FLES program. The students were able to mine and understand the new linguistic structure and vocabulary through the receptive exercise. The task of identifying and describing objects in a culturally appropriate drawing was successful, although, some students needed to be redirected to stay on task. The task sequence also resulted in unplanned exchanges and discussion in Spanish. The focus on form activity was a final demonstration that the students had understood the underlying principle of the grammar.

As CBI tasks are by necessity focused on the meaning of the content area being addressed, the task sequence will be restricted to the characteristics outlined in Willis and Willis (2007). Meaning-based approaches have the following characteristics: (a) the teacher does not attempt to control learner language; (b) a procedure is judged as a success or failure depending on whether or not the learners communicate successfully; (c) at some point in the task learners will stop and decide the best way to express themselves; this process will be aided by the instructor; and, (d) focus on form will always follow focus on meaning (Willis & Willis, 2007).

As the necessary focus in a CBI task is on the content, it is of particular importance that the pedagogic corpus is honed to create a situation where the needed content-related language is integrated within the developing L2 system. The appropriate raw material must contain enough of both elements to generate the insights that learners need to allow them to operate as effective language learners (Willis & Willis, 2007). In Table 1, vocabulary was dictated by the content area demands; the choice of linguistic structures then followed the communicative needs of the L2 learner.

Conclusion

Given the substantial amount of research indicating the difficulty of CBI implementation (Stoller, 2004), it is of extreme importance that task sequencing is well designed. We must avoid the tendency to neglect students' language

competency in order to address content area subject matter. The demands and pressures of administration, subject area teachers, and state and national testing, put the CBI designer in a difficult position. It is paramount that planning decisions are well thought out and examined, that both content and language are equally valued, and that CBI teachers value, and are valued for, both areas.

Within the current educational climate, it is difficult to say what will retain academic currency among school districts, state departments of education, and the larger communities. If we are to advocate language learning for our students, be it through FLES programming or CBI-enriched classes in high school and college, then educators must be at the forefront of research and theory and be capable of building excellent programs and sequencing. The needed breadth and depth of second language study within the United States must be advocated on higher levels in both word (via national mandates) and deed (solidly constructed language programs). We should aim to develop solid programs that will not only serve as model programs, but that will educate new and sophisticated second language learners.

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4

Redesigning Expectations: Curricular Modifications for Digital Natives

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Introduction

Many non-native foreign language teachers can remember the first time they tried to use their newly acquired language skills to communicate with a native speaker of the language. They might recall the experience as being unnerving, and some might reflect that the interaction was not very successful because the language they learned in class did not prepare them to understand the native speaker's response. Even more frustrating might have been the awareness of how little useful language she/he was able to activate in order to accomplish the communicative task. While language pedagogy has improved considerably in recent years, today's students still face the anxiety of interacting for the first time in the target language.

While student anxiety about language production remains relatively constant, stress levels for many 21st century educators have increased because of persistent demands for external validation of their efforts. In the K-12 setting an acceptable score on standardized tests is required for teaching licensure in many states. In addition, the teacher's performance is evaluated, at least in part, through standardized assessment of student achievement by government agencies. College and university programs and faculty are also subject to increased accountability for the quantity of graduates as well as the quality of the knowledge their graduates are able to demonstrate through required program assessments. While educators are inured to the required external assessment, if not altogether convinced that such evaluations guarantee better educated students, many teachers are not yet comfortable with the new reality of students who also demand that educators prove the value and validity of course assignments and requirements. Perhaps this expectation on the part of students is subconscious, but it is nonetheless a reality.

It is not because students are intentionally disrespectful, but rather because the content and methodology of instruction seem to them increasingly disconnected to the world they experience outside the classroom.

As digital natives, or those who have grown up using technology in their daily lives (Prensky, 2001), these students approach education with a different attitude than did previous generations. As they have at their fingertips access to more information and more knowledge than they can possibly need, they may no longer value the classroom teacher's knowledge as did previous generations. There currently exists a debate in the academic community as to the academic ability of this millennial generation; however, the claims that this generation is unable to retain knowledge or that they are uninterested in reading and conversation due to their reliance on technology (Bauerlin, 2008; Jacoby, 2008) have yet to be substantiated in empirical research. If our students indeed lack the need to store knowledge and lack an interest in reading and conversation, then learning a second language may be harder than ever as the students may not enter the classroom with the motivation or skills necessary to develop language proficiency. As a result, the language learning anxiety typically experienced by L2 learners may overwhelm the less committed learner and result in widespread abandonment of L2 study after the minimum requirement is satisfied (Graham, 2004).

At a time when global interdependencies demand an increase in the number of citizens able to communicate well in languages other than English, statistics reflect that the commitment of Americans to sustained language study has still not taken root. However, there is some cause for optimism. In the most recent 2002 MLA survey of enrollments in modern foreign languages in higher education, Welles (2004) found that the absolute number of students enrolling in foreign languages increased over the previous survey administered four years earlier. However, the same report noted that foreign language study, as compared to the percentage of total enrollments in higher education, is still far behind its peak levels of the 1960s. In second language courses at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, almost five times as many students are enrolled in a first- or second-year course than in advanced language study. Although the numbers and proportion of students who begin language study is increasing, the majority of the students do not continue studying the language long enough to achieve fluency.

At issue for current language educators is the need to reach and teach digital natives and retain them as students in foreign language, all while providing continued accountability to students, parents, and administrators. Clearly, no one approach or strategy exists that will magically engage 21st century learners; however, by enhancing our language curricula with technology to reflect the current reality of our students, we can begin to make language learning relevant to their lives. This article presents examples of curricular modification designed to increase student motivation and facilitate student development of appropriate language learning strategies through the use of technology. Technology is used to enhance the curriculum, rather than distract from it. Examples of technology integration are presented for the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels and focus on both receptive and productive skill development.

The Lessons of History

Motivation and attitude have long been recognized as important traits to consider when assessing programs and people (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In addition, research has demonstrated that interest in the target culture/s affects students' persistence in language study in the K-12 sequence (Ramage, 1990). As many faculty find that today's students appear less self-directed and motivated, the challenge for the university L2 teacher is to make something old, new again. The aphorism "you never get a second chance to make a first impression" may never have been a more important mantra than in the current educational environment. If students are not intrinsically predisposed to gain and retain information, to commit to a long term sequence of study, and to value the content offered in the L2 course, then the teacher has the added responsibility of working toward breaking through students' resistance and indifference to enable them to acquire the target language for use in real world contexts. In their study on self-reliance beliefs, Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2006) suggested that teaching strategies that encourage self-efficacy early on in a language course might reduce the need to address student anxiety about language performance later. While self-efficacy as a motivating factor is not limited to the study of a second language, Schunk (2003) suggests that it does have a significant impact on persistence and achievement. In an earlier study (Schunk, 1996), he also demonstrated that self-efficacy predicts students' academic motivation and learning.

There has also been recognition of the important influence exerted by learners' expectancies of success or failure on their motivation to learn a foreign language (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). A study of students' perceptions of learning French found that those students who chose not to persist in the language most often cited as their reasons to discontinue their study the difficulty of the task they were expected to perform along with a low, real or perceived, ability in learning French (Graham, 2004). However, the use of effective language learning strategies, often overlooked by students, was found to be an important characteristic among those who continued to study the language beyond the required sequence.

As student perceptions, motivation, and strategy use all appear to be factors that contribute to success in language learning, we attempted to target these factors in our integration of technology in the French curriculum.

Connecting Perceptions, Motivation, Strategies, and Content

Clearly, knowing how to access information is not the same as knowing the subject matter, and knowing about a second language is not the same as being able to use it to communicate. As in a standards-based curriculum (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 2006), the focus is on what students should know and be able to do, the curriculum should be structured to teach students to function in the ways that 21st century citizens function. Such a change, however, requires that the instructor share the responsibility for the course content.

As the teacher's role begins to change from a fount of knowledge responsible for imparting information to students to a facilitator of language mastery, it is even more critical for the teacher to match strategies and assignments with desired outcomes. Today's students may be impatient learners as in other aspects of their lives they are able to access instantaneously answers to questions with a few keystrokes. Video games are increasingly sophisticated and engage the learner in a multidimensional context that is both stimulating and challenging. Text messaging is a successful means of communicating with friends. Music is downloadable and television programs are accessible online sometimes before they have debuted in their original format. It is a small wonder then that the paper and pencil exercises of most textbooks, and even some applications of technology in classrooms, fail to engage today's students. Foreign language teachers have long valued the use of technology in the classroom as a window to authentic language and culture. However, as was true of the language labs of the 1960s, which failed to produce fluent speakers of the target language, just because access to input in the target language is available to learners via technology, it does not guarantee that students will acquire even a survival level fluency.

By and large professional educators have not yet figured out how to connect the 21st century learner with the instructional goals and objectives that have been traditionally recognized as requisite to academic success. For second language teachers the dilemma is more significant, as students quickly recognize the artificiality of course objectives when the communicative expectations bear little resemblance to the way communication actually occurs in their real world experiences. One way to begin to address the diversity of motivation and commitment in today's students is to posit questions during curriculum development that consider the needs and interests of the students.

Framing the Issues

The following questions serve as a construct for redesigning curricular expectations:

- If an educator were to choose relevance as the organizing principle for an L2 sequence of instruction, how would the course syllabi need to change?
- Is there an accessible, appropriate, and available technology that improves the students' opportunity to communicate in the L2?
- How does course content meet the needs of the diverse interests of the students in each class?
- How is this activity relevant to real world language use?
- Do these curricular modifications result in more competent, fluent, satisfied L2 learners who have persisted for a longer sequence of study?

The University of Arkansas at Little Rock has a language requirement only for students seeking a Bachelor of Arts degree, and since the requirement is for proficiency equal to that attained by students in three three-hour courses, the curriculum was revised over a decade ago to provide a two-course elementary sequence and one three-hour intermediate course. For those students wishing to

continue in the language, three advanced integrated skills courses were developed which students may take in any order. Each course focuses on one of the modes of the communication standard (NSFLEP, 2006): interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication. Sample strategies for addressing the challenges identified above that were designed by the faculty and students at the University are presented here. The examples depict assignments and class activities in both receptive and productive skills from the two elementary courses, the intermediate course, and the advanced-level communication courses.

Developing Learner-centered Receptive Skills

In an attempt to capture the attention of both skeptical students who have had previous less than successful L2 learning experiences and those who think they already know what to expect in an elementary language course, the first class period in first-semester elementary French begins with streaming video from an online French media outlet (e.g., *France 2, leparisien.fr, lefigaro.fr*). The expectation is that students will be able to understand the gist of the two- to three-minute broadcast after having listened to it twice. This listening activity is followed by a reading comprehension activity using an article copied from a French print website (e.g., *lefigaro.fr*). After taking three to five minutes to read the article, the students are asked to report what the article is about. Both of these activities occur before any of the more typical first-day-of-class introductions to the language and language study. Without exception students are successful in the comprehension activities in part because the exercises and assessments are developed to lead students to a successful outcome. As digital native students typically want to know how to access information, these listening and reading experiences are selected not necessarily because the information presented is of particular interest or relevance, but rather because they give students information in French in a format similar to those that students regularly use in the United States. Although, one could also argue that providing a topic in French that is being discussed internationally might increase students' motivation and success. Whichever the reason, students readily admit to being surprised at their level of success in discerning the meaning of the texts. They also immediately recognize that their ability to capture the gist of the print document is more complete than was true with the video segment. Most students report that they probably would not have been able to infer meaning of the listening component had there not been an image to support the narrative. This awareness serves as a catalyst for strategy instruction on topics such as guessing, inferring meaning, and activating game-playing strategies. In fact, it has become much easier to break through the affective filter of most students as the approach has focused on the real world connection to authentic electronic texts.

As an assignment for the next two class periods, students visit the *lefigaro. fr* site and print three copies of an article of interest to them to bring to class for exchange and discussion. Thus, in the first week of elementary instruction, a paradigm shift begins. Each student is individually in charge of a significant part of the content information she/he will read. Because of the abundance of

possible sources, it is unlikely that any two students will select the same article for distribution. As students share their articles with two other students, they also share their interests. For this assignment, the students' reading comprehension is assessed in English. The instructor distributes rubrics for assessment (see Appendix A) while explaining that the students already have reading strategies they use in their native language to infer meaning and that they should activate these strategies in order to improve their reading comprehension in French. In addition to simply reading for the gist, students are asked to analyze how they inferred meaning, to underline what they believe to be three to four key sentences ,and to select five words that they do not understand which they believe would significantly enhance their understanding if they were to look them up. Because this generation may be more interested in how to obtain information, it is perhaps more useful at this point to teach access strategies for real world information than it is to spend time with the reading selections included in the early chapters of most elementary level L2 texts.

Once the students have discussed their chosen articles two or three times in class (a different iteration of free voluntary reading), the instructor then assigns them the task of finding authentic materials online related to the unit themes of the succeeding chapters. For example, when eating in restaurants is introduced, a student must find a restaurant or *brasserie* where a class group might eat after visiting the Eiffel Tower in Paris, bring the restaurant menu to class, and attempt to convince another student to eat at the restaurant by pointing out menu choices that she/he might like. In the unit related to time, dates, and schedules, students find information about visiting the Musée d'Orsay and the chateau Fontainebleau. Based on information they obtain, they plan an itinerary and determine a means of transportation for visiting the places selected.

Giving the students the tools and the responsibility for selecting the materials studied engages them in their learning with a heightened energy and validation that what they are studying is real, practical, and connected to the way they actually obtain information outside of the classroom. The diverse interests of students are easily accommodated in this process without sacrificing the integrity of the course.

In addition to acquiring strategies for locating authentic, web-based information in the target language, anecdotal evidence indicates that the students have also gained tolerance for reading for the gist or for specific details without succumbing to a desire to translate the document. The use of authentic documents and learning to skim and scan for meaning have been hallmarks of L2 pedagogy since the advent of proficiency guidelines nearly three decades ago. Thus, as a method for improving L2 reading comprehension in students, this use of authentic materials is not new. However, teaching access strategies, requiring self-selected materials, and assessing students' reading comprehension using self-selected texts does modify the more traditional approach to elementary-level reading activities.

While reading activities in the elementary course provide students with a wide range of options and significant autonomy in choosing what they will read, listening input is more controlled at this level as even digital native students cannot

easily learn to listen for the gist without guided practice. For example, some students benefit from simple pre-listening activities that let them know that they will be listening to a political speech as opposed to a weather forecast or a book review. Listening activities geared to Krashen's (1985) input hypothesis remain important for skill acquisition. Therefore, in addition to listening assignments from the text materials and French TV news, *YouTube* videos selected by the teacher to correlate with unit content provide a less sophisticated, but nonetheless authentic, platform for attempting to improve listening comprehension. Within the last three years, it has become possible to assign such web-based activities and assume that most students have access to the materials where they live. Those who do not have broadband access at home may use the language department's resources center.

Since students are more likely to attempt to participate in oral and written discussions on issues in which they are interested and since reading for the gist has been well practiced at the elementary level, an expansion of the learner-centered reading activities occurs at the intermediate level. At this level, the topics for input and discussion expand to reflect the more complex topics of general interest to adults. Although it is suggested that digital native students are more interested in accessing information than in retaining it (Bauerlein, 2008), topics suggested (e.g., the environment, gender equity, and stereotypes) are sophisticated enough that students are interested in reading and talking about the topics. As was true in the elementary courses, not all students study the same topic, but rather prioritize the topics according to their preference. Then, working in groups, students seek authentic materials to supplement those provided by the text or the instructor. The students are assessed via a group presentation on their topic to the other members of the class. Each group is expected to provide information in a manner comprehensible to their classmates and the instructor. Most groups choose to develop an electronic presentation to accompany their discussion.

The course in interpretive communication, one of three advanced-level courses focusing on the modes of the communication standard (NSFLEP, 2006), again allows students autonomy in choosing some selections for reading comprehension. Obviously, students are expected to have a higher level of proficiency in reading comprehension. Students are guided to interpret author attitudes and biases and to read for details. Improved listening comprehension is the primary outcome expected for students in this course. Input is of varying lengths and from a variety of sources (e.g., *RFI, Télématin, Authentik*). Students may choose the majority of readings based on their own interests as long as the texts chosen meet the source and length requirements prescribed by the instructor. Here the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS*S) and Performance Indicators for Students (ISTE, 2007) help guide the teacher to develop appropriate expectations for students' use of technology to create with language.

These technology-enhanced receptive activities are supported by the research on the efficacy of computer-assisted language learning. For example, Godwin-Jones (2003) describes a variety of approaches to using second generation Web including blogs and wikis which connect second language usage with the

technologies used by digital native students daily. Kim and Rissel (2008) recently described how technology can support high quality interaction among students suggesting that the instructors' beliefs about the use of technology are more important than their technical expertise. If students are allowed to create language using technology, they are likely to be more engaged in the quality and quantity of language produced.

Developing Learner-centered Productive Skills

Novice learners in the elementary courses are expected to produce language appropriate to their skill level but to do so using technology appropriate to their survival in the target culture. Moving from knowing about the language and about how to access it to being able to use it to produce comprehensible language, requires another shift in the instruction of digital native students. Just as reading may not occupy the role that it once did in an educated citizenry, writing often is less appreciated as well. In order to know how to teach students what they should know and be able to do, we must consider what students would reasonably write in the target language. For example, if while interacting in the target culture a student would not likely write a letter to friends asking them to go to the movies or to come over for dinner, then assigning a similar activity in the classroom is inappropriate. On the other hand, if the young people in the target culture might perform a similar function through instant messaging or using *Facebook*, then social networking sites should be used for writing in the L2 as well. Therefore, in our courses the students and instructor establish a class blog to which students contribute their comments about plans and activities, responding to a cue from the instructor. Students are also expected to communicate with each other using an electronic medium of their choice and print the evidence of their exchanges. At the beginning of the assignment, the instructor distributes an assessment rubric (see Appendix B) and explains the expectations of the assignment. As with reading, when students perceive that the writing task and the medium reflect the communication tools they actually use, anecdotal evidence suggests that the quality of their product and interest in completing the task is enhanced. Thus, as Wiggins (1990) recommends, the assessment supports the needs of learners rather than being composed of items that have no obvious meaning or usefulness.

These Novice-level speakers are expected to produce language demonstrating two of the communicative modes at a level comprehensible to a native speaker accustomed to interacting with non-native speakers. In daily classroom exchanges, students talk with the teacher or other students in the past, present, and future about their daily activities and on topics related to their personal and professional experiences, demonstrating interpersonal communication. In the second semester course, the students' presentational abilities are assessed via a final project in lieu of a final exam. This project is composed of written and oral artifacts from a virtual three-week trip to France. The instructor structures the project so that all project components demonstrate real world tasks needed to travel, sightsee, and live with a host family in France. For the writing component, students are expected to produce an electronic journal enhanced by digital photos. The oral communication

requirement is an in-class group discussion (interpersonal communication) and explanation to the class of the group's virtual trip. To enhance the discussion and to facilitate listening comprehension, the student-presenters are encouraged to show some of the digital images from their journal.

Encouraging diverse student interests is a prominent focus of the productive expectations of the intermediate courses. Students at this level are expected to move toward Intermediate-Mid proficiency; however, we use these courses as an opportunity to celebrate the diverse interests and backgrounds of students as they learn to express their ideas in French. Clearly the language proficiency necessary to sustain and support opinions is above the level of the intermediate course. However, if faculty and students accept real world use as the prevailing expectation in all courses, then it is not unrealistic to assume students will remain interested and engaged in the learning process. If they have no opportunity to talk about social issues and international events of interest to them, it is hard to sustain the commitment to language learning when communicating only about such topics as weekend activities, shopping, and eating in restaurants. Fortunately, this approach is beginning to be embraced by some textbook authors. The introductory material in the intermediate text used in this program**,** *Controverses*, (Oukada, Bertrand, & Solberg, 2006) states:

> *Controverses*, as its title suggests, organizes a body of linguistic, cultural and academic knowledge designed for the French Intermediate level around social issues such as gender equity, globalization, immigration and bilingual issues. Using such competing topics as these, *Controverses* provides a content-rich intermediate program and promotes critical thinking through its underlying structure of **Point**, **Contre-point** and **Réplique et synthèse**. (p. IE-5)

The summative assessment for productive skills in the intermediate course again reflects the expectations of the ISTE Standards. While oral skills were evaluated in the elementary project based on individual student-teacher and group interpersonal exchanges, at the intermediate level the summative oral assessments require groups to present their topic and research to the other members of the class using electronic presentational media, of their choosing, to assist others' comprehension. Students who did not take the elementary sequence in French at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock find the expectations for oral production in the intermediate course unnerving. Luke (2006) reported that open-ended, student-centered courses are often disconcerting to students who are unaccustomed to such learning approaches. On the other hand, those who have learned from the beginning the importance of using real language and have learned strategies for reading and listening for the gist in order to obtain information tend to feel more secure. Therefore, it has proved helpful to mix students native to the program with those who began their language study elsewhere, as those familiar with the program generally accept this presentation assignment as a natural progression from the expectations of the previous courses. In fact, some students who are less

comfortable with public speaking find the presentational format less stressful than the group conversations of the elementary level.

Productive language is the explicit focus of the remaining two of the three advanced skills courses. In addition to the interpretive course discussed earlier, there is a course in interpersonal communication and one in presentational communication. At this level, the learner-centered environment is more sophisticated. Since these courses may be taken in any sequence in order to accommodate students' access to courses required for the major and minor, we allow students the flexibility to choose content for discussions and presentations, which has appeared to have had a positive impact on student engagement in the learning process. Reinforcing principles of good practice for assessing student learning (American Association for Higher Education, 1996), this approach ensures, to the extent possible, that the issues and topic for discussion in the interpersonal course and for dissemination in the presentational course are of interest to students. At this level, the students' use of appropriate technology for oral and written production is expected to be more sophisticated than it was in the lower-level courses. For example, in the interpersonal course, students watch vodcasts (e.g., *tellementfacile.com*) and talk about what they have learned to do. These input-rich, although non-professional, materials provide students with specific vocabulary on topics they choose that is much more accessible to digital native students than the more traditional textbook partner discussion exercises. In the presentational class, students learn to develop a podcast or vodcast on a topic of their choosing and produce one or the other for their final course assessment. Goulah (2007) suggests that the creation of digital videos can be a positive factor in facilitating students' acquisition of reading, writing, speaking, culture, and their development of new technology competencies.

In addition to the traditional language sequence, this approach is being used in the French honors program. Students in that program are required to produce a senior project. Again, the topic and method of presentation of the project is the student's choice, subject to the approval of the course instructor. The use of technology appropriate to the project content is now one of the required components on which the project is evaluated. As students have already contributed to course blogs, developed at least one pod-/vodcast and created course projects using electronic presentational programs, they already have the requisite skills to produce a quality project. In recent semesters, several students have chosen to develop websites (e.g., a website containing information to help French citizens moving to the local area to acclimate to life in their new home or a site for local students to access the job opportunities available with French companies in the local area). One student wrote a new adaptation of Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* for presentation by the city's local children's theatre company, while another developed a multimedia portfolio of her qualifications for submitting applications to work in France. The variety of topics and presentation formats attests to the impact learning the language in a learner-centered context has on students.

The challenge for the project instructor is in working with such a variety of topics, each of which requires differing resources and thoughtful feedback. In

addition, the instructor must evaluate projects on a range of topics and incorporating a variety of presentational formats using one set of evaluative criteria. From the student perspective, the greatest challenge is in finishing the project. However, because the students choose their own topic, it seems that they work much harder at researching, synthesizing information, and developing the product than they would if the project were a more traditional senior paper.

Next Steps and Remaining Challenges

Several questions and challenges remain as the faculty work to find ways to improve student proficiency. While all of the pedagogical emphasis on enabling and motivating students to use online tools to access information for authentic oral and written input is beneficial to the students' language skill development, it also poses challenges in terms of helping students discern when they may have stepped over the line into plagiarism and "cheating" because they "looked up" the answers. Keeping in mind that digital native students may be more interested in how to access knowledge than in how to learn or retain it, and that the focus of all of the curricular modifications presented in this article is on how to encourage more students to persist in their study of language using all of the tools available to them to be able to speak, read, listen, and write in the target language, how should a classroom teacher strike an acceptable balance? If in the real world an individual would simply search for the information online, is it acceptable for the teacher to *always* insist that the student figure out the answer without the help of a laptop or a BlackBerry?

Although access to and availability of technology has grown exponentially in the last few years, not all students have broadband access outside of class. Is it fair to require everyone to submit blog entries, download *YouTube* videos for class discussion, and make digital videos for inclusion in electronic presentations, if all students cannot easily access the required technology? Are there issues with respect to data integrity, privacy, student ethics, and institutional responsibility that are not yet resolved well enough to assure fair assessment of student work?

It is possible to resolve access issues by assuring that on-campus facilities are available for student usage throughout the day. However, it may be necessary to add time for completion of assignments since student schedules may limit the time they have to work in campus libraries and computer labs. On the other hand, many of these issues, such as searching for answers on-line, data integrity, and student ethics transcend second language education. Educators must work collaboratively across disciplines to establish new standards in these areas to assure that students receive consistent guidance on appropriate behavior. Second language educators need to provide leadership in this area since acquiring real world language requires the appropriate usage of real world technologies.

Conclusion

One response, then, to Bauerlein's (2008) concern for the digital natives is that educators at all levels work together to find better ways to answer the questions above so that knowledge, and not just access to knowledge, can become

more relevant for today's and tomorrow's students. Failure to take this reality seriously will result in an increasing disconnection between classroom instruction and student knowledge. On the other hand, embracing emerging technologies as a tool to encourage self-efficacy and to motivate students may enhance intellectual curiosity so that students feel empowered to use the tools at their fingertips to explore and discover better ways to interact with those who speak a language different than their own.

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Appendix A: Sample Elementary Receptive Assessment Rubric

	16–20	**15 points**	**0–5**
Interpretive (comprehension)	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Does not meet expectations
Understands main idea	Explains main idea in own words	Underlines key sentences referring to main idea	Is unable to find main idea
Comprehends key vocabulary	Infers meaning of more than 5 non-cognate key terms	Explains, from context, the general meaning of selected terms and cognates	Is able to define / translate fewer than 5 of the vocabulary words
Infers author's attitude	Underlines words / phrases indicating author's attitude		
Infers cultural perspective	Identifies words / phrases related to cultural perspective		

Appendix B: Sample Elementary Group Project Rubric

For this project, what meets expectations is specified as the standard. Points are added in areas where a student communicates significantly better than required. Points are significantly lowered when the student fails to communicate to the required standard. Although this is a group project, each student is assessed independently.

	21–30 points each	20 points each	10–15 each
	Exceeds expectations	*Meets expectations*	*Does not meet expectations*
Comprehensibility (4 points)		Participation in group discussions is comprehensible to teacher and most students	
Comprehension (4 points)		Responds appropriately to cues and questions from group members, class members, and teacher	
Language control (3 points)		Uses structures required to make the meaning understandable to teacher and most classmates	
Vocabulary use (3 points)		Uses vocabulary required to complete the tasks and convey essentials of the group interactions	
Communication strategies (4 points)		Is able to ask and answer questions adequately to survive the interaction	
Cultural awareness (2 points)		Interactions are culturally appropriate	

5

Infusing Multiple Technologies into a Foreign Language Teacher Education Program

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Introduction

Today's preK-12 students are growing up with increasing access to computers and Internet technology. According to a 2004 report from the United States Department of Education's Office of Educational Technology, "the largest group of new users of the Internet from 2000-2002 were 2-5 year olds" and "90 percent of children between ages 5 and 17 use computers" (p. 17). Statements such as these indicate that our educational system needs to meet the increased technology savvy of today's generation of school children. Thus, preservice teachers, in-service teachers, and teacher-trainers all must begin to work together to better incorporate technology in our practice.

The USDOE's statements only confirm what Prensky (2001) has called the divide between "digital natives" and "digital immigrants." Digital natives are today's learners who seamlessly "toggle" among audio, video, print, and multimedia applications as they process new information. Digital immigrants are those who must adapt to a wide range of technology resources. Although most of our preservice teacher candidates are probably digital natives, we cannot suppose that they will use technology in their teaching practice the same way they do in their personal lives. Many may assume "that learners are the same as they have always been, and that the same methods that worked for the teachers when they were students will work for their students now" (Prensky, 2001, p. 3). In addition, the teacher educators in many foreign language (FL) education programs may be digital immigrants themselves and may either be unaware of

many new applications or be unsure of how to incorporate them into their teacher preparation program.

Given this digital divide between the generations, FL teacher preparation programs need to be updated to both model and provide technologically-enhanced coursework. Technology should not be an afterthought or a course tacked onto to a FL teacher preparation program; rather, it should be an integral part of the program just as the study of language teaching methodology, linguistics, cultures, and literatures has traditionally been. This article aims to provide FL educators at all levels with concrete ideas of how to incorporate technology into their practice. More specifically, it provides FL teacher educators and program administrators with a model of a technology-enhanced FL teacher preparation program.

Teacher Education and Technology Enhancement

The consideration of why and how to create technology-enhanced FL teacher preparation programs has been widely discussed in the literature (i.e., Dhonau & McAlpine, 2002; 2005; Egbert, Paulus & Nakamichi, 2002; Hubbard, 2008; Johnson, 1999; Luke & Britten, 2007; Olphen, 2007). However, in addition to the discussion of why, how, when, and what types of technology should be integrated in FL teacher preparation programs, many national organizations have developed standards for the use of technology in our educational system. In 2008, the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) published the revised National Educational Technology Standards (NETS*T) and Performance Indicators for Teachers. The NETS*T do not consider technology as a separate subject, but rather as an integral part of the curriculum. Thus, the standards are not discipline-specific; however, all disciplines can use the performance indicators to place themselves within the model for the purposes of technology training. The NETS*T standards (2008) suggest that all teachers should

- facilitate and inspire student learning and creativity,
- design and develop digital-age learning experiences and assessments,
- model digital-age work and learning,
- promote and model digital citizenship and responsibility, and
- engage in professional growth and leadership.

ISTE assumes that teachers have already developed the technological competencies to fulfill these standards prior to beginning their careers. However, we question whether most FL teacher preparation programs are currently preparing preservice teachers to adequately acquire these competencies.

In addition to the NETS*T standards, the *ACTFL/NCATE Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (2005) require foreign language teacher candidates to experience technology-enhanced instruction and use technology in their own teaching. This does not mean that teacher candidates should take instructional technology courses, but rather they should experience relevant applications of technology as learners within the foreign language major; for example, in a course focusing on the development of presentational language, students might create their own personal profile in the target language on a

social networking website. Like the NETS*T, this set of standards stresses the integration of technology with subject matter knowledge. Finally, the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (2006) also discuss the need for interconnected curricular elements in foreign language instruction including technology. According to the national standards (2006) foreign language instruction should include

> Access to a variety of technologies ranging from computer-assisted instruction to interactive video, CD-ROM, the Internet, electronic mail, and the World Wide Web, [and] will help students strengthen linguistic skills, establish interactions with peers, and learn about contemporary culture and everyday life in the target country. (p. 35)

Thus, if teacher education programs require their students to create standards-based lesson plans, activities, and assessments, they cannot ignore the inclusion of technology. Preservice teachers should be utilizing technology within their teacher education courses, but should also be preparing to require the use of technology from their future students. In addition, preservice teachers in a standards-based curriculum should be able to analyze the standards of communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities to see how the use of technology might enhance the achievement of each.

The Barriers and Enabling Factors of Technology Enhancement

While the previous sets of standards emphasize the importance of technological awareness, technological competence, and student learning through technology-based materials, there are potential challenges to integrating technology throughout the FL preservice teacher preparation program. Both Hubbard (2007) and Oxford and Jung (2007) describe several barriers to the full integration of technology in FL teacher education including issues of faculty, infrastructure, and methods and standards.

There are several reasons that faculty in a typical FL teacher preparation program might be ill prepared to deliver a technology-enhanced curriculum. First, many FL teacher educators may still teach the way they were taught. Considering that a teacher educator's influence in the field may span a 40-year period, it is conceivable that it would take at least that long for a complete paradigm shift in the use of technology. Second, current reward systems in many modern language or education departments do not allow faculty members the necessary time to learn new technologies or to integrate them into their teacher education programs. In addition, the reward systems may not recognize the improvement of instruction or professional development stemming from technology enhancement as a product for promotion and tenure. Finally, new teacher educators may not be adequately prepared to integrate technology into their curriculum as many masters' degree and doctoral programs in second/foreign language education do not stress the importance of technology integration (Hubbard, 2007).

In addition to the lack of faculty trained in technology integration in FL teacher preparation programs, the high cost of providing an infrastructure is another

obstacle many programs face. In order to offer a curriculum that fully integrates technology, FL teacher educators need to be supported by an infrastructure that includes software and hardware purchases, technical staff to provide and maintain service, and continual upgrades to existing systems. This infrastructure can be costly and many departments, colleges, or universities may not be in the position to offer this type of financial commitment.

Finally, there is no one foreign language teaching methodology that either promotes or requires the use of technology. Likewise, the three sets of standards (NETS*T, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*, ACTFL/NCATE) that the foreign language profession acknowledges lack specificity on what types of technology should be used, how it should be used, and its possible benefits. Thus, FL teacher educators must infer the best pathway to incorporate technology based on their personal experiences with it.

Although there are several reasons that technology has not been fully embraced in FL teacher education, there do exist enabling factors that might facilitate the development of technologically enhanced programs. Strudler and Wetzel (1999) present three enabling factors for effectiveness in teacher education technology integration. They can be summarized as leadership and vision, training and support, and full program integration. However, unless university, college, and departmental leaders value the role technology can play in the development of today's teachers, it will not become an institutional priority. Strudler and Wetzel (1999) comment:

> At the core of informed leadership is a person who has internalized the complexity of effective technology integration and who exercises influence over time to ensure that the various enabling factors are in place or being addressed. Further, knowledgeable leaders articulate the technology, teaching vision, and goals of their colleges. (p. 68)

Thus, one of the most important institutional factors facilitating the creation of technology-enhanced FL teacher preparation programs may be technology-savvy leaders. However, these leaders must provide specific types of training and support so that their vision can become a reality. According to Kelly & Ringstaff (2002), this training and support must include, "opportunities to explore, reflect, collaborate with peers, work on authentic learning tasks, and engage in hands-on, active learning" (p. 15). One-time workshops do not provide enough support for the extended interaction and reflection required to effectively incorporate technology in instruction.

The final enabling factor is the complete integration of technology program-wide. Thus, a FL teacher preparation program may more effectively prepare preservice teachers to be producers of technology, rather than consumers, by fully integrating technology in the curriculum. The expectation is that preservice teachers will experience technology as students and then gain gradual sophistication in the use of similar technologies through their practice (Strudler & Wetzel, 1999). At the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, we have been able to take advantage of

the enabling factors provided by our institutional context and have utilized them to integrate technology into our FL teacher preparation program.

One Approach to Technology Integration in the FL Teacher Education Program

At the University of Arkansas at Little Rock we fully integrated technology into each of four methods courses that lead to initial teacher licensure at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Thus, rather than relying on an instructional technology course offered by the College of Education that may or may not focus on specific teaching disciplines, the FL program infuses the modeling and instruction of technology from the very first course in FL teacher education. The process of implementation, however, was not instantaneous; the courses described here reflect several years of preparation and research on the integration of technology in our program (see Dhonau & McAlpine, 2002; 2005). The four teacher preparation courses are Methods of Teaching Second Languages, Second Language Acquisition, Teaching People of Other Cultures, and Second Language Assessment. They are taught either in a designated teacher education technology classroom, in a classroom that has technology enhancements, or in an online format. Because teacher candidates are not required to take these courses in any particular order, all courses require some use of technology.

Although the courses cannot necessary build upon technology competencies developed in another course due to the varying order in which students take the courses, there are some overarching technology requirements that are promoted through all four courses, including the production of artifacts for the candidate's digital portfolio on Chalk and Wire. Chalk and Wire is an electronic, subscription-based portfolio organizer that may be integrated with the ACTFL/NCATE standards (see http://www.chalkandwire.com for more detailed information). Electronic portfolios (hereon ePortfolios) are particularly beneficial due to their ability to demonstrate preservice teachers' linguistic development, growth in teaching practice and increased technological competency (Dhonau & McAlpine, 2005; Luke & Britton, 2007; Olphen, 2007). The ePortfolio provides students, teacher educators, and administrators with easy access to preservice teacher lesson plans, video teaching segments, examples of language proficiency, as well as many other artifacts necessary to demonstrate the required competencies for initial foreign language teacher licensure as determined by the University and the Arkansas Department of Education. Figure 1 on the next page depicts the visual organization of a teacher candidate's ACTFL/NCATE assessments that must be posted for final licensure approval.

The Blackboard Learning System is also used as the course organization system for all four courses. Blackboard allows instructors to easily upload PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, html files, PDF files, and MP3 files. In addition, Blackboard facilitates computer-mediated communication (CMC) systems such as written and voice chat, email, and discussion boards. Through the use of Blackboard the course instructors model the use of web-based technology and provide a web-based location for students to engage with technology through

email, written discussion boards, voice tools, video, and other multimedia applications (see Figure 2 for a sample of the Blackboard system interface). As might be expected, the Microsoft Office Suite and traditional email communication have become standard technologies that are also modeled by teacher educators and used by preservice teachers.

Figure 1. Chalk and Wire ePortfolio Sample

**Figure 2.** Blackboard Course Management System Page
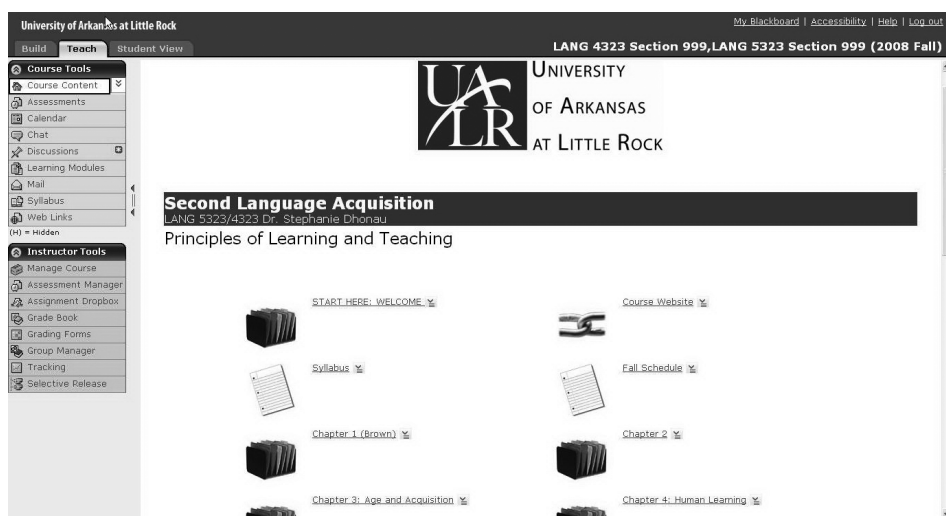
Infusion of Technology in the Foreign Language Teacher Preparation Courses

Both Blackboard and Chalk and Wire are applications that the preservice teacher candidates use continuously throughout their program. However, in addition to these two programs, each of the four methods courses in the FL teacher preparation program at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock requires various applications of technology for pedagogical purposes.

Methods of Teaching Second Languages

Within the foreign language methods course, a three-semester hour course offered on campus during a 15-week semester in a specially-designed technology classroom, both the instructor and preservice teachers use iClicker, PowerPoint, and Quicktime, as well as other applications. Each of these applications serves a different purpose in the classroom. During class discussions, the iClicker response system allows students to answer questions anonymously through a small remote, hardware device. iClicker aggregates data from the students and displays graphs and charts of student responses within a PowerPoint shell. The use of iClicker and similar technologies is one of the most popular forms of teacher/student interactions via technology. The iClicker response system benefits both students and instructors as it allows the instructors to quickly check the students' comprehension, and the comprehension questions asked often jump start class discussions over the course readings. Figure 3 shows the visual interface of the iClicker system (see Dugan, 2006 for more information on the variety of electronic response systems available).

Figure 3: Example of PowerPoint Slide with Iclicker Responses
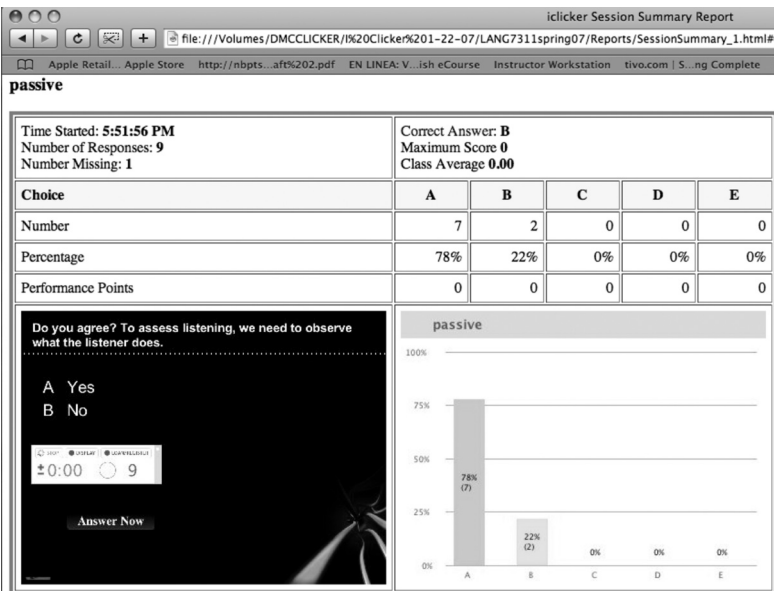
As preservice teachers progress through the methods course, they are required to teach ten-minute mini-lessons requiring both the interpretive and interpersonal modes of communication. We started requiring the use of digital video samples in the early 2000s as the accessibility of Apple's iMovie facilitated the transition from standard VHS recording to a more accessible digital format (see Dhonau & McAlpine, 2002 for more information). The methods course website contains 22 samples of these previously recorded mini-lessons from both instructors and students based on topics such as comprehensible input, modeling, assessment, and including examples of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Thus, the students can use these mini-lessons as models for their own work. Students digitally record their mini-lessons in a technology-enhanced classroom with a ceiling-mounted, remote-controlled video camera. They then import the videos into Camtasia Studio Screen Recorder as a Quicktime movie (approximately 1 GB in size) and transfer them to their flash drive from the classroom computer. Finally, the students upload their videos to Chalk and Wire as part of their ePortfolio. The inclusion of the digital video teaching segments in the preservice teacher's ePortfolio provides artifacts for program review, course assessment, and future employment.

In addition to the software and hardware mentioned, students in the methods course also use traditional email systems to join listservs relevant to the language teaching profession. As a course requirement, students post relevant language teaching and learning questions to these listservs and upload the responses to their questions to Chalk and Wire. This assignment stresses the important role that technology will continue to play in the candidates' future as language teaching professionals.

Second Language Acquisition

In this course, a three-semester hour course offered online within the Blackboard Learning System, preservice teachers are expected to analyze the morphology, syntax, phonology, and phonetics of a language learner's interlanguage. In an assignment for this course, preservice teachers are expected to record a language learner's speech in a conversational setting using a digital recorder, import the audio file into the free Audacity audio editing software program or other software of their choice, and then upload the converted MP3 file to their ePortfolio. Through this assignment, they demonstrate their ability to create digital audio files for use in field experiences, student teaching, and in their own classrooms after graduation, as well as demonstrate their understanding of the linguistic course content.

Because this course is currently offered online, it requires teacher candidates to be technologically-competent in both Blackboard and Wimba Horizon Tools. These tools allow participants to verbally record their comments on online videos, course readings, and personal experiences with their language learner, all while using online audio technologies. Additionally, preservice teachers respond orally through the voice board application, an oral discussion board within Wimba, to course materials commenting asynchronously on other participants' voice messages. Wimba has a live classroom application that allows for synchronous

communication among course participants and the course instructor through voice chat, live video, written chat, and has the ability to access Internet resources just as one might do in a course held onsite. The instructor and preservice teachers access the live classroom approximately every three weeks and the session is archived for future use. Thus, through the Second Language Acquisition course, the students are constantly using technology to support their learning of the course content.

Teaching People of Other Cultures

Within the socio-cultural course, Teaching People of Other Cultures, a three-semester hour course offered on campus, preservice teacher candidates must create a PowerPoint presentation on a country or ethnic group in which they demonstrate a deeper understanding of a second language learner's country, language, and culture. They include web links to visuals, audio, and video to make their country or ethnic group "come alive" for their peers. Thus, students' Internet research provides them with more than an encyclopedic set of factoids. Through this project, preservice teachers are required to do an analysis that goes well beyond superficial facts about a country and employ the 3Ps paradigm of products, practices, and perspectives to provide their audience with a richer cultural understanding of the target language culture/s. Students must also demonstrate their ability to synthesize a vast amount of information found in their web research through the use of technology.

In addition to the PowerPoint presentation, students are required to reflect on a variety of course topics through the use of a learning log. Recently, students have had the option of creating a "reflog," a reflective blog, in which they reflect on course readings, course video, and classroom experiences with L2 students (see Figure 4 for an example). To create the reflog, students use a free blogger

Figure 4. Sample of Student's Reflog
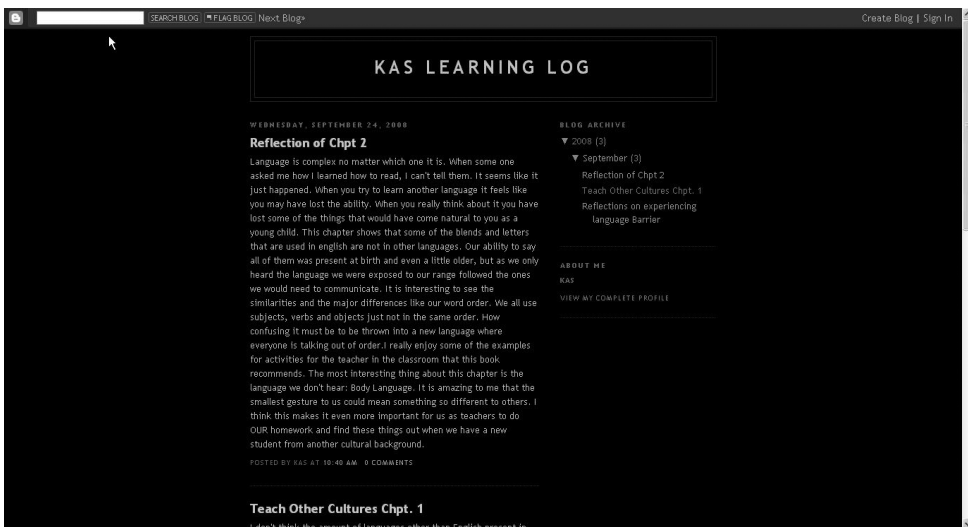
website, such as www.blogspot.com, to open an account, to title their reflog, and to begin writing their own entries as well as responding to others. Those who choose not to write a reflog submit the assignment electronically as a word processed document. This assignment provides preservice teachers with another tool that they can use in their future careers, and it is especially applicable as more and more FL educators are discovering the benefits of blog reading and writing in the foreign language classroom (Ducate & Lomicka, 2005, 2008; Murray & Hourigan, 2008).

Second Language Assessment

In Second Language Assessment, a three-semester hour course offered online in the Blackboard Learning System, students create skills-specific assessments that must incorporate audio technologies and textual materials from the Internet. For the creation of listening assessment instruments, students create either a MP3 file similar to that described in Second Language Acquisition or locate an authentic sound file from an Internet source such as National Public Radio, YouTube, or a local television station. For the reading assessment instrument, students may copy or download an authentic text such as an online newspaper article, an advertisement from an online shopping site, or a train schedule to serve as interpretive material. The value of requiring the authentic audio/video or text is that it emphasizes the use of authentic materials stressing the adage of "edit the task, not the text." By requiring assessment instruments that include authentic online interpretive materials, it is hoped that preservice teachers will incorporate this technique into their teaching in their own classrooms.

These four courses present a model of how one FL teacher preparation program has integrated technology in its curriculum. Rather than present a unit on technology, each of these four classes fully incorporates the use of technology to support the course requirements. In addition, FL teacher educators model all of the software and hardware described while anticipating that their students will be the end users of such technology. Through the incorporation of a wide variety of technologies, we hope to provide our preservice teachers with a solid foundation in instructional technology. The matrix on the next page summarizes both faculty and preservice teacher use of technology across the four FL education courses.

Conclusion

While infusing technology into a teacher education program is not always the easiest path and requires considerable preparation and work on the part of both university faculty and preservice teachers, the benefits of integrating multiple applications can only strengthen the candidate's repertoire for teaching in the classrooms of the 21st century. As the cost of technology, both hardware and software, continues to decrease, more preservice teachers and faculty will have access to their uses. Furthermore, the national standards (2006), the *ACTFL/ NCATE* (2005) teacher preparation standards, and the technology standards for teachers (ISTE, 2008) expect that both university faculty and preservice teachers will be able to use current technologies in planning, instructing, and assessing

students. Ultimately, the success of any language curriculum incorporating technology lies in the hands of the teacher who understands the content of the discipline, the pedagogy of the discipline, and the value that technology provides in integrating the two.

Table 1. Distribution of Preservice Foreign Language Teacher Education Technology

	METHODS	SLA	CULTURES	ASSESSMENT
Blackboard	X	X	X	X
Chalk and Wire	X	X	X	X
iClicker	X			
Digital Video	X			
MP3 Audio		X		X
PowerPoint	X		X	X
Access digital video/web video	X	X	X	X
Wimba audio tools		X		X
Blogs			X	
Listserv communication	X			
Internet	X	X	X	X
Locating/uploading digital images	X		X	

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6

Design, Issues, and Objectives in Foreign Language Field Experiences

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Background

Supported by the author's experience and analysis as a foreign language university supervisor in a preK-12 foreign language teacher education program at a mid-size university in the Midwest, this article reviews the program framework, design, content, and requirements for field experiences in public schools, such as pre- and student teaching courses. It also discusses issues in field experiences and outlines specific objectives for them. The proposed objectives represent data-driven and practical recommendations that foreign language teacher educators can consider in their current and future practice. The achievement of sound teacher preparation through meaningful collaboration of the teacher candidate, cooperating teacher, university supervisor, students, school and university administration, and field experience placement offices is important for successful field experiences. Potentially, every foreign language school teacher with a certain amount of teaching experience can serve as a cooperating teacher and every university foreign language major, who would like to teach, can become a teacher candidate. Many foreign language professionals, such as current or former university foreign language faculty, instructors, lecturers, teaching assistants, and school teachers can be asked to serve as university supervisors. What do they need to know and be able to do in order to be successful in their assigned roles? How can their collaboration with other participants in this process lead to the empowerment of everyone? What objectives, expectations, and requirements should a foreign language teacher education program have? All of these questions need to be examined.

First, this article reviews essential topics and issues that can be found in research, professional literature, and documents related to field experiences in foreign languages. Second, the author describes the foreign language teacher education program and pre- and student teaching courses. Third, in light of the field experiences required for this program, the author discusses and analyzes sample objectives developed by the author during such field experiences.

Review of Literature

Several issues in relation to field experiences in foreign language can be found in the research and professional literature. Completed at different points in the career of a teacher candidate, various field experiences play different roles. However, in all experiences, candidates have to apply and develop the knowledge and skills they acquire in content and methods courses to their professional experiences. Professional and research literature addresses a variety of skills and knowledge that candidates and teachers have to demonstrate in the classroom, such as content knowledge, oral language proficiency, and pedagogical content knowledge.

Teacher Education Standards

Teacher education standards provide a framework and guidance for teacher education programs to establish the sound preparation of foreign language teachers. Such guidelines discuss what preservice teachers in foreign languages should know and be able to do during their preparation, including their field experiences. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education* provide "the shared vision" for a teacher education program's "efforts in preparing educators to work effectively in P-12 schools" (NCATE, 2006, p. 10). These standards address what teacher candidates across subject areas should know and be able to do in terms of their content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills, and dispositions and student learning (see Appendix A for examples of teacher candidates' competencies). The ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) *Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* were developed specifically for foreign language teacher education programs to guide and evaluate their work (ACTFL, 2002). This document contains six standards describing the competencies of teacher candidates in the domain of language, linguistics, and comparisons (standard 1), cultures, literatures, and cross-disciplinary concepts (standard 2), language acquisition theory and instructional practices (standard 3), integration of standards into curriculum and instruction (standard 4), assessments of languages and cultures (standard 5) and professionalism (standard 6) (see Appendix B for examples of teacher candidates' competencies). This document also underlines that "the preparation of foreign language teachers is the joint responsibility of the faculty in foreign languages and education" (ACTFL, 2002, p. 2). Standards 3, 4, 5, and 6 are primarily addressed by the education faculty, while standards 1 and 2

are addressed through the content coursework. With respect to field experiences, candidates have to be exposed to foreign language classrooms prior to student teaching and must be "supervised by a qualified foreign language educator who is knowledgeable about current instructional approaches and issues in the field of foreign language education" (ACTFL, 2002, p. 2).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Field experiences represent a crucial test of teacher candidates' beliefs about effective teaching and learning of foreign languages. In light of teacher education standards (ACTFL, 2002; NCATE, 2006) as well as the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999), our methods courses expose teacher candidates to a variety of approaches, methods, and techniques and, ultimately, promote communicative language teaching. Developing and teaching instructional materials for a variety of curricular topics by using different communicative teaching methods and techniques should be an important part of the methods course.

Beginning teachers struggle with issues of control and classroom management and often wish that their teacher education programs would prepare them better in this area, as well as provide more mentoring during field experiences (Cooper, 2004; Lange & Sims, 1990; Vélez-Rendón, 2006; Watzke, 2007). Watzke (2007) found that in order to establish more control in their classrooms "the teachers attend to student affect […] as a general means to motivate and to make the learning experience enjoyable." (p. 73). Some teachers' practices and beliefs include a shift to an increased focus on task performance, communication, and balance between accuracy of message and the learner (p. 74). Methods and field experience courses should provide an increased focus on development of the abilities of teacher candidates to address these issues. Since "field experiences seldom represent idealized language learning situations," (Raymond, 2000, p. 3) additional support from colleagues, researchers or consultants, and opportunities to reflect on methods that are different from their own can be suggested (Burke, 2006).

Reflection

"Reflection […] is an action oriented [way…] to locate oneself in the history of a situation, to participate in a social activity, and to take sides on issues" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 5). Educators need to be "willing and able to reflect on the origins, purposes, and consequences of their actions, as well as the material and ideological constraints and encouragements embedded in the classroom, school, and societal contexts in which they live" (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 4). Teacher candidates' professional competence is formed through reflection and techniques that enable the candidates to develop such competence on their own (Wallace, 1991, pp. 48-58). Cooperating teachers and university supervisors should engage teacher candidates in asking themselves questions that form a reflective cycle of five elements that need to occur before, during, and after lessons: mapping (what

do I do as a teacher?), informing (what is the meaning of my teaching?), contesting (how did I come to be this way?), appraisal (how might I teach differently?), and acting (what and how shall I now teach?) (Bartlett, 1990, pp. 209-213). Such an approach requires teacher candidates to become reflective practitioners, as it is outlined in the teacher education professional literature.

Program Description

The PreK-12 Foreign Language Program that is used in this article as an example is "a 4-year program designed to prepare teachers of Spanish, French, and Latin to teach in PreK-12 schools" (Wichita State University, 2003, p. 2). This program is based on degrees offered in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction of the College of Education and the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Therefore, the collaboration between both departments and colleges is important for the effective functioning of the program, and is encouraged by the ACTFL program standards.

The College of Education represents a unit that is in charge of preparing teachers across different subject areas. The preparation of foreign language teachers is based on six guiding principles of the unit: (1) Professionalism and Reflection, (2) Human Development and Diversity, (3) Connection of Experiences and Assessment/Data-based Decision Making, (4) Technology, (5) Content that is Aligned with Standards, and (6) Collaboration (Wichita State University, 2003, p. 1). Checksheets and advising are used to guide students throughout the program. As a teacher education coordinator and advisor, I meet with the teacher majors to develop their plans of study that will give them guidance throughout the program. Discussing the importance of the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and the PRAXIS content exam is one of the important objectives of such meetings.

Main field experiences, such as pre-and student teaching courses, are a part of the professional education sequence taught and developed by the author in close collaboration with the placement office of the College of Education. Since it is a PreK-12 program, the latest program review by the state pointed to the importance of the inclusion of the PreK level in the field experiences.

For all three placements of pre-student teaching (PreK, elementary, and high school), the teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher select a class to which the student will be assigned. Candidates have to observe the cooperating teacher's teaching and learn as much as possible about the cooperating teacher's resources. Candidates have to help the cooperating teacher in the classroom as necessary and ask for, follow, and incorporate the guidance and feedback of the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. Depending on the placement and the supervisor's observations, candidates' teaching should be observed by the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor at least weekly. Candidates prepare and give to their cooperating teacher and university supervisor copies of a complete lesson plan and materials, if any, that are distributed to the students. As far as the content requirements, during the pre-student teaching as well as student teaching, candidates should incorporate the teaching of meaningful language (e.g.

stories, songs) with appropriate instructional strategies and technology discussed and used in methods classes. The cooperating teacher and university supervisor complete feedback forms in relation to the candidate's teaching and lesson plan. Candidates videotape at least one lesson from their placements and exchange the videotapes with peers. Candidates view each other's videotapes and exchange one-page reflection papers.

For the high school placement, candidates schedule, develop, teach, and videotape a unit containing at least 5 lessons. Based on this unit, a practice Teacher Work Sample (TWS) is developed, which is "a performance-based assessment that allows [teacher candidates] to demonstrate [their] impact on student learning by describing a comprehensive unit that [they] taught" (Wichita State University, 2007, p. 4). Candidates develop and submit their TWSs electronically. For the elementary level, candidates need to spend approximately ten contact hours in the field during three or four school weeks in October/November. Candidates have to schedule, develop, teach, and videotape a minimum of one lesson or activity. For the PreK level placement, candidates spend approximately five hours in the field during one or two school weeks in early November. They assume limited responsibility as assigned by the cooperating teacher and university supervisor, for example, working with a group of students or individual students, helping teach or co-teaching an activity, or making announcements.

Program assessment instruments address multiple aspects of field experiences, such as the Field and Classroom Disposition Rubric (Wichita State University, 2008a, pp. 31-34), Classroom Observation Feedback Form (Wichita State University, 2008a, p. 27), Candidate Pre/Student Teaching Evaluation Form (Wichita State University, 2008a, pp. 28-29), Foreign Language Lesson Plans Assessment and Rubric (Wichita State University, 2008b) and Foreign Language Addendum (Wichita State University, 2008b). Focus on subject area content, which is required by the state and encouraged by the profession, has been important in the development and use of some of these instruments. For example, the *Kansas Teacher Education Standards* (Kansas State Department of Education, 2007), the framework of communicative modes (Shrum & Glisan, 2005, pp. 154-188), the *ACTFL Performance Guidelines for K-12 Learners* (ACTFL, 1998), the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines-Speaking* (ACTFL, 1999) and the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) were consulted. Collaboration with education faculty across subject areas as well as with content faculty helps one learn from other programs that address the same goals. Contributions and guidance from senior faculty, regardless of their area of specialization in the field of education, as well as analyzing and using the previously developed instruments enable a person to learn about the general context of the process, receive constructive feedback, and develop a sound vision for the development of the program assessment instruments.

The implementation and analyses of field experiences in this teacher education program leads the author to develop objectives, the goal of which is to ensure the quality of candidates' preparation, collaboration, and the empowerment of

all participants. Despite different requirements that can vary over time, these objectives represent experience-based and data-driven recommendations that teacher educators can take into consideration when implementing a variety of field experiences.

Objectives

Objective 1: Dispositions

The candidates' dispositions are important factors in the success of a field experience. Candidates must develop and apply the dispositions expected of professionals while working with students, families, and communities (NCATE, 2006). Timeliness, organization, and the ability to address superiors' feedback are important qualities that candidates have to display in order to be successful during field experiences. It means candidates have to come and leave on time. Lesson plans and copies of materials need to be prepared before the class begins. It is important that candidates respond quickly to emails and phone calls. Candidates' demonstration of respect, a key disposition, can be viewed in the way the candidate respects and tries to meet the cooperating teacher's and the supervisor's expectations.

To evaluate the candidates' dispositions in field experiences, several instruments can be used. The program Field Experience Disposition Rubric (Wichita State University, 2008a, pp. 31-32) that is used across subject areas measures a variety of dispositions important for student teaching. These dispositions are: attendance (attended regularly except when excused in advance), punctuality (arrived on time), diversity (demonstrated respect for cultural diversity and individual differences), reliability/dependability (completed assignments, duties, and tasks on time), appearance (dressed appropriately; presented a professional appearance), interaction with students (was comfortable interacting with students; showed concern for students), response to feedback (was reflective; responsive to feedback; willing to revise plans and implement suggestions), commitment to the profession (exhibited an enthusiasm for teaching and a lifelong commitment to learning), willingness to collaborate/partner with others (worked effectively with peers, supervisors, other professionals, parents, and students), and attitude toward students as learners (expressed or demonstrated a belief that all students can learn). Candidates' dispositions during the student teaching seminar, usually taken by candidates at the same time as the student teaching courses, are measured by using the Classroom Disposition Rubric (Wichita State University, 2008a, pp. 33-34). The instrument measures several dispositions such as respect, justification, participation, attendance, and commitment.

In order to prepare candidates for student teaching, field experience disposition rubrics should be actively used across a variety of foreign language field experiences, such as pre-student teaching placements and those that occur at earlier stages in the program. Even though the program Field Experience Disposition Rubric is used across subject areas, it has items that require candidates to have beliefs and skills that are of critical importance for foreign language

instruction. For example, if candidates are required to use the target language as much as possible in the classroom, they might not be "comfortable interacting with students" if the candidates' proficiency level and content knowledge are not sufficiently developed.

Teacher dispositions are often interrelated. They are not easy to measure but they indicate whether a candidate possesses the qualities necessary in the professional world.

Objective 2: Supervisor's Observations during Visits to Schools

The university supervisor's observations are an integral part of field experiences. A variety of different types of observations can be used, such as announced and unannounced observations. For announced observations, the teacher candidate can prepare a copy of the lesson plan and all materials to be submitted to the supervisor and cooperating teacher before teaching the lesson. Cooperating and student teachers appreciate the announced observations. Such observations bring a sense of organization, certainty, and confidence. Usually, the university supervisor can create an individual schedule for each candidate with a specific day and time when the observation will take place. Sending an email a few days before conducting an observation is an alternative, and possibly an easier way to announce it. By using unannounced observations, the university supervisor can witness and observe the classroom when he or she is not expected. Such observations require the candidates to expect an observation almost anytime, which represents a high expectation of them. It seems a balanced approach between announced and unannounced observations can create a meaningful and effective way to meet this objective.

Objective 3: Lesson Planning

Some candidates and cooperating teachers do not necessarily and immediately see the value of lesson planning. However, lesson planning is an integral part of teaching and professional development. A variety of foreign language lesson plan formats can be used (Rifkin, 2003; Shrum & Glisan, 2005, pp. 85-86). The Foreign Language Lesson Plans Assessment and Rubric (Wichita State University, 2008b) are used to guide the teacher candidates and evaluate their lesson plans during pre- and student teaching experiences. The rubric is based on the state teacher education standards and addresses important aspects of lesson planning, such as lesson objectives, assessment, learner's cognitive and social development, and instructional techniques. The descriptors used in the lesson plan rubric reflect the profession's up-to-date understanding of teaching and learning foreign languages that can be found in the research, theory, and best practices.

Understanding the purpose of each section in a particular lesson plan format and matching it with specific instructional activities requires time and practice and can be challenging for some candidates. The cooperating teachers and the university supervisors should challenge the candidates to adjust the lesson plans to the candidates' needs and plan for necessary adaptations. Some cooperating teachers prefer more detailed lesson plans, while others prefer more concise ones.

Most importantly, lesson plans should be an effective way for candidates and superiors to know and evaluate what candidates want and do in the classroom. More detailed lesson plans seem to help when candidates struggle to define what they want to do. Candidates can be asked to write specific words and steps that they plan to say and do in the classroom. Less detailed lesson plans can be effective when candidates are already confident and can carry out their plans with certain ease. A variety of ranges for lesson planning can be practiced, such as daily planning, planning a few days ahead, and weekly planning.

Requiring teacher candidates at the beginning stages to provide a detailed, specific, and concise description of their activities prepares them to internalize and visualize them better. Internalizing and visualization of an activity is an important contribution to the cooperating teacher's confidence and success. It means that they are able to anticipate and visualize how an activity is going to unfold in real life. Pre-service teachers have to train their mind to visualize their lessons before they teach them. As a practice activity, candidates can be asked to select a particular activity and try to visualize it from the beginning to the end and anticipate the actions and the reaction of their students. This is a skill that the best teachers use and master very well. Practicing the lesson and directions in front of a mirror and with friends and siblings before teaching them in class can be another good exercise for candidates.

Objective 4: Evaluation

Candidates' evaluation during field experiences is another important part of the process. In the discussed program, several instruments are used in this process. For example, the Classroom Observation Feedback Form (Wichita State University, 2008a, p. 27) is used by the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor when they observe the candidate's teaching. The superiors record their observations and suggestions and rate the candidate on a 5-point scale based on several general statements about teaching, planning, and learning on this triplicate form. A copy of the form is given to the candidate at the earliest opportunity following the lesson. These forms constitute formative data that are discussed during mid-point and final evaluation meetings. The program Foreign Language Addendum (Wichita State University, 2008b) is used during mid-point and final evaluation meetings in which all three participants (teacher candidate, cooperating teacher, and supervisor) participate. Every section of the addendum corresponds to a specific ACTFL/NCATE standard (ACTFL, 2002) with corresponding statements that are rooted in the profession's current expectations for language teaching and learning. The rubric's statements should become objectives for candidates and their cooperating teachers to be implemented during the experience. During the three-way evaluation meetings, the candidate can be asked reflective questions about specific issues, situations, challenges, and successes in light of the rubric's statements.

Evaluation is likely to cause stress for teacher candidates. At the same time, it is a way to keep expectations high. It is important to keep evaluation meetings as

professional and focused as possible. Candidates need to see that superiors treat them as professionals.

Objective 5: Candidates' Content and Pedagogical Content Knowledge

In order to be successful, teacher candidates need to demonstrate a match between the knowledge of content and specific instructional techniques that allow teaching that content. Content guides what candidates need to prepare, do, and know when they teach. The curriculum that candidates need to teach already provides the direction for their preparation. Textbooks, cooperating teachers' resources, and samples from methods' courses are some examples that candidates can use. The lack of mastery of specific instructional applications that can be used in the classroom is one of the reasons for unsuccessful field experiences. They need as many samples and specific applications as possible to use during the field experience.

Before entering student teaching, teacher candidates become familiar with different methodological approaches in their methods' courses that they are to apply during their student teaching. One of the struggles that candidates experience is translating the studied methods into specific activities to be implemented in the classroom. Visiting with candidates about their planning and offering specific suggestions on how to implement methods in the classroom are some of the contributions that the supervisor and the cooperating teacher can make.

Grammar is an important component of the curriculum that teacher candidates have to teach in the cooperating teacher's classes. Teaching grammar in a communicative way is a very important objective, but can be a challenge for many teacher candidates. The PACE model that emphasizes the use of meaningful input and learner-centered communicative activities is one of the instructional approaches that can be used to teach grammar (Shrum & Glisan, 2005, pp. 189-214). However, a sufficient level of language proficiency and strong knowledge of content are necessary to carry out such methodologies.

Skipping steps in the presentation of a topic and the directions for an activity as well as not seeing the big picture, can also characterize the teaching of many teacher candidates. The following guidelines can be given to teacher candidates to address this characteristic, which will ultimately improve their understanding of effective teaching:

1. Know yourself. Ask yourself if you are a fast-pace or a slow-pace individual, or, probably, somewhere in the middle. Are you a detail-oriented or a big picture individual? In what circumstances do you display the characteristics of one type or the other? If you are a slow-pace individual, it will naturally be easier for you to connect to slow-pace students. Once you realize what your natural qualities are, work on developing the opposite ones so that you can use them to reach all students.

2. Know your students. Continue to learn about your students to know who they are as individuals and learners. What qualities do they display? Are they quiet or energetic, task-oriented or more reflective learners? What are

their preferred learning styles and language skills? Do the following activity. Have a list of your students in one column. In the other one, write down the students' characteristics. This information will guide you as you teach in the classroom.

3. Know the characteristics of novice teachers. Be aware of the characteristics that novice teachers display. Very often, they have a tendency to go too fast when they present, speak, or explain in the classroom. Often, they skip "baby steps," jump from topic to topic, do not have a big picture of what and why they do what they do. Work on improving your characteristics. Always explain, practice explaining, and be ready to explain anything that you teach. Effective explanations are an essential quality of a teacher. Slow down as you explain. Use comprehension, confirmation, and clarification checks/requests to slow yourself down and check if students understand what they are supposed to do. Use small, "baby steps" in your explanations, give examples, and then do a few items together with your students.

4. Practice routines. To help you to develop the characteristics of effective teachers (such as keeping an appropriate pace, having a big picture of your lesson, providing good explanations, and taking small steps), develop specific routines that you will use when you teach a particular type of activity. Always plan to use those steps as you teach that type of activity. Adjust and alter them as necessary.

5. Know your plan and materials well in a teacher-like mode. You might know what a particular activity is all about but often it is not good enough when you have to teach it. You have to know your plan, activities, and materials as thoroughly as possible. You will see it is not an easy task.

Objective 6: Defining Roles

"Communication between preservice teachers, mentor teachers, and supervisors is crucial to overcoming constraints so that theory might be able to meet practice during field experiences." (Burke, 2006, p. 161). Each participant has their own role and place in this process.

Cooperating Teacher as a Supervising Authority and Mentor. Teacher candidates need to be aware and accept that the cooperating teacher remains the primary supervisory authority in the classroom during the experience. When teacher candidates do not display necessary dispositions, some cooperating teachers might think that the candidates do not listen to them or do not pay enough attention. For many cooperating teachers, organizational skills and attention to detail are important dispositions that they require from teacher candidates with whom they work.

The cooperating teacher's philosophy about the way languages are learned and should be taught is an important factor. Choosing cooperating teachers whose beliefs and classroom practices are in accordance with the profession should be an important objective for the foreign language teacher education program. One can ask: Is the cooperating teacher a communicative or grammar-oriented teacher?

Does the teacher believe that foreign language learners are entitled to receive the best education possible in a foreign language? By coming to the classroom of the cooperating teacher, the teacher candidate and the university supervisor basically work with the classroom environment that the cooperating teacher has created. If similar beliefs about what represents the best practices are not shared and supported, it is challenging for candidates to develop them during field experiences. In such a case, conflicts can arise and the candidates and the supervisor need to try to establish a professional dialogue with the cooperating teacher about the best way for the candidate to impact the students' learning in the classroom. Such dialogue can eventually become an opportunity for all participants to grow and revisit their own beliefs, practices, and skills. Consideration should also be given to what type of guidance the cooperating teacher can and needs to give to the teacher candidate. Resources, specific instructional applications, and room for growth are some examples. Cooperating teachers differ in their journeys, experiences, and expectations, and candidates and supervisors need to be aware of these differences. Usually, all cooperating teachers are willing to share their experiences and expertise with candidates. It is important that teacher candidates have individual cooperating teachers with whom they can build a relationship.

Teacher Candidate as a Growing Foreign Language Professional. Some teacher candidates might think that in order to be successful during field experiences they need to have specific activities for every single topic and solutions for every situation. However, while it is important to have as many resources and sample activities as possible, it is only through their own experience and application of the principles of effective teaching that candidates can find their own teaching style and learn, create, and explore effective teaching applications. Therefore, the quality of the candidates' daily preparation is essential and revelatory about their commitment to their professional growth. Effectively collaborating with and meeting the expectations of the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor regarding candidates' daily work are obvious objectives and, because of a variety of constraints, very often present challenges that teacher candidates have to face during field experiences.

University Supervisor as a Representative Linking Theory, Research, and Practice. The university supervisor represents the program requirements when visiting the candidates in the field. The university supervisor has to make sure to rationalize how the candidate's teaching practices correspond to the profession's knowledge of the foreign language methodology, theory, research, and best educational practices. Very often cooperating teachers and teacher candidates value more practice and practical applications over theory and research. The university supervisor's responsibility is to engage the other participants in a meaningful dialogue about what it might mean to be a foreign language educator.

Conclusion

Based on the research and professional literature, this article discusses the framework, design, content, requirements, and objectives for foreign language

field experiences of a preK-12 foreign language teacher education program. Development and implementation of the foreign language field experiences is an important and integral part in the professional preparation of foreign language teacher candidates. As one of the required forms of field experiences, student teaching (which usually takes place during the candidates' last semester) represents for candidates an ultimate opportunity to practice and learn as well as demonstrate to their superiors their ability to become foreign language teachers. Foreign language teacher educators need to analyze and research how effectively all required field experience courses are integrated with methods, content, and education courses, and lead to pre- and student teaching experiences at the end. The structure, organization, and participants' tasks and responsibilities in a variety of field experiences, especially during pre- and student teaching courses, should be analyzed and new innovative models need to be considered and tested. Having a sound vision for such experiences can ensure a better preparation of our foreign language teachers.

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Appendix A

NCATE Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education

Standard	Competency
Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions	• Content Knowledge - know the subject matter that they plan to teach and can explain important principles and concepts. • Pedagogical Content Knowledge - have a broad knowledge of instructional strategies and facilitate student learning of the subject matter through presentation of the content in clear and meaningful ways and through the integration of technology. • Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills - can consider the school, family, and community contexts in which they work and the prior experience of students to develop meaningful learning experiences. • Dispositions - apply the dispositions expected of professionals while working with students, families, and communities. • Student Learning - focus on student learning, use of assessments in instruction, and development of meaningful learning experiences for students based on their developmental levels and prior experience.
Standard 3: Field Experiences and Clinical Practice	Demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn during field experiences.

Appendix B

ACTFL Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers

Standard	Competency
Standard 1: Language, Linguistics, Comparisons	Demonstrating language proficiency, understanding linguistics, identifying language comparisons.
Standard 2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts	Demonstrating cultural understandings, understanding of literary and cultural texts and integrating other disciplines in instruction.
Standard 3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices	Understanding language acquisition and creating a supportive classroom, developing instructional practices that reflect language outcomes and learner diversity.
Standard 4: Integration of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction	Understanding and integrating standards in planning, instruction, selecting and designing instructional materials.
Standard 5: Assessment of Languages and Cultures	Knowing assessment models and using them appropriately, reflecting on assessment and reporting assessment results.
Standard 6: Professional-ism	Engaging in professional development, knowing the value of foreign language learning.

7

Using Dialogue Journals to Improve Grammatical Accuracy

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Introduction

Ashift in foreign language (FL) teaching from traditional grammar-based approaches to more communicative and interactive approaches has brought new developments in the ways FLs are taught. With new approaches to FL teaching that put less emphasis on the role of grammar than previous approaches comes a discussion of the role of grammar in the communicative classroom (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998a; 1998b). Research on this shift in focus indicates that a successful learning and teaching experience should be learner-centered (McGarrell, 1996), communicative in nature (Lee & VanPatten, 1995), and should include meaningful grammar instruction (Doughty & Williams, 1998a; 1998b). Teachers should also pay increased attention to students' individual needs and learning styles (Oxford, 1990; 1997) to ensure that students receive instruction that meets their own learning needs.

Recent results of classroom-based research reflect this shift in focus. In some studies, learners are made aware of their own learning styles and are encouraged to increase their use of learning strategies and to intentionally employ new learning strategies (Chamot, 1993; Oxford, 1990). Other studies reviewing the results of research on how learners best learn FLs show a renewed focus on the needs of individual learners (Oxford & Crookall, 1989). Chamot (1987) introduced the now extensively-used explanation of language learning strategies as follows:

1. *Metacognitive strategies:* previewing a concept prior to a learning activity; planning in advance to pay attention to certain aspects of input; practicing linguistic features that will be needed for communication later; and self-monitoring personal language learning progress.

2. *Cognitive strategies:* repeating after a native or native-like version of the target language (TL); translating from the first language (L1); recalling a new word in the TL by relating the new word to one that sounds similar in the L1; and inferring meanings of new words through deduction.

3. *Social/affective strategies:* finding ways to converse with native speakers of the TL; working with classmates to receive suggestions; asking questions to clarify meaning; and asking for something to be repeated or explained.

Presenting these three categories of learning strategies to learners can assist them in identifying the strategies they already use and in developing strategies they are not currently using but may want to employ. Oxford's (1990) *Strategies Inventory for Language Learning* can also be used to assist learners in determining which strategies they use in FL learning, to identify what type of FL learner they are, and to introduce them to strategies that may fit well with their own learning style/s and personality.

Saville-Troike (2006) summarizes the differences in individual language learners in terms of age, gender, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, and personality and how these individual differences influence a learner's use of learning strategies. For example, in terms of age, younger learners are more likely to use repetition, and older learners are more likely to use synthesis. In terms of gender, female learners seem to use more social/affective strategies and more metacognitive strategies in listening tasks than male learners (Saville-Troike, 2006). Further, Ellis (1994) summarizes the results of research conducted to define characteristics of "good language learners," listing the five main characteristics they possess including "(1) a concern for language form, (2) a concern for communication (functional practice), (3) an active task approach, (4) an awareness of the learning process, and (5) a capacity to use strategies flexibly in accordance with task requirements" (p. 546). Although the results of these research studies suggest which students may be good language learners, it is not yet known whether learners' strategies for language learning can be altered or supplemented by means of training (Saville-Troike, 2006). The strategy training used in these types of studies encourage learners to take an active role in their own learning by assisting them in identifying language learning strategies they already employ and also by making them aware of additional language learning strategies that might improve their language learning abilities. But in order for students to successfully do this, they often need to receive some type of guidance.

This paper focuses on the use of student dialogue journals with the dual purpose of establishing interpersonal teacher-student communication and of focusing students on self-selected grammatical structures. Dialogue journals such as these are one technique available to assist learners in becoming self-directed while providing individualized instruction. This paper reviews the self-directed learning and recent trends in FL teaching; presents the nature, purpose, content, and assessment of student dialogue journals; and describes the dialogue journal assignment and its outcomes. Finally, the article provides some preliminary

conclusions based on the implementation of dialogue journals in one class and suggests implications for future research.

Self-Directed Learning in FL Teaching

In a general education context, self-directed learning implies that the teaching and learning process encourages autonomy among learners requiring them to take an active role in their own learning rather than depending on the teacher as the sole source of information and feedback. In traditionally-taught FL courses, the teacher is generally considered to be the source of knowledge from which the students learn. Students are asked to memorize lists of vocabulary words and grammar rules and charts but are not usually asked to take responsibility for their own learning beyond rote memorization. One of the main concerns of FL teachers wishing to make their courses more self-directed is that they are required to follow a strict curriculum, which allows little time for innovation beyond teaching what is in the textbook, and to prepare students for standardized tests. Although they may be frustrated by the structure of the courses they teach, teachers in these circumstances can still look for ways to involve students in their own learning.

Teachers who have used self-directed learning to some degree generally find that learners who take an active role in their own learning process, "learn and remember more at a more profound level than learners who follow a primarily instructor-directed learning program" (McGarrell, 1996, p. 497). But in most FL courses, students often do not have the required expertise or confidence to take an active role in their own learning without assistance from the teacher, and teachers do no always have the time or resources to provide students with the guidance they need to become self-directed learners. Research indicates that learners are capable of directing their own learning (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991); however, they need a structured framework that helps them discover their learning options and make appropriate selections. For example, some learners of German may be interested in learning how to write using the future perfect tense, but until these learners have learned how to use the future and present perfect tenses correctly, this objective may be unattainable. Thus, learners need input from the teacher on how to select appropriate learning goals. By adapting traditional dialogue journals to include a focus on form, teachers can begin to involve learners in taking an active role in their learning of the FL while providing grammar instruction.

Recent Trends in FL Teaching

Over the past thirty years, the shift in FL teaching from traditional grammar-based approaches to more communicative and interactive approaches has brought new developments in FL pedagogy. Some of the recent trends in FL teaching include: communicative language teaching (Lee & VanPatten, 1995), computer-assisted language learning (Bush & Terry, 1997; Dunkel, 1991; Lafford & Lafford, 1997; Pennington, 1996), the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996), authentic assessment (Hancock, 1994; Liskin-Gasparro, 1996; Moore, 1994; Stansfield, 1994; Wiggins, 1994), culture teaching (Galloway, 1985; Kramsch,

1993a; 1993b; Lange, 1999), content-based instruction (Bragger & Rice, 1998; Genessee, 1998; Leaver & Stryker, 1989), languages for specific purposes (Bosher & Smalkoski, 2002; Lepetit & Cichocki, 2002), and courses for heritage learners (Merino, Trueba, & Samaniego, 1993; Reber & Geeslin, 1998; Valdés, 1995). The nature of these more communicative and interactive approaches encourages FL learners to engage in self-directed and individual learning activities but does not always provide learners with ways to practice correct grammar usage.

With new approaches to FL teaching that put less emphasis on explicit grammar instruction comes the discussion of the role of grammar in the communicative classroom (Doughty & Williams, 1998a; 1998b). This discussion may be due partially to changes in second language acquisition (SLA) and FL teaching theories but also to the need learners have to become proficient in the TL. For example, according to the Grammar-Translation Method of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, grammatical analysis and rule learning were the main focus and purpose of FL study (see Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The Audiolingual Method, based on Skinner's behaviorist view of learning from the field of psychology, supported habit formation as its main tenet of FL learning (Lado, 1964; Skinner, 1957). A few years later, Krashen's Monitor Model emphasized the role of subconscious acquisition and made the point that conscious, formal, classroom learning does not lead to the successful acquisition of a FL (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Other approaches to FL teaching, such as the Silent Way (Gattegno, 1972), Community Language Learning (Curran, 1976; 1982), Suggestopedia (Lozanov, 1978), the concept of "communicative competence" (Savignon, 1983), Total Physical Response (Asher, 1986), the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), the definition of "proficiency" (Buck, Byrnes, & Thompson, 1989), and processing instruction (VanPatten, 1992) have sought to either emphasize or de-emphasize the role of grammar instruction in the FL classroom. Over the past decade, research on "focus on form" in the FL classroom (Doughty & Williams, 1998a) has sought to redefine FL teaching in the context of focusing on one specific grammatical feature at a time while simultaneously attending to the meaning of what is being taught in the TL. In many FL classrooms, teachers focus either almost exclusively on correct grammar usage (by requiring students to memorize verb conjugation charts, lists of grammar rules and their exceptions, and lists of vocabulary words) or almost exclusively on the production of spoken language (with little regard for correct grammar usage or sophisticated use of language or vocabulary).

Even though most FL teachers do not agree on how and when grammar should be taught, most do agree that grammar should be taught (Bell, 2005). In a recent nationwide study that looked at university-level FL teacher behaviors, Bell (2005) found that 84.2% of the teachers surveyed agreed that an effective FL teacher uses activities and assignments that draw learners' attention to specific grammatical features (n=457). These results concur with the research in SLA that suggests that learners must consciously attend to the structures in the input of the TL if these structures are to become part of their linguistic systems (Doughty & Varela, 1998; Doughty & Williams, 1998a; DeKeyser, 1998; Williams & Evans, 1998; Harley,

1998; Lightbown, 1998; Long & Robinson, 1998; Swain, 1998; White, 1998). In light of new trends in FL teaching and the results of recent research, some type of learner-centered, self-directed activity that allows for learner autonomy, learner creativity, and focus on form would be an ideal addition to FL learning contexts.

The Nature, Purpose, and Content of Dialogue Journals

Dialogue journals have been used traditionally to promote communication between students and teachers and to encourage creative writing in students' L1 or the FL they are learning (Staton, Shuy, Peyton, & Reed, 1988). Staton (1988a) defines dialogue journal writing as, "the use of a journal for the purpose of carrying out a written conversation between two persons, in this case a student and the teacher, on a regular, continuous basis" (p. 4). It is important to note that the topics of dialogue journals are not assigned by the teacher but are chosen by individual students based on their own interests (Staton, 1988b). Furthermore, dialogue journals are interactive and continuous in nature, and each student may initiate a conversation on any topic with the belief that the teacher will acknowledge the topic and comment on it. Staton (1988a) points out that none of the characteristics necessary for successful dialogue journal keeping provides adequate motivation to explain exactly *why* students are so willing to participate in dialogue journal writing, but they are. From the teacher's point of view, dialogue journals provide students with an open forum to communicate whatever they would like while simultaneously focusing on using a wide range of language functions in the FL. Complaints, questions, descriptions, hypothetical statements, and past and future narrations are all integral parts of dialogue journal writing. In addition, the open, meaningful nature of dialogue journals encourages different types of written discourse compared to the traditional essays commonly assigned in FL curricula.

Dialogue journals can also be used as a means of strategy instruction. For example, learners may find that discussing their experiences and feelings about language learning with their teacher in a dialogue journal supports their use of a language learning strategy they probably would not have had the opportunity to use otherwise. Oxford (1990) lists four among her possible strategies for language learning that are directly applicable to improving language learning through the use of dialogue journals: "(1) When learning new material, I write personal notes, messages, letters, and reports in the new language; (2) When learning a new word, I put the new word in a sentence so I can remember it; (3) When I cannot think of the correct expression to say or write, I find a different way to express the idea; for example, I use a synonym or describe the idea; and (4) I keep a private diary or journal where I write my feelings about language learning" (pp. 284-287). Language learners who choose to attempt to use at least one of these strategies will be able to learn even more from their use of keeping a dialogue journal than if they were not required to do so.

McGarrell (1996) suggests that teachers keep four key questions in mind when designing learner-centered activities, such as dialogue journals. First, what will the learner learn? The objectives for dialogue journals in FL classes need to be clearly defined for students before they begin writing so that they understand the

purpose of the activity and the skills and knowledge they will gain as a result of successfully completing the activity. Explanations and examples of long-term and short-term goals should be provided to assist students in understanding possible outcomes of the activity and to assist them in mentally preparing for the activity. When the objectives have been defined, learners should then plan how they will reach their goals to meet the objectives.

Second, how will the learner achieve a short-term objective? Through explanations by the teacher and class discussions, students will begin to decide on short-term goals for the activity. Sample goals could include learning how to write complaints in the TL, learning how to write about hypothetical situations, or learning how to describe an object or experience in detail. Students can begin to choose which types of resources they will use to assist them in reaching their goals, for example a native speaker of the language, a more proficient tutor, the teacher, grammar books, or other reference books.

The next question to consider is: How will the learner demonstrate what he or she has learned? Students should be allowed to show what they have learned as a result of their self-directed learning activity. One way to do this is to have students reflect on what they have learned and compare this with what they planned to learn. In learning a new language, students may not be able to determine for themselves how accurately they have learned something new about the language, but in reflecting on the process of using new features of the language, they will be able to analyze how well the actual process worked for them. McGarrell (1996) points out that even though many teachers will be ready to evaluate student performance before allowing students to reflect on their work, the formal evaluation by the teacher should not begin until after student self-evaluation has been completed.

The final question to consider is: How will the learner's demonstration of achievement be evaluated? At this point, after the student has produced a written journal entry and reflected on how well s/he wrote, formal evaluation by the teacher should take place. Keeping in mind the goal the student has set for the activity, the teacher will consider the following criteria: is the goal defined and outlined clearly; what did the student accomplish by setting this goal; and, how well is the goal achieved? When teachers consider these questions, they are more likely to create successful learner-centered activities.

Implementing Dialogue Journals in the Foreign Language Classroom

Dialogue journals are best introduced to an entire class at the beginning of a new term by means of clear explanations and concrete examples provided by the teacher. To implement dialogue journals in a FL course, the teacher should decide how often journals should be submitted, how long each entry should be, and what the purpose of the journal should be. In beginning FL courses, students may need suggestions for topics for the first several weeks of the course. For example, a student in a beginning German course might want to focus on subject-verb agreement, cases of nouns, or spelling, while a student in an intermediate course might want to focus on accurate use of adjective endings, word order in subordinate clauses, or narrating in the present perfect tense. Individual student-

teacher meetings and demonstrations on how to write a journal entry during the first week of TL instruction may also benefit students. In fact, students may even need a template to assist them in writing their first dialogue journal entry.

Grammar-focused Dialogue Journals

The Context

Participants in this project included eight undergraduate students enrolled in an intermediate German course at a large Midwestern university in the United States. Students' ages ranged from 19-31 years of age. Six of the students had spent somewhere between two days and two weeks traveling in a German-speaking country, and two had never been to a German-speaking country. Seven of the students had completed two semesters of German at the university, and one had completed two years in high school and was placed in the course after taking the *German-Computer Adaptive Placement Exam*. Six students were taking the course to complete the foreign language requirement for their major, and two were taking the course as part of their major or minor. The course met daily Monday through Friday for two hours each day for four weeks. The course description stated that students would be introduced to contemporary German culture, with a focus on popular music, cinema, and literature of the past twenty years. Further, the course would continue to emphasize speaking, listening, and reading, while adding a special emphasis on writing skills. Students were told that classroom activities and homework assignments would solidify their knowledge of German grammar while enhancing their knowledge of the German-speaking world.

The Dialogue Journal Assignment

The eight students were asked to write or type at least one full-page entry four times each week for four weeks. Each student was asked to choose a grammar-related goal on which each dialogue journal entry would focus. In addition to the grammatical feature chosen, students selected the topics of discussion for each entry. Once they had determined a grammar-related goal, they were asked to review what they already knew about the grammatical feature and to learn anything new about it they could that would assist them in producing it correctly in their writing. After the review and investigation of their grammar-related goal, students were asked to write their one-page journal entry on a topic of their choice while they focused on their chosen grammatical structure. After they completed their entry, they read it again underlining every instance in which they used the targeted grammatical feature. Finally, they reflected on the process they underwent in reviewing the grammatical feature, writing on their chosen topic while focusing on the selected grammar feature, and underlining the relevant feature in their journal entry. To complete the assignment each week, students were asked to write a short statement describing how well they felt they reached their goal for the week (see Appendix A for sample journal entry format). This statement was to

be written in English to allow students to reflect more easily on the success of the grammar feature they focused on in each journal entry.

Rather than evaluating all grammatical and syntactical errors in students' journal entries, as many students requested, the teacher only evaluated the errors on the student-selected grammatical feature underlined in the journal entry. In addition, the teacher responded in writing to each entry as an interested interlocutor, asking clarification questions in order to elicit more details, responding to what the student wrote, and introducing topics the student might want to write about next. In these responses, the teacher exhibited more complex language use, correct spelling, and more sophisticated syntax and punctuation than students were used to reading. Some students reported that they were so interested in reading the teacher's responses that they would look up unknown words used in the teacher's entries and incorporate these words in their German vocabulary. A number of times during class sessions, students would smile and comment as they used a word they had learned from a response written by the teacher. An added benefit of the dialogue journal assignment was that through the written medium, the teacher was able to engage those students typically not willing to speak up in oral conversations. Some students seemed to feel more comfortable sharing thoughts and feelings with the teacher through the private medium of a dialogue journal rather than in person or in the public classroom setting.

By analyzing each student's journal entries over the course of the four-week course in terms of overall accuracy, length of journal entries, and accuracy over the course of the semester for selected grammar goals, the author found that each student's overall accuracy improved in the writing of their journal entries. At the end of the course, most students made very few written errors overall in their journal entries, even on features related to self-selected grammar goals they had worked on earlier in the semester. Because students submitted journals in a notebook, it was easy to look back at grammar features that they had been working on over the course of the class to compare accuracy in selected grammar features.

Students are often concerned that if they seek to improve their writing and are not successful at first, they will be penalized. For this reason, students earned credit for this assignment based on completion of the assignment rather than on accuracy even though some corrective feedback was provided by the instructor. On a written questionnaire students completed at the end of the semester, all students in the class reported that they felt their overall grammar production improved because they were allowed to work on grammatical structures they had chosen. Also, student self-reports as well as instructor analysis indicated that the students' accuracy increased when they focused on the specific structures that they had selected themselves (see Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire). The instructor also noticed that the accuracy and complexity of students' writing increased throughout the semester. Based on these experiences, it is suggested that dialogue journals are an effective means of offering language learners greater opportunities to work toward and achieve individual goals while also focusing on, reviewing, and learning specific grammatical features.

Conclusion

Implementing student-driven dialogue journals in FL courses that focus on form represents one response to the call for approaches to FL teaching and learning that are more learner-centered (McGarrell, 1996) and that contain meaningful and communicative grammar use (Doughty & Williams, 1998a; 1998b). Students are allowed to select one grammatical feature at a time to work on while also communicating with their teacher on a regular basis and writing to their teacher about topics of interest to themselves. Further, the students in this course reported on a questionnaire that they were able to "learn and remember more at a more profound level" (McGarrell, 1996, p. 497) than if they had not completed the dialogue journal assignment. The process of becoming directly involved in their own learning provided them with the opportunity to learn more than if they were involved in a traditionally taught FL course. None of the students in this course reported that they would have chosen this type of learning activity on their own as a learning strategy to improve their written skills in German. By requiring students to keep a dialogue journal as a significant part of their grade, these students were able to learn how to direct their own learning of the German language. All students reported on the questionnaire at the end of the course that they plan on continuing to employ the strategy of selecting grammar features to work on in their future learning of the German language as a means to assist them in improving their written German.

Implications for Future Research

This project represents one attempt to use dialogue journals for the dual purpose of developing interpersonal communication and providing individualized form-focused instruction. Empirical research is still needed to support the claims made here. Some suggestions for future research include studies comparing the pre- and post-tests scores of learners using dialogue journals for reviewing grammar and learners that receive the same instruction without the use of dialogue journals. It would also be useful to analyze student journal entries over the entire semester to see if students continue to produce correct grammar structures in their writing after they have reviewed and focused on it in their journals. In addition, a study that compares students' accuracy in journal entries with their accuracy in formal essays, writing assignments, exams, and accuracy in writing in subsequent FL courses would be helpful in determining the efficacy of focus on form through student dialogue journals.

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Appendix A. Sample Journal Entry Format

You will keep a journal in a large blue book. You will write sixteen entries during the course of this class. Each entry is worth up to 20 points. I will read and respond to your journal entry and will return it to you the following class period, unless it is due on a test day. If it is due on a test day, I will return it to you before you leave that day. Please follow the guidelines to ensure that you receive full credit for each journal entry. You will receive an additional 50 points on your journal assignment if you turn in all sixteen entries over the course of this class. Feel free to write about any topic — yourself, your ideas, summaries of reading assignments, the most recent movie you saw, etc. — just make sure you underline each instance in which you write a word or sentence related to your grammar goal for the entry. Prior to writing each entry, write the following in the top margin of the entry:

Date due: *Why I selected this goal:*
Grammar goal of this entry: *What I did to review:*

Upon completion of each entry, write the following at the very end of your entry:

How well I achieved this goal:

Appendix B. Questionnaire on the Effectiveness of the Dialogue Journal Assignment

Please answer the questions below thoroughly *in English*.

(1) What is your overall reaction to keeping a dialogue journal during this course?
(2) Did the "grammar goal" assist you in improving your accuracy in written German? If so, how? If not, why not?
(3) Do you feel that your overall grammar production improved from this assignment? Why?
(4) Do you plan to still use the learning strategy of selecting grammar goals based on your own proficiency to work on as you continue to study German?

8

How to Execute Your Own Trip to Puerto Rico

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World language teachers generally tout the importance of study abroad, perhaps more so than teachers in other disciplines. Students learn to communicate better, come to understand the culture of another people, and use their language skills to decipher a range of other disciplines, such as science, geography, and foreign relations. Bellamy and Weinberg (2006) have argued that "[y]ears after students return from abroad, they continue to learn languages, are keenly aware of other cultures and are more confident and committed to a sensitive global point of view" (p. 20). Student travel companies are extremely important and influential in this effort and provide myriad options for travel all around the world. Unfortunately, the cost of leading students outside of the United States is prohibitive to many, especially in small rural school districts. Huebner (2006) has suggested that "[l]ess affluent students, moreover, often rule out foreign study from the start. […] And yet those who miss out on foreign exposure are often those who need it most" (p. 21). With this in mind, Spanish teachers can lead their own tour of Puerto Rico at a price typically one third to half that of student travel companies following the plan described below.

Why would Puerto Rico be an appropriate and beneficial target for foreign language teachers when it is not technically a foreign country? There are many benefits that the small island has that help facilitate travel and engage student interest. To begin with, this paper outlines the conveniences of travel to Puerto Rico. Second, the different places of interest are explained. Third, engaging students in the study of other disciplines through both Spanish and English is explored. Fourth, consideration is given to the many (hidden) costs associated with travel to Puerto Rico with a student travel company. Fifth, a timeline for planning and travel is provided for the world language teacher interested in leading his or her

own trip to the island. Finally, a discussion of the total cost of leading a personal trip to Puerto Rico is given based on three years of implementing the program. By the end of this report, a teacher interested in saving money for students will have a good idea and plan for how to execute his or her own travel program.

The Convenience of Travel to Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico offers many potential benefits for the Spanish teacher considering foreign travel with students. This section will demonstrate for other teachers how the issue of documentation is streamlined and the costs are reduced. In addition, the questions of health and automobile insurance will be examined. Finally, the issue of telephone service and communication will be discussed. All these factors will help the teacher to execute his or her own trip to Puerto Rico and help to keep costs low.

To begin with, many students and U.S. citizens are unaware of the political situation of the island. Puerto Rico has had a close political relationship with the United States since the Spanish-American War of 1898. Most importantly, Puerto Rico holds the classification of a Free Associated State. In the vernacular, it is a commonwealth—although not in the sense of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Puerto Rico is incorporated into the federal system of U.S. government so it is not technically a foreign country. However, the small island now enjoys a level of insular freedom that contrasts sharply to the presidentially appointed military governors typical of the first half of the twentieth century.

On the other hand, the island suffers from a lack of representation at the national level in the mainland U.S. While Puerto Ricans living on the island cannot vote in presidential elections, the island can send delegates to the Democratic and Republican Party conventions. Puerto Rico has no representatives in the Senate or in Congress, although the Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico can voice an opinion. Some suggest that the lack of representation makes up for the fact that there is no federal income tax on the island, except for those employed at a federal level such as Homeland Security or the Postal Service. In addition, the island cannot represent itself internationally in trade or make treaties with other governments. Leading a group of students to the island can be an education in the fiery historical-political relationship of not-so-foreign relations with Puerto Rico.

The current political relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico holds a beneficial opportunity for teachers leading groups abroad. Currently, there is no requirement of a U.S. passport for travel to the island. A picture ID is sufficient—although this has not always been the case. Therefore, at this time a teacher can offer this savings to students. Additionally, due to the fact that the island is considered a part of the U.S. and not formally another country, there are no signature requirements to take minors out of the country. Normally, as many foreign language teachers are well aware, both parents' notarized signatures are required, which can sometimes bring to light the home situations of many students. As we learn, often many students come from divorced homes, have never met one of their parents, have suffered through the death of a parent, etc. For international travel, this can pose a problem that Puerto Rico does not present.

When there are not two parents present to notarize permission to leave the U.S., original raised-seal documents must be presented declaring full custody. If one parent does not have full custody, then a student may not travel internationally without the other parent's consent—no matter where they are or their involvement with their child (and both signatures need to be notarized within thirty days of travel). Additionally, to help prove sole custody, students must also present raised-seal parental death or divorce records. Once again, travel to Puerto Rico does not present this problem because it is not considered international travel.

Another benefit of traveling with students to Puerto Rico is the fact that there are no customs to pass through or customs forms to complete. There is absolutely nothing to declare when entering or upon returning to the United States. The only inconvenience before returning to the mainland is that all baggage must pass through USDA inspections, which is generally a quick process. All bags receive a stamp unless a traveler is trying to bring back unprocessed endemic plant or animal species or products. In sum, for travelers who have had less than pleasant experiences passing through customs, Puerto Rico saves time and frustration.

A further benefit of travel to Puerto Rico includes the issue of insurance in general. Because of the integration of Puerto Rico, health care providers like Blue Cross/Blue Shield offer service. Of course, each insurance provider may have different clauses to be aware of, so it is advised that parents verify that their individual health insurance is valid. Another type of insurance advantage is automobile coverage. Many companies include Puerto Rico as one of the territories where insurance is valid. For example, if one has a very small group of students then the rental of a minivan tends to be the most economical choice. Fortunately for policyholders traveling to Puerto Rico, there tend to be no limitations of automobile insurance as there would be with international travel beyond Canada or Mexico.

A final consideration when leading a tour of Puerto Rico is the advantage of the communication network of the island. The major cellular phone companies and plans consider a call to, from, or inside Puerto Rico as a normal domestic call similar to a call from Michigan to Illinois. Because of the domestic classification, there are also no international calls to make or codes to remember for teachers, students, or worried parents back on the mainland. The phone numbers follow the familiar one, area code, phone number pattern. Similarly, one does not have to spend the fees for phone cards nor pay the international rate that can cost one dollar per minute. Likewise, many hotels offer a few computers with Internet access for students to maintain contact with their parents via email. In fact, the downtown plaza of Ponce has a free municipal Internet café that anybody can use. Therefore, in terms of communication, Puerto Rico offers a large advantage over other Spanish-speaking countries for the teacher willing to organize his or her own tour for students.

In sum, a study abroad experience in Puerto Rico involves more than just lower cost. Due to the particular relationship of the island to the United States, there are many similarities that the teacher, students, and parents will appreciate. There are fewer obstacles in terms of securing the correct documentation for travel abroad,

especially regarding passports or signed and notarized parental permission for travel outside of the United States. Additionally, the lack of a customs checkpoint increases both the fluidity and ease of travel. Likewise, most of the insurance plans, both for health and automobile coverage, are accepted as easily on the island as they are stateside. Finally, Puerto Rico allows for an easier and more economical way of maintaining communication between the group and parents, in addition to among the members of the group itself. All of these benefits help to enable the teacher to keep the costs associated with travel lower than costs of a student travel company.

Places of Interest in Puerto Rico

Although Puerto Rico is only approximately 100 miles long by 30 miles wide, there are countless places to visit. This section explores sites of interest in the capital of San Juan, the rainforest area of the east, the southern city of Ponce, the central mountains and northern coast, and the southwestern city of La Parguera. For an island so small, there are rainforests on one end and dry forests complete with cacti on the other. Some areas are highly industrialized and other areas are filled with pristine beauty, untouched by human hands. Students will learn about the pre-Columbian cultures that lived on the island, the European heritage that many profess, the importation and importance of African slaves working the sugarcane plantations, and the general culture of the Puerto Rican. Different eras of the island's history are presented and brought to life in indigenous ceremonial sites, recreations of Columbus's ships, lookouts against pirate attacks, replicas of the U.S. invasion of 1898, and the struggle for independence throughout the 20th century. Puerto Rico offers the potential student and teacher much to discover.

A trip to Puerto Rico would not be complete without a visit to the capital, San Juan. The twelve mile long metropolis is located in the northeastern region of the island. Most visitors to the island find it most convenient to begin their trip at this key location due to its international airport and wide variety of hotel accommodations. Within the modern city, San Juan boasts two art museums: the Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. In addition, the capital has a prosperous business district that is home to the Plaza Las Américas Mall. The Condado Beach is a nice place to take students who have never experienced the taste of salt water before. It is not necessarily worth a whole day's excursion, but makes for a nice trip in the evening hours to have the experience of swimming in the sea.

The most exciting part of San Juan lies in the furthermost western corner of the city and is truly a door to the rich cultural history of Puerto Rico. With a quick public bus ride, one arrives on streets that are still cobblestoned from the 16th century and can admire the Spanish architecture with its vividly painted buildings and wrought-iron embellishments (Stallings, 2007). This section is known as Old San Juan and sits on a peninsula that allows it to remain isolated from the "newer" parts of the city. There are numerous attractions with much historical value in this UNESCO protected part of the city (¡Qué Pasa!, 2008), but since time is always a constraint when traveling, some find it beneficial to research the main

sites and plan their itinerary accordingly. Some of the most notable sites are the two prominent Spanish forts, San Cristóbal and San Felipe del Morro. These forts were erected between 1634 and 1785 and between 1540 and 1783 respectively (Stallings, 2007). Visitors are allowed to explore dark passageways, old dungeons, and towering turrets. These mammoth labyrinths of multilevel construction are impressive to walk through and one begins to contemplate the protective forces that once inhabited the fortresses. These forts also offer museums, gift shops, and provide self-guided tours. The old 16th century churches and cathedrals are some of the other attractions that Old San Juan has to offer, such as the Iglesia de San José, which is one of the oldest churches in the western hemisphere, and the Catedral de San Juan Bautista that houses the body of the great explorer Ponce de León. There are also numerous museums in Old San Juan that cover a wide spectrum of interests; the Museo del Niño for children, the Museo de Arte y Historia de San Juan for the artist and historian, and the Museo de Nuestra Raíz Africana for the anthropologist.

Aside from the most renowned attractions, Old San Juan offers unique sites such as the Parque de las Palomas in which visitors have the opportunity to chase and feed hundreds of pigeons and the Paseo de Princesa which is a port street that is tranquil by day with its flowers, fountains, and benches but comes to life as a cultural smorgasbord of food and entertainment by night. Other attractions of Old San Juan include the Plaza de Armas, the Plaza de Colón, the Museo de las Américas, and the Casa Blanca, which all have their own story of how they contributed to the origin of Puerto Rico. When traveling through this city, one might find it very beneficial to hire a guide so that the travelers will not miss intriguing details and historical landmarks. It is also important to use time efficiently while staying in this part of the island. Since San Juan is a center for tourism by air and sea, the prices are considerably inflated. If a group is able to see all the main attractions in essentially one day, it will help keep overall prices lower for students.

After spending a few days in the capital city of San Juan, a quick southeasterly trip of 26 miles will bring travelers to the eastern coast and mountains of El Yunque. El Yunque is the only rainforest found within the United States National Forest system. The forest takes up 28,000 acres and receives 100 billion gallons of precipitation every year (Stallings, 2007). El Yunque is home to 240 trees and 68 types of birds, including the *cotorra*, the endangered green Puerto Rican parrot (Stallings, 2007). The forest is notorious for the tree frogs called *coquís* that come out in the evening hours to sing with their distinct calls. El Yunque has 13 hiking trails with varying degrees of difficulty, but travelers may also see waterfalls from the comfort of their car as they follow Route 191 through the mountains (Stallings, 2007). La Mina, La Cola, and La Coca are three dynamic waterfalls that are easily reached by trail. As long as the rivers are flowing at a safe level, visitors are encouraged to take a swim in La Coca falls. One of the trails takes tourists up a small hill to the Torre Yokahú which resembles a turret of a castle. This tower rises high enough to offer breath-taking views of the forest and puts the observers among the clouds. Aside from all the natural beauty, the park also offers

an information center known as El Portal. The center houses a theater for viewing a documentary highlighting the many attractions of the rainforest. Likewise, there are many interactive exhibits at El Portal which aid in truly appreciating the forest and understanding its geographical significance in Puerto Rico. One would want to allot a full day to experience El Yunque with its expansive information center and hundreds of acres waiting to be hiked. Most importantly, rain gear is a must!

A bit further to the east lies Luquillo, a town that has one of the area's nicest beaches. It is known as the "Sun Capital" of the island (Stallings, 2007) and many take advantage of its family friendly atmosphere. The Balneario de Luquillo is equipped with a guarded swimming area and is picturesque with its horizon dotted by palm trees and small fishing boats. With sun permitting, this could be a great way to relax and rejuvenate after an intensive itinerary.

The middle days of a trip to Puerto Rico can be spent exploring the southern city of Ponce, the second most populated city of the island with approximately 194,000 inhabitants (Stallings, 2007). There seems to be a certain rivalry between this city and the capital, San Juan. This city's inhabitants call themselves *ponceños* and are known for their prideful adage that "Ponce is Ponce and the rest is parking." Ponce is known for its carnival preceding lent with its colorful masks and fun-filled celebratory parades. The city itself is situated around the downtown area, which is home to many attractions. The Plaza de las Delicias is set in the center with its beautiful flowers, shrubs, fountains, and benches. Within the Plaza sits the Catedral de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. Interestingly, the *ponceños* have adopted the patron saint of Mexico as their own. On the opposite side of the plaza sits the Parque de Bombas, a museum that showcases antique firefighting vehicles, equipment, and local art. The structure itself is hard to miss with its flamboyant red and black striped paint. It is truly an eye-catching landmark.

The city also boasts two well-stocked museums, the Museo de la Historia de Ponce and the Museo de la Música Puertorriqueña. The Museo de la Historia offers exhibits on the history of the area from the Taíno Indians to the present-day occupants. The Museo de la Música Puertorriqueña is a tribute to the diverse heritage of Puerto Rico as it traces the roots of music back to its origins and explains the origins of salsa. Both museums offer guided tours in both English and Spanish. A fun excursion to get better acquainted with the town is the guided trolley tour of some of the historical landmarks within the city limits. Tours start and end at the Plaza las Delicias and information about the tours is readily available at the tourist center of the city that is conveniently located in the Parque de Bombas. La Guancha is another attraction that must be experienced before leaving the Ponce area. This vibrant boardwalk has many kiosks and dining sites along a working harbor. During weekend evenings, live bands and spontaneous dancing are a common sight. It is truly a great opportunity to observe the nightlife culture of Puerto Ricans. On a note of caution, the beaches in this vicinity are borderline dangerous at times and swimming is not recommended for persons experiencing the area for the first time.

While in Ponce, one cannot miss the sight of a mansion and a cross overlooking the city from a large hill. The mansion is known as Castillo Serrallés, the former

residence of Ponce's wealthiest family. This family is known for its making of "Don Q" rum and the luxurious lifestyle experienced by the Serrallés Family is on display for all to witness since the Spanish-style villa has been turned into a public museum. Just a few steps from the front gate of the expansive mansion stands the Cruceta El Vigía, a 100-ft. cross that represents the original Spanish watch for approaching ships (Stallings, 2007). This popular tourist attraction allows visitors to take an elevator or climb steps to the top of the modern cross to take in panoramic views of the city that lies below.

An enjoyable evening could be spent taking salsa lessons from a dance school located on the southwest corner of the Plaza las Delicias. On an upper floor, lessons are offered for beginners at a very reasonable rate. If the school is contacted in advance, they will be more prepared to handle a large group. The dance lessons run for an hour and afterwards students can try out their new skill with the live spontaneous music played in the Plaza or along the boardwalk of La Guancha. A simple, cheap lesson will add tremendously to the cultural experience of the island.

Also within the city lies the animal filled Parque Monagas. This park houses a wide variety of tropical birds and enormous free-roaming iguanas. The park is currently being expanded and will have a train, water park, and many other attractions when completed. A nice addition to any school trip that is trying to emphasize the importance of language to their students, might include a simple trip to the local Wal-Mart to engage in a Scavenger Hunt. While students are eagerly trying to find simple foods written in Spanish, or trying to understand some of the more complex foods that are native to the island, adults may take advantage of this time to shop for a picnic or find personal items that were forgotten at home. Lastly, plans are in motion for a salt-water aquarium for the city that will demonstrate the flora and fauna of the Caribbean.

Two great day-trips can be completed in one day: the Centro Ceremonial Indígena de Tibes and the Hacienda Buena Vista. By taking Route 503 to the north, one will have the opportunity to view artifacts of the native Taínos and pre-Taínos that used to inhabit the island. This site is relatively new to Puerto Ricans because the ruins were not discovered until after a 1975 tropical storm manipulated the dirt enough to uncover some of the ceremonial grounds (Stallings, 2007). The grounds themselves date back to the 2nd century. Today it is one of the most important archaeological sites in Puerto Rico. The site includes ball game fields, ceremonial areas, and even some authentic petroglyphs that are still visible in the stones. The museum is a key component of a tourist's visit because the explanations within the exhibits help one truly appreciate and understand the significance of the site. On the same day, a teacher can arrange for a tour of the restored Hacienda Buena Vista plantation. This plantation was constructed in 1838 by Salvador de Vives (Stallings, 2007) and much of the furniture and structure has been recently restored to give visitors the authentic experience of life 150 years ago. The old coffee plantation is run completely on the hydroelectric power that it produces from manipulating the Río Canas. The river's water is funneled into channels that

only children were small enough to clean out. Efforts should definitely be made to visit both sites.

While staying in the Ponce area, a snorkeling excursion to the Isla Caja de Muertos would be simple to plan and execute. Along the boardwalk of the operating harbor of La Guancha, a commercial boat leaves daily and heads south to the uninhabited island for swimming and snorkeling, or hiking to enjoy the wildlife. With luck, one can see the sea turtles that lay eggs on one side of the island. When traveling with a large group, it is recommended to set up this excursion in advance to make certain there is enough room and snorkeling gear for all. The beaches are some of the best on the entire island and the views are truly straight from a Caribbean postcard. From the snorkeling in the aquamarine waters to the hike up to the old lighthouse, this is an all-day event that will make your Puerto Rican experience truly memorable. Still, it is important to use sunscreen and make sure that students spend ample time covered up and under the picnic canopies.

The mountainous region known as the Cordillera Central is located in the center of the island. This important geographical feature contributes to the high precipitation levels on the eastern side of the island and the arid lands of the western side of the island. The "Panoramic Route" traverses the mountains with many tight turns and may be difficult to navigate in a large vehicle. Yet, it is imperative that one risk the dangers and head to four main sights that fall within this region of the island: the Arecibo Lighthouse Musuem, the Caverns of Camuy River Park, the Arecibo Observatory, and the Caguana Indigenous Ceremonial Park. The lighthouse of Arecibo, el Faro, dates to 1897 and is beautifully restored (Stallings, 2007). The lighthouse itself houses a museum that is packed with maritime exhibits. This lighthouse and museum is set in a park that also offers a petting zoo, two outdoor eateries, a recreation of pre-Colombian culture habitats, a saltwater aquarium, and smaller replicas of the Niña, Pinta, and the Santa María used by Christopher Columbus. Although most of this attraction is geared toward children, the outdoor animals, historical replicas, and saltwater fish are interesting at any age.

South of Arecibo one finds the world-renowned radar-radio telescope that has even appeared in movies like *James Bond: Golden Eye* and *Contact*. It is the largest of its kind on Earth and is operated by the National Astronomy and Ionosphere Center of Cornell University. The dish itself fills 20-acres and has a 600-ton platform that allows it to function as a telescope (Stallings, 2007). The information center has many interactive exhibits that discuss topics from weather to the creation of the universe. In addition, there is an educational film that depicts the daily routine of the scientists that operate the telescope and explains in detail the capabilities of this scientific wonder. The sheer magnitude of this structure will take one's breath away when observing it from the rim of the dish. Heading south of Arecibo following Route 129 will lead to the Parque de las Cavernas del Río Camuy. This park offers hour-long tours of the wildlife-rich cave system. The caverns are laden with tarantulas, bats, and crabs that are quite visible to the viewers. The entrance offers just a glimpse of the stalactites and stalagmites that one will observe within the cave. Parts of the tour are linked together by a tram

that takes you from attraction to attraction and keeps the tour moving at a good pace. The last thing viewed is a tremendous sinkhole, Tres Pueblos, which allows people to view an underground river that runs between the different major caves of the area. The park has a maximum capacity per day so it is important to call for reservations beforehand.

The final attraction worth noting in the Central Cordillera is the Parque Ceremonial Indígena de Caguana, a 13-acre park of uncovered ceremonial grounds of Taíno Indians. The grounds include religious sites and numerous ball courts. The park also contains large stone monoliths and spectacular petroglyphs. The 800 year-old site holds a bit of mystery and eeriness when one spends time contemplating the hidden secrets of the land that have yet to be discovered. Although the park is not massive in size, the history and culture learned here is needed to truly appreciate the origins of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico is known for its variety of geographical features, and as the group heads towards the southwestern region it will understand why. With the tropical rainforest to the east and the mountain system pushing through the center of the island, the western part of the island is a sharp contrast with its dry desert climate. The Bosque Estatal de Guánica is a State Forest that exemplifies tropical dry coastal forestry. The 9,900 acres are home to 700 species of plants and over 100 species of birds (Stallings, 2007). The hiking trails are well-maintained and visitors may have the opportunity to catch a glimpse of a lizard, cuckoo, or a prickly pear cactus (Farnsworth, 1991). There is an assortment of trails that vary in length and difficulty and offer a variety of spectacles waiting to be observed. One of the more notable attractions within the forest is the Ballena Trail that leads you to one of the oldest Guayacán trees on the island, 400 years old to be exact, that measures 6 feet wide at the base (Puerto Rico Tourism Company, 2006). Following the Ballena Trail past the old Guayacán leads to a large beach that may not have the best swimming, but has extraordinary views and presents a fun crab-hunting challenge. The guard shack of the State Forest has an array of literature about the different species in both English and Spanish. Guided tours are not the norm for this park, but one who is equipped with the provided resources will enjoy a self-guided stroll through the cacti and mahogany trees of this arid region.

One of the largest attractions in the southwestern region of Puerto Rico is the small town of La Parguera, famous for its bioluminescent bay. By day, it is great fun to rent a Johnny Boat from one of the many commercial boating companies that line the coast and head out to the mangrove forests for a picnic on the Isla Mata de la Gata. The Johnny Boats are easy to maneuver and not much larger than a paddleboat with an outboard motor. They can seat about seven adults including the driver and quickly get you from the mainland out to the mangroves. The water here is crystal clear and students generally enjoy being able to pick up the starfish on the ocean floor. In the mangrove forest islands one finds vividly colored fish zooming around the root structures of the trees. Although climbing on the actual mangroves is not recommended, swimming within the groves gives one an up-close account of these unique trees. By night, travelers are encouraged to embark on one of the glass bottom boats that take you out to the Bioluminescent Bay to

observe the eerie glow of the microscopic dinoflagellates when the water is agitated (Puerto Rico Tourism Company, 2006). On the larger boats, tour guides jump in to disturb the water and create the visual effect, but on smaller rental boats anyone can jump in and stir up the water to witness nature at its most spectacular.

In conclusion, there are many opportunities for travel and important sites to see within the small island of Puerto Rico. The island lends itself very well to a teacher looking to design his or her own affordable trip because day trips are fairly straightforward to facilitate. Students will enjoy traveling down the colonial streets of Old San Juan as well as through the trails of the Yunque rainforest. Students will also take pleasure in swimming at the Condado and Luquillo beaches, as well as through the mangrove forests near the town of Parguera. In addition, a plethora of museums and parks will teach students about Puerto Rican history, geography, politics, music, and language. While student travel companies offer few opportunities of travel during a trip to the island, a teacher executing his or her own trip may allot much more time to these important sites.

Incorporation of Other Disciplines

One of the greatest aspects of taking a trip to Puerto Rico is the wide variety of disciplines to which this trip caters. To begin with, there are obvious opportunities to communicate in Spanish. Secondly, the island's attractions make for great connections with biology, geography, history, astronomy, government, and political science experiences. Thirdly, at some of the sites listed above, students must use their knowledge of Spanish in order to read signs and understand the tours given.

With regard to political science, Puerto Rico is commonly referred to as an associated state of the United States. However, many people are unsure as to what this title really means. Students would be able to find out exactly what federal programs are offered to Puerto Ricans, and in return what types of representation in the federal government their "state" is granted. Likewise, an examination of Puerto Rico's political parties reveals that they stand in sharp contrast to the traditional Democratic and Republican Parties and students will have to opine about the issue of Puerto Rican independence. In addition to being specific to governmental curiosities, the large quantity of museums that will be visited will also introduce and examine historical events. These events would be easy to incorporate into a course such as World History, United States History, or Spanish History.

Traveling opportunities such as the Bioluminescent Bay, El Yunque Rainforest, and the Guánica Dry Forest offer a tremendous amount of content for any botany- or biology-based curriculum. With the tremendous variety of birds, animals, and microorganisms that can be observed at these attractions, students can truly gain a hands-on experience from this trip. Geography students would have the opportunity to witness a variety of land formations, climates, and weather patterns throughout their excursion to Puerto Rico. With one island being home to a mountainous region, an arid desert, and a rainforest, students would observe drastic differences within small distances. The climates based on location and

elevation could also be studied and trends tied to geographic features would be an interesting theme to explore. The Observatory of Arecibo would definitely cater to an astronomy or earth science curriculum. The observatory has an information center and museum that offer exhibits that cover the creation of the universe, the solar system, weather patterns, and much more.

Another component that could easily be incorporated into the Puerto Rico experience is the idea of a possible credit allotted to students for participating in the excursion. Since the trip will most likely take place in the summer, some schools might like to consider offering an elective credit for the time the students spend abroad outside of the basic school year. This may increase participation at the student level and create a more worthwhile element from a parental standpoint. When one is considering offering this as an option, administrative approval would be required.

The Cost of other Companies

Providing a travel abroad experience is a costly endeavor. There is almost no exception to this rule. Indeed, student travel companies only remain operable if they return a profit. This section examines the costs that travel companies charge, where hidden fees can be expected, and ways to reduce the cost for students.

To begin with, a quick examination of student travel companies demonstrates a very competitive business. The largest of these companies have name recognition for many foreign language teachers, including: Explorica, EF, CHA, Passports, NETC, Voyageur, ASTA. In fact, most teachers are familiar with these companies' booths at world language conferences. There is no suggestion, whatsoever, that their services are less than adequate. Many teachers will attest to the attention and opportunities that are offered, as well as the personal connections made with local tour guides. Additionally, the great majority of teachers would never travel with students were it not for the efforts of the student travel companies. However, for an instructor with experience in Puerto Rico, there is less need for a company to facilitate the organization of travel abroad. Likewise, it is precisely the lack of a company that creates a lower cost for students overall.

The general policy of most travel companies is that the teacher will travel free, as long as he or she is accompanied by a minimum of five to ten students. The price per student is also often dependent upon this ratio, or upon the inclusion of points that teachers can earn over the course of a few years. This is obviously a great selling point and rewards the effort on the part of the teacher in facilitating the trip; however it keeps the price higher for students. Moreover, this benefit is lost for a teacher who is accompanied by a spouse as the adult cost tends to be approximately $200 more than the cost for students. Therefore, the teacher will end up spending more out of pocket if accompanied by family than he or she would organizing a trip on his or her own and paying the same price as the students.

The largest overall cost of travel is typically airfare, and this is to be expected. The majority of catalogues will offer teachers a base fare from the cheapest city out of which to fly. Therefore, a teacher needs to be aware that flying to Puerto Rico

from Detroit can cost significantly more than it would from Miami. This is reflected in the costs that most companies post at the bottom of the trip advertisement. In addition, the time and month of travel is a large determining factor of price, as well as the carrier the teacher chooses. For example, travel to Puerto Rico should be avoided during December and January because of the high cost of holiday travel. Hence, a travel abroad experience will be much more economical during spring break or very early summer. Early summer offers an additional advantage: it is the low tourist season because of the heat and the approaching hurricane season. This helps to keep airfare and hotel costs considerably lower.

A uniform measure of the cost of a trip to Puerto Rico from competing companies is difficult to determine because of factors including airfare, travel dates, length of trip, and group size. Be that as it may, a trip originating from Detroit through EF that lasts seven days, two of which are dedicated solely to travel will cost approximately $1525 to $1575 (EF, 2008). Controlling for trip length and city of origination, NETC offers a cost between $2399 and $2499 (NETC, 2008). Of course, there are extraneous factors that inflate NETC's price: there are no other costs. It is simply a flat rate. To gain a perspective on the cost of a similar trip in the past, Explorica offered a price of $1455 for an eight-day trip from Detroit to Puerto Rico (Explorica, 2005). Additionally, many companies require a surcharge be paid for travel that occurs on a weekend. A close examination of Explorica's fine print reveals that the

> [t]our fee [is] based on one free chaperone for every six participants and the Flexible Rewards Package and does not include Membership Fee and airport taxes. Tour fee [is] valid for all enrollments received prior to 6/15/05. There is a $95 high season surcharge for all departures between 12/15/05-12/24/05. (p. 109)

In sum, the general fee for a trip to Puerto Rico from Detroit can be estimated around $1600 for a trip ranging from seven to eight days.

The previous Explorica quote brings out the idea of hidden fees that will greatly inflate the overall cost for students. To a teacher naïve in leading student groups, these additional fees are often unexpected and frustrating for parent, teacher, and student alike. The first hidden fee that many travel companies charge is an enrollment or membership fee. The average cost for this fee is approximately $95 and it is usually non-refundable. Similar to the enrollment fee, there is also a common late enrollment charge if a student joins the group after the initial enrollment period.

Similarly, many companies have predetermined methods of payment. There are generally options that allow students to pay the cost up front, pay the membership fee with the initial payment, pay 30 days later, or split the cost into monthly payments. This offers some flexibility for students and parents, although deviation from the planned payment method will usually result in a penalty that is added to the overall cost. In fact, many companies will charge various late fees if payments are not made on time. Effectively, a student could end up paying another $170 in late fees (EF, 2007). When a teacher organizes his or her own trip

to Puerto Rico, on the other hand, the way to collect payment is up to the teacher and there are no late fees. On a tour, if a student needs to cancel a trip due to an emergency, there is often a fine associated. In fact, some companies will refund nothing if a trip is cancelled within 30 or 14 days of travel (Explorica, 2005; EF, 2007). For a teacher organizing a trip on his or her own, the only cost that cannot be recouped is the airline ticket. Some hotel bookings may have to be rearranged slightly, but the student need not lose everything. Finally, sometimes companies will cancel students automatically if all payments have not been paid in full 75 days prior to the travel date (EF, 2007). All of the possible late fees and automatic cancellations can seem overwhelming to students considering travel abroad and this added worry can decrease overall participation.

Another hidden cost includes the price of trip insurance, which some parents will feel they want to pay. In fact, some websites for student travel require one to unclick the insurance option as a way to increase the amount of people actually paying the premium. This can add an additional cost of $14/day, or a flat fee between $115 to $240 (Explorica, 2005; EF 2007). If parents wish to purchase flight insurance or any other type of insurance, they may do so on their own when a teacher plans a personal trip. Incorporating this cost into the normal procedure for enrollment in a company led trip is insidious when the option specifically has to be denied.

Although previously mentioned, another potential savings for students is that with Puerto Rico, currently there is no need for a passport. Considering that a passport can add close to $100 to the cost of a trip, it can be an important savings for the student. However, foreign language educators in general would most likely encourage the purchase of a passport because it will encourage future travel for students and can expedite passage through the airport.

An extra cost that many people forget to consider is the tour guide and bus drivers that accompany most trips. While the salary of both is paid through the companies, it is standard practice to tip them both. In general, a tour guide receives a tip of three dollars/person/day and the bus driver one dollar/person/day. Most travel companies have a tour guide that travels with a group of students throughout the entire trip. Estimating the trip length and discounting travel to and from the island, this would typically be five or six days. Each student then, would normally be required to pay a tip of $20 to $24—a substantial payment when all travelers combine their tips.

Planning for meals is an important consideration that can add another cost for student travel. Some companies provide all meals to students, but often fail to include beverages, including water. Other companies will provide a continental breakfast with other meals included as per itinerary. Lastly, others only provide breakfast and dinner. With provided meals, students often do not have much choice as to where or what they eat. This can be especially perplexing if there are vegetarians in the group, as many of the meals provided fail to take these students into consideration. When booking hotels, especially during low season, a teacher can often bargain to have a full breakfast included in the room price. When this is not an option, many hotels will offer a continental breakfast. Hotels

such as the Comfort Inn-Condado or Hotel Miramar in San Juan or the Melía or Fox Delicias in Ponce are examples of hotels that offer breakfast, or where this can be a bargaining chip during low season. Other meals and snacks can be the responsibility of the student. One way to increase savings for the students is to purchase some food and drinks from a big box retailer in Puerto Rico. This will provide a cheap alternative to having to eat out every day and students appreciate the savings.

Transportation can be a major obstacle to executing a trip to Puerto Rico. However, this is also an area where there are potential savings for the group as a whole. To begin with, the size of the group is a major determining factor on many levels. Fewer students mean fewer taxis to pay for, in addition to an increased likelihood of accommodating everybody on a bus. It will even determine whether the rental of a minivan is possible versus contracting a bus company.

While in San Juan, however, it is not usually necessary to rent a minivan or contract a bus because there is a very good system of cheap, public transportation. The most expensive transportation cost will be a taxi from the airport to the hotel. This can range between $20 and $30 for large van taxis, and there may also be a charge for baggage. After arriving at the hotel, the concierge will be able to direct the group to bus stops and stations. There are many buses that will go directly to the heart of Old San Juan and they require exact change, 75¢. It is very prudent to be prepared with extra change for the students. Taxis are a possibility, but are also considerably more expensive. It is not advised to rent a minivan in San Juan because of the heavy traffic and confusing one-way streets. It is also very difficult to find a spot to park in Old San Juan and many hotels will charge for overnight parking.

After leaving San Juan, a minivan or rented bus will work well depending on group size. Many hotels offer tours to the rainforest or other areas of the island, but the prices are generally high. There are a few different bus lines that rent buses with drivers at rates depending on the size of the bus needed and destination. For example, López Bus Lines charges $500 for an all day excursion in San Juan to the Plaza Las Américas Mall, to the rainforest, and transfer to Ponce for a group of 23 including luggage. To retain the use of a bus for the same size group but for use solely around Ponce, the price is $250. One may compare that price to Gómez Bus Lines to see which company will offer the best rate. Once again, though, if the group is small a minivan will provide the least expensive alternative. However, additional charges will include night parking and gasoline but save the price of the tip. The flexibility may well be worth the cost of the gas. During the day with planned events in Ponce, it will not be necessary to retain the use of the bus, as most sites are within walking distance or included in the trolley tour. Taxis can be used to reach La Cruzeta and Castillo Serallés, and it is a short, downhill walk back to the downtown.

A last consideration for saving money is to ask for discounts for large groups or for students. In addition, paying by cash can save 10% on the price of a local tour guide. Similarly, sometimes hotels and bus companies require a payment by cash or check and it is advised to call ahead to know the payment arrangements. Also,

while staying in Ponce, a stop by the tourist center at the Parque de Bombas will include a Quenepa book full of coupons and entrance fee discounts. For example, there will be a 10% discount for travel by boat to Caja de Muertos Island.

In conclusion, executing a trip to Puerto Rico without the help of a student travel company can save students a considerable amount of money. There are no membership fees, excessive group travel costs, late fees, insurance fees, or other hidden fees associated with a personalized trip. There are more possibilities for transportation that can also help to bring down the cost of a trip, as well as the opportunity to see many more sites than those included in a travel company's itinerary. One consideration that needs to be evaluated is the cost of student meals and the idea of buying large quantities of food at a big box retailer. Finally, by bargaining, asking for discounts, or paying with cash, one can often save even more. During low season, it is easier to have hotels compete against each other when negotiating for a group.

Timeline for Travel

Before any travel can begin, a timeline should be established that takes into account student interest, parental or chaperone involvement, and fundraising. Additionally, knowing when and how often to discuss the trip with the school board, book flights and hotels, and rent buses or vans is important. Lastly, student conduct contracts and relief from financial liability forms need to be completed before travel.

The first step in the timeline is to hold an interest meeting to gauge the level of student participation. Likewise, an early presentation to the school board may be required to have an initial approval of travel without the support of a student travel company. These details generally have to be covered early as planning becomes dependent on the number of students interested. Additionally, many school boards may require an approval process once all hotel and travel accommodations have been made. After the initial interest meeting, fundraising has to start quickly. It is important to hold a parent meeting for interested students in order to solicit help from the parents and to judge the level of chaperone participation. Many of the parents will have ideas regarding fundraising or have connections that will provide the group additional opportunities. At the meeting with the parents it is important to discuss responsibilities for verifying cell phone coverage, health insurance, passports, additional travel insurance, and purchasing of airfare.

Once a definite group is established, the process of purchasing the tickets happens quickly. To ensure that all participants are able to book passage on the same flight, it is important to contact a travel agent, otherwise one must pay for all the tickets simultaneously on a single credit card. In addition, if there are more than 10 participants they can be booked at a group rate, which will generally be lower than individual fares. Having a flexible time period will help maintain lower costs. Here students and parents are required to give their permission to book any flight within a certain day range. If one is planning travel over the summer, it may be necessary to plan a few additional snow days onto the end of the year in order to decrease the chance of problems with a possible school year extension. Typically,

tickets can only be reserved for 24 hours. After that there is no guarantee that the space or the price will be available. Once airfare is booked, the full itinerary and hotel bookings can be made. The plan for the itinerary needs to take into account that museums and attractions have the least chance of being open on Mondays and Tuesdays. An example of an itinerary is provided in Appendix A.

In order to increase the savings for students, students can sleep four to a room. It is very important to check how many beds are in each room, as some hotels have triple queen rooms. When parents travel, they can share a bed with their son or daughter. This arrangement helps to monitor student behavior as well as save money. In order to save even more, other adults can be asked if they mind sharing a bed with another same sex adult. Other considerations for the hotel are location and the inclusion of breakfast. Location is extremely important because it can raise ground transportation costs for the group. Lastly, it is important to verify how payment is to be made and whether bargains can be arranged for low season occupancy.

There will probably be a need for one or two more meetings with students and parents before travel in order to verify that passport applications have gone well and to update the group on fundraising efforts. Within 30 days of travel, it is beneficial to have a notary stamp the students' permission to travel. This permission has the rules for travel, gives the power to the teacher to send unruly students home at the parents' expense, and relieves the teacher and school district of financial liability should unforeseen events occur (a benefit of student travel companies is the liability insurance offered). This is also the time to set the agenda for travel to the airport and what protocol should be followed on flight days. Depending on the carrier, students may need additional funds for baggage. On the day of travel it is important to have a checklist for everything a student needs (passports, notarized forms, copy of health insurance, emergency information, and remaining costs per student). The final cost per student has ranged from $80 to $250, and is dependent heavily on the previous fundraising efforts. In years past, the cheapest total cost to students for airfare, hotel, transportation, and entrance fees has been as little as $500 but also as high as $660. Considering the cost of a student travel company, a teacher that organizes his or her own trip can save students a substantial amount of money.

In sum, a timeline can be created that allots time for fundraising, meetings, and board proposals with proper planning. Allowing oneself enough time to make hotel and transportation arrangements is important because rooms and buses can book quickly depending on the time of year. The details of the trip are often overwhelming if one tries to complete too many tasks at once.

Total Cost Breakdown for Students

The major costs associated with travel are airfare, lodging, transportation, meals, and entrance or attractions costs. Whatever students spend beyond these expenses is purely incidental. Airfare for a flight between Detroit and San Juan typically costs between $300 and $500, although there is considerable variation with regard to specific departure dates and cities. Currently, flights from Detroit

to San Juan for summer 2009 begin at $273 (expedia.com) but can become much more expensive. This is generally the cost of the trip that students and parents have to fund completely by themselves. Likewise, it is the most uncontrollable cost in determining group travel to the island.

Lodging is the second most expensive part of the trip, although students have been able to mitigate or nullify this cost with fundraising efforts. As the plan is set up, there are two different hotel stays on the island. One hotel is located in the San Juan area while the other is located in Ponce. San Juan hotels are expensive, although there is no need for renting a bus or minivan for the time spent here. However, it is possible to stay in Ponce for the entire trip to keep costs down, but this increases the amount of time students spend in transit and increases gasoline and parking expenses. In San Juan, there are a number of two-star hotels close enough to bus stops to get students into Old San Juan in approximately 15 minutes. Using as few rooms as possible will obviously keep costs low, but San Juan cannot compete with Ponce's prices. In the 2008 trip, the per person cost of two nights in the Comfort Inn San Juan was $95, whereas five nights at the Fox Delicias Hotel cost each student $142. It is up to the teacher to determine where and exactly how long the group will stay. On the central plaza of Ponce, there are three different hotels that can accommodate students: The Meliá, Fox Delicias, and the Bélgica. These hotels are in order from most expensive to least expensive, although only the Melía and Fox Delicias offer breakfast.

Transportation is an issue that is dependent on the size of the group. If there are fewer than seven or eight participants, then everyone can fit in a single minivan as long as they have checked only one bag. The cost of the minivan will typically be around $400 for a week, depending on the company used. With a minivan, however, are the added costs of gasoline and overnight parking, which can vary. The flexibility, nevertheless, is very valuable. The other major transportation cost may be bus rental. This can be much more expensive but with a larger group it is the best option. Many parents would be uncomfortable driving in Puerto Rico if they were to have to follow a caravan of cars. López Bus Line, Inc. offers buses that can accommodate 17, 30, 50, or 60 passengers and will travel all over the island. The price varies with destinations, use, and size of the bus, but can only be contracted for the days it is in use. The total cost of a bus for students in 2008 was $95 person, which would be comparable to a minivan after allowing for gasoline and parking payments. Therefore, an allotment of $100/person for ground transportation is a valid general estimate. Fundraising, however, could completely defray this cost.

The next most important cost is meals. If one is able to book a hotel that includes breakfast then one third of the potential cost per day is already paid for and will save the students money. Likewise, Puerto Rico offers a plethora of fast food restaurants where students can eat lunch for approximately five dollars. Students were surprised to find that they could eat a large plate of traditional cuisine complete with meat, rice, beans, salad, and *tostones* (deep fried smashed plantains) at César's, a local restaurant near the central plaza in Ponce for this price. Another way to keep costs low is to plan picnic-style lunches and buy large

amounts of food and drink from one of the Sam's Clubs on the island. In total, students are usually told to plan to spend approximately $15/day for food, snacks, and drinks when breakfast is included. In past trips, some students purchased cereal as well as bread, peanut butter, and jelly in order to have a cheap snack and breakfast available. In order to keep the costs of student travel low, it pays to be creative.

Finally, the other major expense is that of entrance fees and excursions. A list of different museums, parks, and attractions is provided in Appendix B. By purchasing all the entrances at once, groups can save valuable time and see more attractions throughout the day.

Once all the major costs have been accounted for, a trip to Puerto Rico usually costs between $850 and $1000. Group fundraising efforts in the past have lowered what students pay to between $500 and $660. Compared to the costs of a student travel company whose base rate ranges from approximately $1500 to $1800 (not to mention hidden costs), a teacher that plans and executes his or her own trip to Puerto Rico provides substantial savings to the students and their families. If the price is one of the single largest determining factors for participation, there is much that a teacher can do.

Summary

For a world language teacher, offering students the possibility of travel outside the United States is a wonderful way to bring the language and culture of the people alive. Bellamy and Weinberg (2006) suggested that "[s]tudy abroad programs teach important intercultural and language skills, but the true success of a program occurs within a student, when she realizes that she can see the world from a different cultural viewpoint" (p. 20). Puerto Rico is a very useful target destination for foreign language teachers even though it is not technically a foreign country. Puerto Rico's designation as a Free Associated State helps to facilitate travel and the small island can engage student interest across a variety of subject matters. When compared to the cost of student travel companies, a teacher executing a student trip on his or her own can save the students important resources and increase overall participation in the program. By following the outline presented in this paper, a teacher can provide an unforgettable and highly educational trip to students at a cost much more reasonable than those offered elsewhere.

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Appendix A: Sample itinerary

Day 1:   **Arrive in San Juan**
If late, sleep. If not, Old San Juan shopping and nightlife
Day 2:   **Old San Juan**
Morning walking tour through Legends of Puerto Rico
Lunch / Shopping
Visit to El Morro and San Cristobal
Free time / Shopping
Swimming at Condado Beach
Dinner
San Juan Nightlife-Paseo de la Princesa, Live music
Day 3:   **Excursion to the East**
Morning: Plaza Las Américas Mall
Lunch during drive to rainforest, rainforest hiking
If time and weather permits, Luquillo Beach
Dinner on drive to Ponce
Day 4:   **Get to know Ponce**
Trolley tour of Ponce
Museum of History of Ponce, Museum of the Massacre, Pearl Theatre,
    Museum of Puerto Rican Music
Lunch
La Cruceta lookout / Japanese Gardens / Serrallés Castle

City Hall, Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Fireman's Musuem,
    Plaza del Mercado
Dinner
Salsa lesson above downtown plaza

Day 5:   Central and Northern Regions
Cavernas de Camuy
Arecibo observatory
Lunch in Arecibo
Arecibo Lighthouse Museum / Beach
Possibly Ceremonial Site of Caguana
Dinner
Ponce nightlife at the Guancha Boardwalk

Day 6:   Excursion to the Southwest
Wal-Mart scavenger hunt
Hike through dry forest of Guánica
Crab sightseeing at Ballena Beach
Continue to La Parguera
Picnic at Isla Mata La Gata by motorboat
Mangrove forest visit by powerboat /swimming
Dinner in La Parguera
Free time / Shopping
Bioluminescent Bay at night

Day 7:   Excursion to Caja de Muertos
Beach day / Snorkeling / Hiking
Dinner at Plaza del Caribe Mall / Shopping
Possible Spanish language movie

Day 8:   Farewell to Ponce
Hacienda Buena Vista plantation
Tibes Ceremonial Site
Return flight home at night

    *Additional or fewer days may be possible, depending on flights. The itinerary is subject to change based on availability of group entrances and times at sites of interest. Day plans may be switched based on day of the week or holidays to best fit the sites on the itinerary.

Appendix B: Contact information and entrance fees

Name of Place / Event	Phone / E-Mail	Address	Price
Legends of Puerto Rico Inc. Guided Tours: Debbie Molina Ramos	787-605-9060 info@legendsofpr. com	P.O. Box 9021692 San Juan, PR 00902-1692	$25.00-35.00/ person
Catedral de San Juan Bautista	787-722-0861 www. catedralsanjuan.com	151 Calle Cristo Old San Juan, PR	$1.00 Donation
Convento de los Dominicos	787-721-6866	98 Calle Norzagaray Old San Juan, PR	Free
Alcaldía	787-724-7171	153 Calle San Francisco, Plaza de Armas Old San Juan, PR	Free
Fuerte San Cristóbal and Fuerte San Felipe del Morro	787-729-6960 www.nps.gov/saju	Calle Norzagaray Old San Juan, PR	$3.00-$5.00/ person
El Yunque Rainforest	787-888- 1880 or 1810 www.fs.fed.us/r8/ caribbean/	USDA Forest Service El Yunque National Forest HC-01, Box 13490 Rio Grande, PR 00745-9625	Free to hike trails Small entrance fee for information center
Museo de la Historia de Ponce	787-844-7071	51-53 Calle Isabel Ponce, PR 00733	$3.00/ person
Parque de las Bombas	787-284-3338	Plaza Las Delicias Ponce, PR 00733	Free
Teatro La Perla	787-843-4322	Calle Mayor y Calle Cristina Ponce, PR 00733	Free
Ponce Tourism Office Autonomous Municipality of Ponce	787-284-4141	Plaza Las Delicias Ponce, PR 00733	Free
Hacienda Buena Vista Plantation	787-812-5027	Calle 10 Barrio Magüeyes, PR	$4.00-$7.00/ person
Castillo Serallés	787-259-1774 www. castilloserralles.org/	17 El Vigía Ponce, PR 00733	$6.00-$9.00/ person

Centro Ceremonial Indígena de Tibes	787-840-2255	Rte. 503, Km 2.8 Barrio Tibes, PR	$2.00/ person
Island Adventure (Isla Caja de Muertos)	787-842-8546 iventure@caribe.net	P.O. Box 7711 Ponce, PR 00732	$36.00-$40.00/ person
Cruceta El Vigía	787-259-3816	(across from Serallés Castle)	$4.00/ person
Museo de Arte de Ponce	787-848-0505	2325 Av. Las Américas Ponce, PR 00733	$5.00/ person
Bosque Estatal de Guánica	787-821-5706	P.O. Box 985 Guánica, PR 00653	Free
Faro de Arecibo	787-817-1936 www.arecibolight house.com	P.O. Box 141300 Arecibo PR 00614-1300	$9.00/ person
Parque de las Cavernas de Río Camuy	787-898-3100	HCO 2 7865-A Camuy, PR 00627	$10.00/ person
Observatorio Arecibo	787-878-2612 www.naic.edu	HC03 Box 53995 Arecibo, PR 00612	$5.00/ person
López Bus Line, Inc.	787-848-3924	Urb. Ferry Barrancas #61 Calle Alelíes Ponce, PR 00730	$250.00-$500.00/ day
Fox Delicias Hotel	787-290-5050	P.O. Box 7383 Ponce, PR 00732-7383	$65.00-$120.00/ night
Hotel Meliá	787-842-0260	P.O. Box 1431 Ponce, PR 00733	Pricing varies
Hotel Bélgica	787-844-3255 www.hotelbelgica. com	122-C Villa Street Ponce, PR 00730	$65.00+/ night
Comfort Inn San Juan	787-721-0170	Calle Clemenceau 6 San Juan, PR 00907	$110.00+/ night
Johnny's Boat Rental (Ferry for Bioluminescent Bay and Johnny Boats for Mangroves)	787-899-5891	P.O. Box 427 Lajas, PR	$40.00/ Johnny Boat $5.00/ person for Ferry
Ponce Trolley Tours	787-284-3338	Plaza las Delicias Ponce, PR 00733	$2.00/ person

9

Ratatouille: An Historical Approach toward Gastronomy

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Food is a necessity for everyone yet is a passion for so many of the French. The animated movie *Ratatouille* illustrates a gifted rat, Rémy, who infiltrates a Parisian restaurant kitchen and is able to re-establish the reputation of its deceased chef, Gusteau. In order to appreciate the culinary spectacle *Ratatouille* offers, to understand the strong passion the French have for food, and to value the current culinary landscape, we must first look at the 19th century factors that contributed to gastronomy. Indeed, this period refers to the golden age of gastronomy, characterized by exquisite foodstuffs, sumptuous restaurants, and leading to gastronomic discourse and competition among chefs. This paper will first examine how Paris has been favored as the center of France, the capital of gastronomy, and the city of pleasures. It will then examine gastronomic literature, which can be divided into several categories: cookbooks, etiquette literature, and restaurant guidebooks. We will also focus on 20th century gastronomy where, due to changes in society, it evolved towards lighter preparations while still maintaining excellent quality and standards. As we shall see, the movie *Ratatouille* illustrates the essence of French culinary art.

The Golden Age of Gastronomy

First appearing in 1801, the word "gastronomy" was defined as the art of good eating (Ferguson, 2001). It originally was intended for hosts or anyone who wanted to be a good host, particularly the nouveau riche. Gastronomy encompasses food, aesthetic debates, and literature. It implies the use of table manners and can be considered as an interest in food, as well as a culinary tradition that includes discipline, control, and moderation. Furthermore, gastronomy illustrates the

culture of a nation, its cultural strength and culinary excellence. Restaurants, new cooking methods, and gastronomic discourse contributed to the golden age of gastronomy, all established in 19th century Paris.

Paris, the Gastronomic Capital

Paris has always benefited from a privileged geographical and historical situation and thus received more attention and more wealth than the rest of the nation. Undoubtedly, it represents France, the birth and the glory of the nation, where politics, economics, culture, and art take place. This idea of nationalism was certainly reinforced during the Empire (1804-1815) when France regained world power under Napoleon I. According to Grimod de La Reynière, the gastronome journalist who wrote *L'Almanach des gourmands* in 1803 and *Le Manuel des amphitryons* in 1808, Paris was considered the capital of Europe and the destination of choice for foreigners. Food was a major contributor to this reputation. Indeed, Paris was the capital of gastronomy; it had the best food prepared by the most talented chefs, and was where chefs received their training (Poulain & Neirinck, 2004). Paradoxically, nothing was growing in the capital, and yet every possible foodstuff was available there. Thanks to the Industrial Revolution, boats and trains enabled the delivery of international merchandise, and fresh and exotic produce were shipped directly to the capital. Provinces produced resources, sending the best to be prepared and consumed in Paris. By doing so, we see a continuation of the Ancien Régime, with the peasants working for the aristocracy, except this time the provinces nourished Paris. Needless to say, wealth created demand and new produce helped innovative chefs create new recipes based on different foodstuffs.

Also during this time, the *Halles de Baltard* were built on the right bank. This ensemble of nine pavilions arranged by specialty and made of stone, steel, iron, glass, and marble with central water and railroads arriving directly underneath mirrored the style and the progress of the period. Every working day, a profusion and variety of fresh produce, meat, fish, and vegetables was delivered to the *Halles*, for restaurants and for personal use. This "magical" space was simultaneously the place where people would come to find something to consume as well as where they were consumed, as Emile Zola points out in his novel *Le Ventre de Paris* (*The Stomach of Paris*).

The Development of à la carte *Restaurants*

It is correct to associate the proliferation of restaurants with the post-French Revolution period. However, Paris already had several fine restaurants in the 1780s. In the early 1800s, chefs previously employed by the Ancien Régime opened their own restaurants in the Palais-Royal neighborhood, this time extending their services to the new elite and the bourgeoisie. Members of these social classes were formerly denied access to the same privileges as the aristocracy, and therefore now intended to order conspicuous meals in front of others to show that they too had money and could consume like the old elite. Yet, this social class was lacking savoir-faire and savoir-vivre, both notions taught in the Ancien Régime.

"Haute cuisine became the privilege of all those who can afford it. (…) With the passage of time and changes in social and economic institutions, haute cuisine became part of a much broader and deeper configuration of elite culture" (Trubek, 2000, p. 41).

When originally opening their restaurants, chefs served the same culinary preparations to their new clientele that they had previously served to the aristocracy. However, it was almost impossible to display all the dishes together on the table and therefore the *service à la française* had to be abandoned. Instead, the bourgeois consumers ordered only a few dishes that were served one at a time, which is where the term *à la carte* came into being (Poulain & Neirinck, 2004). The idea of culinary display so dear to the Ancien Régime faded in restaurants, only later to grow among the bourgeoisie. They too developed a taste for refined food, hired chefs, organized sumptuous dinners with elaborate table displays, and started reading gastronomic literature. But more and more, the main reason to consume in public was to be seen. Yet, in some cases, restaurants were a place for pleasure, a place to enjoy refined food and good wine, a place to take one's mistress out for dinner, or simply a place to dine among men. Bourgeois housewives, on the other hand, were rarely invited out.

Although over two thousand restaurants had opened in the city by 1834, only a few *à la carte* restaurants existed. They first opened in the Palais-Royal neighborhood during the Empire, in the area close to the Louvre. In the early 1800s, Chez Véry, the Trois Frères Provençaux, and the Rocher de Cancale were renowned for their cuisine and attracted a wealthy clientele (Aron, 1989). The décor was refined with a profusion of dinnerware reminiscent of the Ancien Régime, but the emphasis was placed on food and wine, with customers creating a demand for elaborate, creative, and spectacular culinary preparations. Maintaining a solid reputation was challenging. Strong leadership and reputation, established primarily by the chef, made it difficult to find a successor once he passed away. The result has been that trends in restaurants and cuisine tend to change every thirty years, or the average length of a career (Girveau, 2001).

By the 1830s, recently built boulevards became fashionable and were where Parisian life took place. New cafés and restaurants opened, such as the Café Anglais, the Café Hardy, the Café de Paris, Chez Chevet, and many more. Wanting to distinguish themselves from the Palais-Royal establishments, an accent was placed on appearance with sumptuous décor and carefully chosen furniture, designed to catch the eye of the new bourgeoisie. Dandies—young men with new money, no class, no savoir-faire, and no taste—frequented these restaurants in the hopes of flaunting their wealth. Restaurant reviews highlighted the décor, but also denounced the mediocre food and the deplorable service alongside small portions. Still, it did not stop the nouveau riche from frequenting these establishments since it was more important to be seen in the public sphere than to enjoy succulent preparations.

By the Second Empire, Paris was in the process of becoming one of the most beautiful capitals in Europe. Department stores, opera houses, and restaurants attracted numerous visitors. Although Paris had countless restaurants and clubs, very few were excellent. Throughout the century, more and more chefs

left the private sphere to work in the public circle. Restaurants and cafés on the boulevards were frequented for supper or drinks, where social nightlife continued for those who had attended the Garnier opera, theaters, and cabarets. In 1860, Adolphe Dugléré, a great admirer of Antonin Carême, bought the Café Anglais whose décor was sumptuous but whose food was mediocre. Dugléré's idea was to turn it into the *grand* restaurant in Paris, where the most famous personalities would come to dine. This ambitious and creative chef realized what an excellent restaurant should offer: exquisite preparations matching superb wines, both to be consumed in a sumptuous décor, either in a dining room or in private salons. What he created was basically a combination of the first *à la carte* restaurants and the trendy establishments of the boulevards in the 1830s. Combining them led to the immergence of the most famous and best restaurant in the capital. To this day, Dugléré is known for having prepared the most expensive meal in history on June 7, 1867 that was served to Bismark, William I, and Alexander II (Parienté & Ternant, 1994).

Within one century, restaurants occupied a much more important place in social history and contributed to the evolution of culinary habits.

> The restaurant evolved over the nineteenth century as the paradigmatic urban institution. The modern consumer frequented public restaurants rather than private banquets, and restaurants ended up operating a sea of change in the fundamental modes of conspicuous consumption. (Ferguson, 2001, p. 152)

Every day, a multitude of fresh foodstuffs arrived in Paris that was later offered in various ways on restaurant menus. During the Empire, the menus of the *à la carte* restaurants still reflected the *service à la française* with several hundred dishes available, from potage to desserts. Obviously, it was difficult for culinary chefs to move away from the long traditions to which they were accustomed. With time, menus became simplified due to practicality, thus imposing the *service à la russe*, where everyone consumed the same dishes at the same time and menus contained fewer preparations, arriving hot. Restaurants followed this pattern, offering a menu with fewer dishes that were prepared individually. However, it is important to note that regional cooking was absent from the refined restaurants' menus.

Extensive classifications of ingredients reflect the tastes of the time period. Meat, synonymous with wealth and strength, was largely offered. Beef, considered the king of meat, was served with different sauces and accompanied by various vegetables. It was the same for lamb, pork, and poultry. Fish was also popular and always present on the menu (Flandrin, 2002). Those with money usually started a meal with a dozen fresh oysters, always available in refined establishments. Wine lists were also extensive, illustrating the abundance of everything in France at the time.

New Culinary Techniques

The 19th century was also a time for innovation in the kitchen. Little by little, frying, brazing, and moistening became the norm for preparing meat and

preserving taste (Poulain & Neirinck, 2004). Furthermore, Carême, Beauvilliers, and Dubois invented a multitude of sauces for all types of dishes that became a staple on restaurant menus. They not only improved culinary preparations but also highlighted the sauce chef's talents, who played a unique role in the kitchen. Other recipes appeared such as gratin, soufflé, baking, and ice-cream (Poulain & Neirinck, 2004).

In the Kitchen

One thing that did not belong exclusively to the golden age of gastronomy, and yet is very important, is the kitchen. Already well equipped, it consisted of a room of its own since the Middle Ages, and was physically separated from the place where food was then consumed. What dominated the décor were the copper utensils already abundant among the wealthy since the 18th century. During the 19th century, the pots and pans became even more precise. This time period also saw the era of heavy cast iron stoves heated with coal, a chimney, and closed ovens, which brought progress to the kitchen. The first refrigerators appeared late in the 19th century, allowing the development of frozen desserts and the transportation of frozen produce from around the world.

An illustration of the Café Riche's kitchen inaugurated in 1865 (Verroust, 1999) showed the modernity of these kitchens with a pantry, a rotisserie, a fish-tank, a large heavy cast iron stove in the center of the room, different stations where ingredients were prepped, and where silverware was hand-dried. These kitchens mirrored the affluence of the Café through the profusion of copper cooking utensils hanging from pot racks. Copper utensils were extremely expensive but the investment reflected quality and durability.

Gastronomic Discourse

Gastronomic literature developed along with the proliferation of restaurants. As in the past, professional cookbooks and treatises written by famous chefs for professional cooks were abundant. Jules Gouffé, Urbain Dubois, Emile Bernard, and Antonin Carême, one of the most prolific writers of the period, wrote cookbooks on culinary art. Around mid-century French and foreign cookbooks, written less technically and in a more simple language in order to be accessible to young housewives, appeared. A third type of literature dealt directly with gastronomy, focusing on the art of hosting as well as appreciating good food. In his *Manuel des amphitryons*¸ La Reynière insisted on food etiquette mostly targeted toward the nouvelle bourgeoisie and the aspiring bourgeois gastronomes. Another important figure for gastronomy was Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, author of the famous *Physiologie du goût*, whose accent was on physiology and how to understand and therefore improve taste. Finally, another type of gastronomic discourse dealt with restaurant guidebooks. La Reynière's *Almanach des gourmands* was famous and useful for wealthy foreign travelers who came to Paris to experience sumptuous meals prepared in outstanding restaurants. This precious guidebook not only listed places where one could find good food but also addressed where one could buy the best foodstuffs. This type of review was necessary for any visitor who wanted

to find good meals, which was not always an easy task due to the high number of restaurants recently opened in Paris. This new type of literature focused on the grand restaurant's ability to stimulate and satisfy any desire and therefore led to competition and creativity among chefs. As a result of restaurants becoming a social institution during the 19th century, eventually all types of restaurants were classified.

Twentieth Century French Cuisine

In the 19th century refined restaurants finally replaced the traditional banquet of the Ancien Régime, with a profusion of dishes to be selected from the menu. During the following century, dining in refined restaurants became the norm due to a higher level of prosperity. Couples went out for dinner for pleasure or simply to taste new recipes. In the early 20th century, haute cuisine was still based on Carême's legacy, using rare and expensive produce such as truffle, foie gras, partridge, and beef, and it targeted a wealthy clientele. In the time between the two World Wars, haute cuisine eventually disappeared, instead making room for bourgeois as well as regional cuisine. With time, people consumed less and the number of dishes decreased (Flandrin, 2002). Moreover, France evolved to make room for more dietetic preparations while still maintaining sophistication in the dining room and on the plate.

Nouvelle Cuisine

The term *nouvelle cuisine* appeared for the first time in 1973, in an article written by Henri Gault and Christian Millau. *Nouvelle cuisine* came into being as a reaction to the classical cuisine inherited from Escoffier and the previous chefs, which was considered heavy with sauces that hid flavor, and a presentation lacking simplicity. Consumers of the 1960s ate less than their ancestors, being self-conscious about health and fitness and looking for lighter dishes. Shorter cooking time, a daily menu based on fresh ingredients from the market, natural flavors, and an aesthetic of simplicity were the goals of *nouvelle cuisine* and were attained by Paul Bocuse and the Troisgros brothers, and joined immediately by a young group of chefs (Drouard, 2004).

But *nouvelle cuisine* did not necessarily replace a long culinary tradition. Instead, this type of cuisine was in essence a return to the cooking traditions of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, a return to the roots of French culinary art, and to popular regional dishes. This so called *nouvelle cuisine de terroir* created refined recipes by using local produce and techniques, showing that luxurious dishes could come from simple ingredients (Poulain & Neirinck, 2004).

How does "Ratatouille" fit into Gastronomy?

We have established an historical approach towards gastronomy, and will now see how *Ratatouille* is more than a movie about a rat who likes to cook. It is an illustration of what French gastronomy is and has been throughout hundreds of years, infused by cultural elements of contemporary France.

The setting of the action takes place in France, and more precisely in Paris, the gastronomical capital of France. "The best food in the world is made in France, the best food in France is made in Paris, and the best food in Paris some say is made by Chef Auguste Gusteau" (Walt Disney, 2007). Obviously, Rémy the rat ends up in Paris, stands on top of the building right in front of the late Gusteau's restaurant, the former five-star restaurant and whose façade is very similar to the three-star restaurant, Taillevent. However, unlike many restaurants of this level, there seems to be only one large dining room lacking a private salon, decorated in red with chandeliers, very much like Napoleon III's décor, representing power.

Eating in a three-star restaurant is a memorable culinary event. Without making a reservation, patrons are not guaranteed a seat, due to the strategically limited number of seats coupled with high demand. We observe that Gusteau's clientele is demanding, as are gastronomes, and are knowledgeable about food and wine. These regulars are tired of *foie gras* and soup; they want to try something different, something special, and something new created by the chef. Basically, they want to be surprised.

The food critic plays a major role in the gastronomic field and is well caricatured in the film. We see two different approaches, one being pleasant and paying compliments to the chef, like Solène Leclerc, a warm and positive person. The other, Anton Ego, is known and feared by everyone, and does not believe in giving people a second chance. For him, not everyone can cook.

Behind the Stage

Let us move to the kitchen where the culinary action takes place. This room is very inviting to anyone who loves to cook, illustrating practicality, modernism, and style. Several amazing cooking stations are all equipped with La Cornue style gas stoves in beautiful porcelain, enamel, and brass, a style very similar to the first 19th century heavy cast iron stoves. Representative of a great restaurant, there is an extensive collection of copper pots and pans as well as modern kitchen appliances. The cold storage is well stocked with fresh produce and can be locked when necessary. Finally, the kitchen floors are made of cabochon stones.

In terms of food, similar to the 19th and 20th centuries, refined produce is used, covering a variety of items. Based on the orders placed, we can guess what type of cuisine is prepared. We have the *Potage du jour* (made with leeks, mushroom, cream, herbs, and spices), the *salade composée* (fresh salad), *foie gras*, *filet mignon*, *brochet à la vapeur* (steamed northern pike), *saumon* (salmon), *coquilles St Jacques* (sea scallops), *sole meunière* (sole), *carré d'agneau* (loin of lamb), *soufflé*, *canard* (duck), *riz de veau* (veal thymus), *faisan* (pheasant), and *ratatouille*. Someone is also preparing *beurre blanc*, a true French sauce. Other preparations involve emmenthal cheese, beautiful fruits (grapes, pears, and lemons), asparagus, and caviar placed in the storage area. Our previous observations about culinary art indicate a classic culinary French repertoire, illustrating bourgeois cuisine (*foie gras, beef, agneau, canard, riz de veau*) as well as peasant cuisine (*ratatouille*), the

latter seemingly poorly fitting in this type of establishment. After all, *ratatouille* is a classic recipe that any good cook can prepare at home, using very basic ingredients.

However, we learn something about Gusteau's cuisine. As Colette mentioned, he always added something unexpected that adds a little twist and makes his dishes unique. According to him, "anyone can cook. But only the fearless can be great" (Walt Disney, 2007). Chef Gusteau illustrates that cooking requires talent, passion, and innovation. Interestingly, he represents both physically and spiritually the most iconic chef in France, Paul Bocuse.

As in any luxurious restaurant, the cellar is impressive with a collection of Bordeaux wines: a Pauillac Château Latour 1961, apparently the best vintage of the century and worth over 4,000 euros per bottle at present, and St Emilion grand cru Cheval Blanc 1947, the best vintage of the century, valued at 6,000 euros per bottle. Like Ego, Skinner orders a bottle with his meal, indicating a stack of bottles. Thanks to the Bordeaux wine official classification of 1855, Bordeaux wines became more popular and in demand, which explains why famous restaurants have the best vintages. We certainly cannot expect less than the best years in the best restaurant of Paris.

The movie also reveals the life of a chef, a masculine domain in which women are not welcome. Colette explains that: "Haute cuisine is an antiquated hierarchy built upon rules written by stupid old men. Rules designed to make it impossible for women to enter this world" (Walt Disney, 2007). In order to be where she is, Colette has worked very hard, memorized Gusteau's recipes and thus is able to prepare the classic repertoire people are requesting. However, she is missing the little touch (originality, creativity) that Rémy has and therefore she cannot be head chef in this kitchen. When expressing himself on television within the film, Chef Gusteau explains what it takes to become an excellent chef:

> You must be imaginative, strong hearted. You must try things that may not work. And you must not let anyone define your limits because of where you come from. Your only limit is your soul. What I say is true. Anyone can cook. But only the fearless can be great. (Walt Disney, 2007)

Based on what we have previously mentioned, to become a chef one has to learn from the past and then move on to show his or her creativity. It is also essential to want to please the guests and to create an effect around the table. According to Thomas Keller, chef-owner of the French Laundry restaurant in California and consultant chef for the movie *Ratatouille*, the philosophy of a great meal is to make it memorable, paying attention to detail from the very beginning until the end.

> In the end, a great meal is not about the food and the wine. A great meal is an emotional experience. We try to make it an extraordinary one by creating a beautiful place, one filled with staff who care about it as they do about their home, and care for you as the most important guest in it. Our chefs are obsessive about the culinary details and fundamental techniques that are the foundation of an exciting culinary imagination and a kitchen that delivers the very best products of the earth to the table. No detail or element can be less important or more important than another. Because a

great meal is not one that fills you up. A great meal is a kind of journey that returns you to sources of pleasures you may have forgotten and takes you to places you haven't been before. (The French Laundry restaurant, 2008)

It is with these lines that we can understand the meaning of the ratatouille dish. After watching the movie, many people did not understand why Rémy decided to fix a ratatouille for Ego. At first, the ratatouille dish seems awkward because we associate it with ordinary peasant food, a vegetable stew that is aesthetically unattractive. Like us, even Colette is surprised to see that Rémy insists on serving it. However, when we think about its taste, it is an extraordinary preparation full of simple flavors. But as we know, Rémy is gifted and understands culinary art well. He wants to serve something simple, which when well prepared becomes memorable. Indeed, when Ego fell off his bike as a child, his mother offered him ratatouille to comfort him, a familiar dish that is not well arranged but is very flavorful. Without knowing it, Rémy provoked pleasant childhood memories for Ego, like Marcel Proust and his madeleine cake. As Keller said, "a great meal is an emotional and memorable experience" (The French Laundry restaurant, 2008). No doubt it was.

In conclusion, *Ratatouille* retraces the culinary past of France, with the strong tradition of gastronomic restaurants, the rigorous training chefs undergo, and the creativity they must have. It took decades for gastronomy to be recognized as an art, and now more than ever it is. Clientele create demand and in order to satisfy them, every thing must be perfect from the moment they enter to the moment they leave. It is the chef's goal to make this experience unforgettable. Working "back stage" (in the kitchen) is physically very demanding, and everyone is always aiming for perfection. As Keller says: "When you acknowledge as you must, that there is no such thing as perfect food, only the idea of it, then the real purpose of striving toward perfection becomes clear: to make people happy. That's what cooking is all about." (The French Laundry restaurant, 2008) Still, *Ratatouille* also represents the negative sides of the cooking profession in the food processing industry, with its tasteless pre-packaged products, and in the harsh food critic. Let us not forget that Gusteau lost a star and then died, perhaps a subtle allusion to Chef Bernard Loiseau's death. But Gusteau was right; anyone can cook, as long as they have passion. Rémy was able to prove his passion and was given the chance to become a great chef. Everyone deserves a second chance.

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200