

# Touch the World

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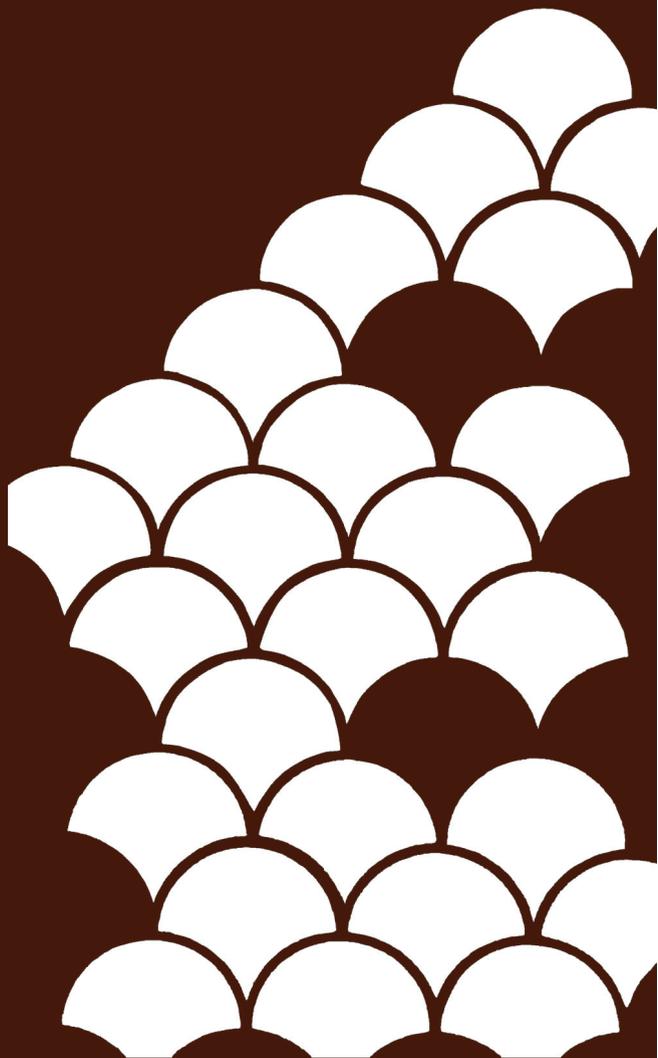
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2012 Report of the  
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages



# **Touch the World**

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**Selected Papers from the 2012  
Central States Conference on the Teaching of  
Foreign Languages**

**Tatiana Sildus, Editor**  
Pittsburg State University (KS)

**2012 Report of the  
Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**

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that the article (1) be published in its current form, (2) be published after specific revisions have been made, or (3) not be published.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

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## Preface

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### Touch the World

The 2012 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages focused on ways to integrate culture into every facet of the World Language classroom. As educators, we were reminded of the importance of recognizing the cultural spark that ignited our passion to teach and share world languages with future generations. At the same time, we examined a variety of strategies and opportunities that are available to us through both physical and digital media to ignite the same fire in our students. More than 250 presenters at the 2012 conference shared their genius with us through sessions and workshops over the course of the three days. From our joint venture with the Wisconsin FLESFEST to our support from the national language organizations, our professional development offerings ranged from pre-kindergarten to university with themes from advocacy to technology.

The 2012 Keynote speaker was Mrs. Linda Mornell, who was inspired by the inter-cultural and linguistic experiences that impacted her own children. She is the founder of National Summer Search, which is a non-profit organization providing scholarships to high-ability, low-income students. With powerful multimedia and supporting facts about student triumphs, she motivated the attendees to crave more enlightening cultural experiences for their students. Her message reminded our attendees of the impact they can have in changing the lives of students through world language instruction.

Throughout the 2012 *Report*, the authors have contributed a variety of articles to this publication. These scholars discussed how technology ties into the instruction of culture in the classroom and connecting students to the world. Teacher development and community involvement are also topics included that will help all of the readers make connections with the world and the plethora of cultures all around us. With great fortune, the 2012 *Report* addresses all levels of instruction from kindergarten to university to give the readers of this volume the highest possibility of making a connection with the articles so that they may be able to infuse the newfound knowledge into their own classrooms.

With the full range of articles, complemented by the variety of session topics and styles, it is our sincere desire that you have been touched by this volume of the *Report*. We hope that it will fill you with the ideas and inspiration to reach out to your students and ignite the passion that will create a lifetime of memories intertwined with cultural understanding and linguistic exploration.

Jill Woerner  
2012 Program Chair



# Making the World a Better Place

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## **Tatiana Sildus**

Pittsburg State University (KS)

Our world is changing very rapidly. No matter where we live, we are now more aware of becoming interdependent, and multilingual communication plays a bigger role in our lives. What does this mean for the language teaching profession? This volume attempts to answer this question, and the following points reflect its message to the readers. As language educators, we need to emphasize linguistic and cultural proficiency to prepare students who are not only capable of interacting with others in their native languages, but who can also function in a different cultural environment. Language and culture are inseparable, and we need to design instructional activities that connect language and culture in a meaningful way. Also, effective intercultural communication implies cross-cultural understanding, and students need to be aware of the complex nature of culture in order to appreciate different perspectives and points of view. Reflection that involves critical thinking and comparisons is a crucial step towards this understanding. Moreover, technology has made the process of communication more efficient and provided numerous opportunities for enriching foreign language instruction. Furthermore, preparing linguistically and culturally proficient students is a challenging task. To accomplish this task, teachers need regular professional development opportunities to stay abreast of current effective instructional strategies and methodologies. Finally, reaching out and communicating in other languages to serve the needs of different communities at home and abroad can also benefit the learners and help them become responsible global citizens. Languages do make a difference.

## **Helping Local Communities**

The articles in this section focus on Service Learning and Civic Engagement. In the opening article, **Angelika Kraemer** and **Theresa Schenker** discuss the importance of early language learning for all children and showcase the Community Language School at Michigan State University, which offers community-based language and culture programs for pre-K-12 students, including academic courses for preschoolers, elementary and middle school students, culture events, and language summer camps. The program not only helps children to learn languages from native speakers, but also encourages high school and undergraduate students to serve their community. To identify and meet the needs of local communities and engage students in active learning, **Marie Hertzler** advocates for service learning as a pedagogical tool for language teachers. The author shares the results of a survey administered to K-16 language educators in her state, summarizes best

practices and offers guidelines for teachers interested in implementing service learning, including a variety of sample projects.

### **Analyzing Cultural Perspectives**

The next group of articles relates to the topics of awareness of cultural biases and openness to learning about other cultures. **Deborah Page, Ruth Benander,** and **Jody Ballah** analyze the relationship between the concepts of cultural humility and cultural competence and encourage foreign language educators to incorporate the perspective of cultural humility as a curriculum component. The authors suggest that the practice of cultural humility can be structured explicitly and used as a foundation for more meaningful and effective acquisition of cultural competence. Data from several study-abroad programs was examined with the purpose of modifying reflection assignments to foster critical thinking and learn cultural expectations for behavior and language use. Study abroad experience is also a mandatory component for the Certificate of Competence in Language and Culture, introduced in **Marc Cadd's** article. The two parts of the certificate, cultural and linguistic, allow students to take advantage of the immersion environment, improve their linguistic proficiency, and participate in discussions on global topics based on first-hand knowledge and experiences. The certificate is a way to recognize student achievement in the programs unable to offer majors or minors.

### **Building Intercultural and Linguistic Competence with Technology**

This group of articles deals with integrating technology into language instruction to provide a wide variety of tools for teaching the new generation of students. **Oxana Dema** and **Aleidine Moeller** summarize research and pedagogical practices for teaching culture in the digital environment. The article looks at the way of teaching culture through the integration of media and inquiry learning, to create a rich environment for building intercultural awareness through students' own understanding of products, practices, and perspectives. The authors also review the articles that describe more traditional methods of teaching culture and demonstrate how they can be enhanced with technology. Although some teachers may find the new and constantly evolving technology overwhelming, **Tabitha Miller** suggests that teachers need not fear technology and shares practical ideas from her own classroom on implementing low- to no-cost simple communication and presentation tools. She encourages teachers to bring culture and language into their classrooms in new and creative ways. The article by **Carolina Bustamante, Sheri Hurlbut,** and **Aleidine Moeller** adds applications of Web 2.0 technologies to the collection of available free tools for foreign language classrooms, with Internet access as the only technical requirement. The authors contribute examples of standards-based tasks, in which students create authentic products and integrate all three modes of communication in an engaging learning environment. Each

activity begins with a brief description and includes the Web 2.0 technology involved, as well as examples, step-by-step instructions, and rubrics.

### **Learning Together in Professional Communities**

The last group of articles provides examples of how teachers can learn together and support each other, and how professional growth can be enhanced through peer collaboration. **Chinatsu Bachmann**'s article describes a teacher study group and its role in promoting change in teacher beliefs and practices. The ethnographic case study focuses on one relatively new language teacher and documents her professional transformation, as she reflects on her own teaching and finds encouragement and support in the collegial learning community. **Stephanie Dhonau** and **Rosalie Cheatham** emphasize the importance of backward design for enhancing student performance and potentially increasing student enrollment in advanced language courses. Together with their colleagues, the authors created a series of professional development workshops for K-12 teachers. The university team introduced a model that connects backward design, integrated performance assessment, and the 5Cs and uses technology as a mediating tool for enduring learning. The participants utilized a wiki for editing and collaborating.

The editor is grateful to the authors for sharing their ideas in this volume and to the members of the editorial board for their time and expertise.



# 1

## Reaching all learners through community-based language programs

Angelika N. Kraemer

Theresa Schenker

Michigan State University

### Abstract

Research documents that learning languages early holds many personal, academic, and professional benefits, yet many students in the U.S. do not start to learn foreign languages until high school. Service-learning and civic engagement programs, which have been shown to advance students' attainment of academic learning outcomes and allow participants to enhance their own language, intercultural, and teaching skills, are one way to involve students in addition to their formal schooling. This article discusses the importance of early language learning and introduces the Community Language School (CLS) at Michigan State University, which offers community-based language and culture programs for pre-K-12 students. Different program types are highlighted, including academic courses for preschoolers, elementary and middle school students, culture events, and language summer camps. The programs allow learners of different ages to connect with other cultures and touch the world by interacting with native speakers instead of simply learning about languages and cultures from a textbook. Additionally, the article describes how high school and undergraduate students are provided service-learning opportunities as part of CLS programs.

### Early Language Learning

**E**conomic and immigration trends indicate that future global citizens need linguistic and intercultural competencies among other crucial skill sets (Goertler & Kraemer, 2008). This need is also underscored by the Standards

for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999):

Language and communication are at the heart of the human experience. The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad. This imperative envisions a future in which ALL students will develop and maintain proficiency in English and at least one other language, modern or classical. (p. 7)

While many students in the U.S. begin learning a foreign language in high school, programmatic offerings are lacking at lower levels, where research shows such programs have the highest impact. According to a national survey on foreign language teaching in the U.S. conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (Rhodes & Pufahl, 2010), the percentage of high schools offering foreign languages (91%) has not changed much from 1997 to 2008. However, language offerings at the middle-school level saw a decrease from 75% to 58%, and at the elementary level they dropped from 31% to 25%. Similar results were revealed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in its 2000 report on foreign language enrollments (Draper & Hicks, 2002). These numbers stand in stark contrast to Europe, where compulsory teaching of foreign languages begins in primary schools and most EU member states expect students to learn two or more languages throughout their secondary education years (Eurydice, 2009).

Early exposure to languages is especially important because learners can achieve higher levels of proficiency, and the learning process can be easier. A recent study by Garcia-Sierra et al. (2011) suggests that bilingual and monolingual infants “show a different timetable for developmental change, with bilingual infants remaining ‘open’ to the effects of language experience longer than monolingual infants, a highly adaptive response to the increased variability of language input that bilingual infants experience” (p. 11). This finding indicates that exposure to languages early on has positive effects on brain development, which is also supported by the work of Werker and her colleagues (e.g., Byers-Heinlein, Burns, & Werker, 2010; Weikum et al., 2007; Werker, Byers-Heinlein, & Fennell, 2009). Second language acquisition research suggests that native-like proficiency, particularly in the area of phonology, may be extremely difficult to achieve when the language is first introduced at a later age (e.g., Hyltenstam & Abrahamson, 2003; Moyer, 2004; Singleton & Ryan, 2004). Also, children’s lower levels of inhibition allow them to be more open-minded to things that are new and different, and coupled with their natural enthusiasm, make them receptive to foreign languages and learning about new cultures. In other words, the age of onset of language study is the most crucial factor influencing ultimate attainment, which means that the earlier children are exposed to other languages, the better their command of the language will be.

There are also a variety of general benefits of language learning, which can be grouped into three areas: personal, academic, and professional benefits. Personal benefits range from language and culture knowledge to aspects of increased

awareness, openness, and flexibility (Bateman, 2002; Domínguez & Pessoa, 2005; Simard & Wong, 2004). On a health-related note, recent studies from Canada showed evidence that bilingualism has a protective effect in delaying the onset of dementia by four years on average, compared to people who are monolingual (Bialystok, Craik, & Freedman, 2007; Craik, Bialystok, & Freedman, 2010). Academic benefits range from improved school performance and higher SAT scores to superior problem-solving skills and a competitive advantage at college application time (e.g., Curtain & Dahlberg, 2004; Horn & Kojaku, 2001; The College Board, 2011). Professional benefits range from employment advantages to higher wages, especially in the military (e.g., Grosse, 2004). In sum, previous research supports the assumption that early language learning provides not only personal enrichment and benefits, but it is also associated with advanced linguistic and cultural competence.

### **Community Language School**

In order to address the lack of early language programs, the Community Language School (CLS) at Michigan State University was founded in 2008 as part of the Center for Language Teaching Advancement within the College of Arts and Letters. The rationale for establishing CLS was fourfold: (1) a recent high school graduation mandate requiring two years of foreign language study during K-12; (2) budget cuts affecting public schools and diminishing language offerings at all levels; (3) a state-wide language requirement of advanced-low proficiency for K-12 language teachers and the need for additional practice for many teacher candidates to achieve this required proficiency level; and (4) limited foreign language offerings at the elementary level, where research suggests language instruction is most successful.

The Community Language School grew out of various enrichment programs at area elementary schools that had been offered by individual faculty members from the university language departments. The initial pilot program in German took place in 2002 at a local elementary school with a diverse student population. The primary goal was to share the German heritage of a second grader, the son of the program leader, with his peers. Local parents requested continuing opportunities for their children to learn languages and develop cultural awareness. In order to open the programs to as many children as possible, weekly classes were moved to the university campus. Bridge programs were added to continue learning throughout the summer, and programming eventually grew to include younger and older learners.

The Community Language School provides community-based pre-K-12 language and culture programs and also offers service-learning opportunities for upper high school and undergraduate students. The learning opportunities include enrichment programs at area elementary schools, culture events on and off campus, weekly academic classes for preschoolers, elementary, middle, and high school students on campus, language summer camps on campus, and professional development workshops for teachers. The language offerings vary depending on the program and currently include Arabic, Chinese, French,

#### 4 *Touch the World*

German, Hausa, Hindi/Urdu, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Uzbek. The CLS programs strive to enrich the lives of all participants (including children, parents, teachers, administrators, and university students), to expose them to new languages and cultures through interactions with native speakers, and to give them the chance to touch the world without the need to travel the globe. The CLS instructors are native speakers of the languages and include faculty members, graduate students, and community members who receive training in how to teach young learners. Undergraduate students and upper grade high school students serve as assistants and gain valuable teaching practice while applying their knowledge in the classroom.

The mission of the Community Language School is to raise global citizens who are competitive in the job market through demonstrated foreign language proficiency and who appreciate diversity and different cultures. The program goals are outlined below.

- Create community awareness about the importance of early language acquisition and appreciation for other cultures.
- Introduce children to language learning and motivate them to achieve at least minimal language proficiency.
- Offer alternative learning and teaching opportunities.
- Provide a training venue for pre- and in-service teachers and those interested in a career in foreign language teaching.
- Offer community volunteers new opportunities for using languages.

With the exception of the enrichment programs at area schools that mostly take place during lunch, the CLS programs are extracurricular after school activities. Keeping long school days in mind, the programs engage all students and take into consideration different learner styles, types, and domains. Through real-life tasks, such as visits to the campus museums and the dairy store, student learning is connected to the university community. The lessons include language and culture components with interactive activities, tied to the K-12 curriculum wherever possible. Additional information and online resources for parents allow families to continue practicing at home between lessons.

This article describes five on-campus programs in more detail. Each section includes a sample lesson from the German program that will allow readers to replicate or adapt the ideas.

##### *Languages for Elementary Kids*

*Languages for Elementary Kids* is a weekly academic program for children ages seven to 12 that meets for 60-90 minutes in the early evening on campus. It is the oldest and largest CLS program and is currently offered in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Hindi/Urdu, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish. Class size is limited to eight students, and concurrent sections are offered for most languages to accommodate students of different age groups and proficiency levels. Some participating students, especially in the less commonly taught languages such as Arabic and Hindi/Urdu, have background knowledge in the language or are

heritage learners. Most of the students, however, are new to the language they choose, and they usually stay in the program for a number of semesters.

The language classes are taught primarily in the target language and focus on all language skills (speaking, listening, writing, and reading). Since the sessions take place after long school days, the classes introduce language and cultural concepts in playful ways, incorporating authentic language games, songs, and hands-on activities. All materials are specifically prepared for each section to address the individual levels and interests of the learners. At an open house at the end of each semester, students in each class share with their parents what they have learned. The following activities illustrate a typical lesson in the upper-level German for Elementary Kids section for children with previous knowledge of the language (see Appendix A for the lesson plan).

The topic of the lesson is *Mein Zimmer* [my room]. First, students are shown pictures of typical objects from the bedroom, such as *das Bett, der Schrank, der Schreibtisch, der Stuhl, das Regal* [the bed, the closet, the desk, the chair, the shelf]. The children use visuals to practice identifying the objects. Then, they practice writing the new words by labeling furniture items on a worksheet depicting a room. Next, the children draw their own rooms with the objects in them. The older children in class are also asked to label each object in their room in German, while the younger children, who are still learning to write in their first language, only have to draw the objects. To reinforce the words, the children are asked to describe their rooms by using simple sentences such as: *Das ist das Bett.* [This is the bed.] *Das ist der Schrank.* [This is the closet.]. Next, the children learn the words *links, rechts, oben, unten* [left, right, on the top, on the bottom] to help describe where objects are located in their pictures. The learners work in groups of two, and the partners take turns describing their rooms and drawing their partners' rooms after they hear the partners' descriptions. The children construct simple sentences such as: *Der Schreibtisch ist links unten. Die Lampe ist rechts oben.* [The desk is on the bottom left. The lamp is on the top right.]. After that, the partners check if the drawings are correct. As the last activity of the lesson, the class plays Pictionary. One child draws one of the newly learned objects on the board, and the other children have to guess in German what it is. In the following class session, the students review the objects in the room by creating their *Traumzimmer* [dream room] on a poster board. To do this, they choose and cut out pictures of furniture from various store advertisements, decorate their posters with the clippings, and then describe their dream room.

### *Languages for Teens*

Once the *Languages for Elementary Kids* participants become teenagers, they transition to *Languages for Teens*. There is not always a need for offering language classes for teens, because many students at that age enroll in language classes at their high schools. However, because of program cuts or unavailability of certain languages at different high schools, the Community Language School fills these gaps by offering language classes for older learners.

The *German for Teens* class deals with topics covered in regular German high school courses and meets twice a week for 60 minutes. The focus in the teen course is on developing speaking skills and writing competence, while also improving listening comprehension and grammar knowledge. Different online media, such as video clips, audio examples, and online language exercises, are incorporated. The online interactive German course *Deutsch Interaktiv* [Interactive German] on the website for *Die Deutsche Welle* [German Wave, the German Public Radio] (Deutsche Welle, 2011) is particularly useful. *Deutsch Interaktiv* is a valuable resource in combination with other teaching materials for in-class language practice, where student use is supervised. The online program follows the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001) and is ideal for giving the students (and parents) an idea of their current level of German and documenting their progress at the same time.

#### *Languages for Preschoolers*

*Languages for Preschoolers* is the most recent addition to the courses currently offered at the CLS. In the spring of 2011, a four-week trial run of *German for Preschoolers* began when six children ranging in age from 18 months to four years were admitted. Some of the children had prior experience with German, while others had never been in contact with the language. Parents were invited to learn together with their children. The class met on campus once a week for 60 minutes in a carpeted room, from which all tables had been removed, so that the children could run around and play freely. Instead of sitting in the chairs at a table, the group gathered on the carpet in a circle, which was more appropriate for the young language learners.

The class was conducted completely in German and was structured around games, crafts, and songs. Each class also focused on a specific topic. For the first four weeks, the primary topics were animals and colors. The four-week trial run was a success, and it led to an extension of the class throughout the remainder of the semester. The topics of body parts and Easter were added. The minimum age requirement was changed to three years because of the considerable developmental gap between the 18-month-old child and the other children in the class. German for Preschoolers is now a regular component of the CLS programming, and the program was expanded with the addition of Spanish in the fall of 2011. Each group can accommodate six children ranging in age from three to five years.

The primary goal of *Languages for Preschoolers* is to introduce children to the target language and culture by speaking in the target language throughout the entire class. The children are immersed in the language and get used to its sounds, while learning to say simple phrases. The focus of the class is on listening and speaking, supported by visual cues. During the regular snack break, for example, the children quickly learn the meaning of *Bitte* [please] and *Danke* [thank you] and repeat the words easily. A sample preschool lesson on body parts is described below (see Appendix B for the lesson plan).

The students sit in a circle and review the body parts introduced during the previous lesson. The lead instructor shows different parts of the body on a stuffed

animal, asking the children to name the parts. If the children do not offer any words, the instructor helps by saying: *Ist das das Bein?* [Is this the leg?], *Ist das der Kopf?* [Is this the head?], etc. As with all activities, the instructor offers the correct words many times: *Ja, das ist der Fuß! Schau? Der Fuß!* [Yes, this is the foot! See? The foot!]. Once all body parts are identified on the stuffed animal, each child gets to pick a stuffed animal from a bag. The group then uses a premade body part die. One child gets to roll the die, then everyone says the name of the body part that was rolled, and everyone shows the body part on a stuffed animal. Between turns, the instructor also asks questions about the children's body parts, such as *Und wo ist dein Zeh?* [And where is your toe?]. After all the body parts have been sufficiently practiced, the words are reviewed and applied in a song. The song *Lied über mich* [Song about Me] (Rosin, 2008) is a German children's song that includes naming many body parts and also reviews some animals.

To introduce this song, the instructor prepares a storybook that includes all the song lyrics with pictures that follow the storyline, so parents can sing along together with their children. First, the children listen to the story and focus on the pictures. Then, the instructor plays the song and points to the pictures in the storybook. In the second round, the instructor encourages the children to try to sing along, pointing to the various parts on their own bodies. The song is quite catchy, and the preschoolers enjoy learning new songs, especially when they can dance or point. The game of bingo, which the instructor prepares specifically for the young learners, is played after the song. Instead of numbers, the game boards contain pictures of body parts. If the children have the picture of the body part that is being called out, they place a sticker on the board. This game is easily understood even by young language learners. With a smaller game board (3×3×3 or 2×2 squares), the game is not too difficult for them, and it keeps them interested. To allow different children to win, the game is usually played for several rounds. For the last activity, the instructor and the undergraduate assistant draw the outline of each child on butcher paper. Each child uses the outline to draw a face with eyes, a mouth, ears, and a nose to review parts of the face. These pictures are hung up in the room, so the children can show them to their parents. They sing the body parts song one more time with the parents, before going home for the day.

*German for Preschoolers* has been highly successful and will be expanded to languages beyond German and Spanish. The ease with which the young children acquire new words and accept instruction entirely in a foreign language attests to the benefits of starting foreign language instruction as early as possible.

### *Culture Events*

Saturday Culture Events at Community Language School focus on different cultures with only minimal language instruction. Interested children of all ages are introduced to specific cultural events from a variety of cultures, which take place at approximately the same time. For the German culture events, for example, the CLS invites children to celebrate *Fasching* [carnival] in February, learn about the first day of school in September, or celebrate *Martinstag* [St. Martin's Day] in November. During these two-hour events, the CLS instructors and volunteers

introduce children to specific aspects of the target culture through stories, games, crafts, and songs and teach them simple phrases in the target language at the same time. Halfway through the event, an authentic snack is served to the children, and they leave with a treat to take home. Parents are encouraged to stay and learn with their children.

Culture events generally begin with a brief language unit teaching children to say hello, followed by an introduction via a poster board with many pictures. For the *Fasching* [carnival] event, children are encouraged to come dressed in their Halloween costumes. Seeing pictures of the German children dressed up and hearing about the activities associated with *Fasching*, such as collecting candy, fosters cross-cultural connections. The activities include making German carnival masks and decorations, learning chants for the parade, playing traditional carnival games, face painting, and coloring activities (see Appendix C for the lesson plan). For the authentic snack, children eat *Berliner* [jelly-filled donuts] and drink *Apfelschorle* [apple juice mixed with carbonated water]. In the end, the children participate in a parade through the hallways and catch candy thrown to them by their parents. Each child also receives a *Fasching* medal, depicting the masks from different German carnival guilds.

To provide more varied exposure to different cultures, multicultural events are offered once a semester. During such events, as many as three different cultures are being introduced at the same time. International students and scholars from the university are eager to share their heritage with children and families from the community and make their home cultures come alive through stories, traditional clothing, and artifacts.

### *Language Summer Camps*

Week-long summer camps are offered for a variety of languages to provide continuous learning opportunities between the spring and fall *Languages for Elementary Kids* classes. The camps run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with morning-only options, and are open to children ages six to 12. For five days, children are invited to learn new facets of a language, explore a different culture, interact with other children interested in foreign languages, and connect their learning with campus resources, such as museums, botanical gardens, or the dairy store. All camps are theme based. The most recent German camps, for example, dealt with *Sport, Spiel, Spaß* [sports, games, fun], *Die Welt Erich Kästners* [The world of Erich Kästner, (a popular children's book author)], and *Reise ins Märchenland* [Trip to the Fairytale Land]. The mornings generally focus on introducing new language concepts and cultural information. The afternoons are dedicated to outside activities and games that review the new vocabulary or correspond in some way to the cultural pieces introduced in the mornings. Throughout the camp, children learn a variety of games and songs from the target culture. In addition, they make crafts and practice speaking, reading, and writing in the target language. At the end of the camp, the parents are invited for a brief show and tell, and the children present what they have learned in the form of a skit, song, or a poster. Because camps usually include children of different proficiency levels, students are split

into groups based on their prior language knowledge for some of the activities. The following describes a typical morning at the German camp, where the topic centers on what German children do in their free time.

The second day of the camp is dedicated to talking about music (see Appendix D for the lesson plan). After all participants arrive, the first 30 minutes are spent playing general ‘get to know each other’ games, which enable children to learn each other’s names and become more comfortable with each another. Then, the topic of the day is introduced. A simple PowerPoint presentation shows a variety of typical instruments, such as *Geige*, *Cello*, *Klavier*, *Querflöte* [violin, cello, piano, flute]. After each instrument is shown, the students practice saying the words in complete sentences: *Das ist die Geige*. [This is the violin.]. Then, the instructors and assistants model asking questions, such as *Spielst du Geige?* [Do you play the violin?], and the children ask their partners whether they play the instrument in question. Thus, the children learn how to ask whether someone plays a specific instrument and also learn to answer this question. These declarative and interrogative structures can later be easily transferred to other topics. After a variety of instruments are introduced, students learn to ask and answer the question *Spielst du ein Instrument?* [Do you play an instrument?].

Then the students engage in a review activity called *Instrumente-Autogramm jagd* [instrument signature hunt]. Each child receives a worksheet with these three columns: ‘name,’ ‘favorite instrument,’ and ‘instrument you play.’ They go around the room, interviewing their classmates. Once the interviewers have recorded all answers on their worksheets, the interviewees sign their partners’ worksheets. The instructor and assistants first model the activity by saying *Wie heißt du? Was ist dein Lieblingsinstrument? Spielst du ein Instrument?* [What is your name? What is your favorite instrument? Do you play an instrument?].

In the next step, the students are introduced to the German song *Wenn der Pott aber nun ein Loch hat* [What if the pot had a hole] (Solomons, 2009). The song is the origin of the popular American folksong *There’s a Hole in my Bucket* and lends itself well to performing with children, because it consists of a male part and a female part. The class is split into two groups (the boys and the girls), and the groups practice their respective parts. The class also spends some time making props for the song, because this song will be performed for the parents at the end of the camp. Once the props are made and the parts rehearsed, the groups sing the song together. This concludes the morning program for the second day; the afternoon is spent doing a variety of activities connected to the music theme, such as making musical instruments and playing Pictionary.

### Service-Learning Opportunities

Service-learning, in contrast to mere volunteering, consists of deliberately planned and supervised activities that reinforce academic course content through community involvement (Gascoigne, 2001). Service-learning presents an opportunity to discover a new, professional environment (Grim, 2010). As indicated above, the Community Language School programs are generally taught by native speakers or highly proficient graduate students. All programs offer

service-learning opportunities for a number of undergraduate and advanced high school students. The student assistants have a major or a minor in a foreign language. In addition, they have a general interest in teacher education.

The tasks for the assistants differ and depend on their personal expectations and experiences. Some assistants help with general classroom management, while others prepare worksheets, activities, or lesson plans, provide one-on-one help, and co-teach classes. The lead instructors supervise the assistants, whose participation is a vital part of the program success. By participating in the programs, the assistants gain more exposure to foreign languages. They interact with native speakers, have many opportunities to deepen their knowledge of the target culture, and gain experience in teaching and classroom management. Many of the assistants return each semester and take on more responsibility in the classroom.

In an effort to expand the service-learning opportunities to include the target cultures, the CLS has added teaching internships abroad. The goal is to maximize participants' acquisition of linguistic and intercultural skills in an immersion setting and at the same time provide practical training in teaching. The teaching internships are offered as part of the university's study abroad program, and acceptance into the internship is competitive. Participating students spend three to six weeks at secondary schools in the target countries at the end of the spring semester. Internship placements are currently offered in Germany and Spain; other countries will be added in the future. The internship programs aim to create opportunities for students to compare and contrast the educational systems and teaching methodologies, obtain first-hand teaching experience, and increase language proficiency. Furthermore, it seeks to enhance students' understanding of the target culture and to encourage a more complex engagement with the language and its native speakers. This experience changes the learning process from learning about another language and culture from the outside to a more participatory experience as a language user. The interns are directly connected with the target community and provide a service to their host schools. Homestays play an important role in the total immersion experience.

The internship offers participants a variety of learning opportunities:

- Interns examine differences between the educational systems of the U.S. and the target culture through observation, discussion, and critical reflection.
- Interns improve language proficiency, language learning strategies, and cross-cultural communication competencies in a total immersion environment.
- Interns gain valuable language teaching practice at the secondary level in teaching English as a foreign language.
- Interns form partnerships with in-service teachers and obtain feedback on their teaching strategies and methodologies.
- Interns utilize technology in an ongoing analysis of their experience.

The program is designed as an independent study. The interns keep a blog to reflect on their learning and teaching experiences and use their writing and reading skills in the target language. The supervising university faculty member provides regular comments on the content (publicly on the blog) and on the language (privately via email and through voice recordings, using the *Rich Internet Applications* developed by the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR, 2011), to provide students with additional listening comprehension practice). The interns also use Flip Cameras to document their experience abroad and to stream video samples of their teaching. In addition, the students podcast reflective commentaries on their teaching. This allows participating students to utilize cutting-edge technology tools for effective language education, which they can later employ in their own teaching. As a final project, the students compile an ePortfolio of their internship experience that is reflective of their teaching and their improved language skills.

### **Suggestions for Starting Community Language Programs**

The Community Language School programs were introduced with the goal of encouraging others to adapt these kinds of learning opportunities to their own specific needs and available resources. The following suggestions may be helpful to readers who are interested in replicating the programs described in this article.

- It is advisable to start with one program and/or one language and expand to other programs and languages, once the initial program has been firmly established.
- A good system of feedback from participants, instructors, and volunteers is essential to ensure the quality of all programs. This also helps to identify areas of improvement or potential needs for new or different course offerings.
- Regular meetings with the instructors and volunteers across programs and languages are a good way to share ideas and teaching tips and create a system of communication and support.
- International students studying in the area, as well as high school exchange students are often eager to share their cultures and languages and can be a tremendous asset to a program.

In the future, the CLS at Michigan State University plans to enhance its course offerings in a variety of ways. The preschool classes will be expanded to include a wider variety of languages, based on community demand and availability of instructors. *Languages for Elementary Kids* and *Languages for Teens* will also continue to include more languages. Another course that is currently in the planning stages is English as a second language for children of various ages. In addition, adult language classes will be offered concurrently with children's classes, so parents can learn at the same time as their children. It is the goal of the CLS to bring languages and cultures to the community in a variety of ways and to accommodate the interests of the community.

Through its various offerings, the Community Language School and Michigan State University work together to make language and culture learning available to all children and families in the community. By offering a variety of different programs, the CLS contributes to raising global citizens and preparing children for the unique needs of living in a multicultural and increasingly interconnected world.

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## Appendix A

### *German for Elementary Kids Sample Lesson Plan*

**Topic:** Objects in my room

**Language Goal:**

1. Identify objects in the room (particularly objects in the bedroom).
2. Describe the room to other children.
3. Label objects in the room.

**Key Vocabulary:**

*Bett, Schrank, Schreibtisch, Stuhl, Teppich, Lampe, Regal, Buch, Fenster, links, rechts, oben, unten* [bed, closet, desk, chair, rug, lamp, shelf, book, window, left, right, on the top, on the bottom]

*Das ist \_\_\_\_.* [This is \_\_\_\_.]

**Materials:**

Pictures of objects in the room, worksheet to label objects, blank paper, crayons, pencils, chalk

**Procedure:**

1. Welcome children and review some general questions including *Wie heißt du? Wie alt bist du? Hast du Geschwister?* [What is your name? How old are you? Do you have siblings?].
2. Introduce objects in the room:
  - a. Show pictures of objects in the room and ask what they are, repeating and reinforcing the words.
  - b. Have each child pick a picture from the instructor and say what it is.
3. Review objects in the room:
  - a. Have children fill out a worksheet to practice labeling objects in the room.
  - b. Have children draw their room on a blank piece of paper.
  - c. Have children label the objects on their drawings.
4. Practice talking about the room:
  - a. Have students identify the objects in their room in simple declarative sentences. Model the activity first.

- b. Teach students how to say *links, rechts, oben, unten* [left, right, on the top, on the bottom].
  - c. Have students work in pairs, where one child in each pair describes his/her room using the directional words while the other child tries to draw the partner's room. Model the activity first.
  - d. Switch roles and have partners describe their rooms.
5. Play Pictionary:
- a. Hand each child a picture card with one of the objects on it, and ask the child to draw it on the board. Have other students guess which object it is.
  - b. Give every child the chance to draw at least one object.

## Appendix B

### German for Preschoolers Sample Lesson Plan

**Topic:** Body parts

**Language Goal:**

1. Identify body parts on a stuffed animal upon hearing the German names.
2. Identify own body parts in German.
3. Sing a song about body parts.

**Key Vocabulary:**

*Fuß, Bein, Zeh, Knie, Bauch, Po, Kopf, Kinn, Mund, Nase, Ohren, Augen* [foot, leg, toe, knee, stomach, bottom, head, chin, mouth, nose, ears, eyes]

*Ist das \_\_\_\_? Das ist \_\_\_\_.* [Is this \_\_\_\_? This is \_\_\_\_.]

**Materials:**

Animal and body parts songs on YouTube (use audio only), stuffed animals, body parts die, storybooks created by the instructor, bingo cards, stickers, butcher paper, crayons

**Procedure:**

1. Welcome children and sing the animal song from last week (Neuhaus, 2011).
2. Review body parts:
  - a. Show body parts on a stuffed animal and ask what they are, repeating and reinforcing the words.
  - b. Let each child pick a stuffed animal from the sack.
  - c. Have children roll the body parts die, repeat the word, and ask them to show the body parts on their stuffed animals.
3. Introduce the body parts song (Rosin, 2008):
  - a. Read the storybook with children, pointing to the pictures.
  - b. Play the song and model pointing to the body parts.
  - c. Play the song and sing along.

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4. Take a snack break.
5. Play the body parts bingo:
  - a. Hand each child a game card. Roll the body parts die, and distribute stickers to those children who have the body part that was rolled on their card.
  - b. Play several times so that different children get to call 'bingo'.
6. Sing the body parts song again.
7. Make a paper craft:
  - a. Have each child lie down on butcher paper; trace the outline on paper.
  - b. Have children draw their eyes, ears, mouth, and color the picture. Then have them point to the body parts: *Wo sind die Augen? Wo sind die Ohren?* [Where are the eyes? Where are the ears?] etc. Give each child only one crayon at first to draw the face. Then let them color freely.
  - c. Sing the body parts song one last time and say goodbye. Make sure children take their storybooks home.

### Appendix C

#### *German Culture Event Sample Lesson Plan*

**Topic:** German *Fasching* [carnival]

**Culture Goal:**

1. Learn how to say hello in German.
2. Learn about *Fasching* in Germany.
3. Play German *Fasching* games and make German *Fasching* crafts.
4. Participate in the *Fasching* parade.

**Materials:**

Vocabulary poster with basic greetings, a soft ball, *Fasching* poster, the history of *Fasching* document, chalk, crafts handouts, scissors, tape, glue, pencils, markers, CD with parade music, *Berliner* [jelly-filled donuts], juice and water, cups, plates, napkins, a tablecloth, candy on a string, tin cans and tennis balls, face paint, balloons, coloring pictures, word searches, *Fasching* medals

**Procedure:**

1. Welcome children and introduce some basic German phrases:
  - a. Introduce basic greetings by referring to the vocabulary poster. Write greetings on the board, if necessary.
  - b. Have children sit in a circle and model the activity: Toss the ball to a volunteer and say *Ich heiÙe \_\_\_\_*. *Wie heiÙt du?* [My name is \_\_\_\_ . What's your name?].

2. Talk about *Fasching* [carnival] in Germany:
  - a. Show children the poster board with pictures, and ask them what they see.
  - b. Point out things they did not mention.
  - c. Talk about the history, importance, and regional differences of the event (refer to the document).
3. Practice typical *Fasching* [carnival] chants:
  - a. Teach different chants, and write them on the board.
4. Complete various arts and crafts projects:
  - a. Make carnival masks.
  - b. Make banners and decorations.
  - c. Make bags to collect candy.
5. March in the parade:
  - a. Explain and model the parade.
  - b. Review the chants.
  - c. Conduct the parade.
6. Have a snack break: *Berliner* und *Apfelschorle* [jelly-filled donuts and apple juice with carbonated water].
7. Play games:
  - a. Play *Reise nach Jerusalem* [musical chairs].
  - b. Play *Bonbonschnur* [candy on a string].
  - c. Play *Dosenwerfen* [tin can toss].
  - d. Do *Schminken* [face painting].
  - e. Play *Luftballonwettlauf* [balloon race].
8. Color pictures and finish arts and crafts projects.
9. Review parade chants.
10. Close the program:
  - a. Have parents join the parade.
  - b. Give each child a *Fasching* [carnival] medal.
  - c. Take a group photograph.

## Appendix D

### *German Summer Camp Sample Lesson Plan*

**Topic:** Music

**Language Goal:**

1. Identify musical instruments
2. Ask what instrument someone plays and respond to the question.
3. Ask others about their favorite instruments, and tell them about yours.

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4. Sing the German song *Wenn der Pott aber nun ein Loch hat* [What if the pot had a hole].

### Key Vocabulary:

*Geige, Cello, Klavier, Querflöte, Trompete, Schlagzeug, Gitarre* [violin, cello, piano, flute, trumpet, drums, guitar]

*Das ist \_\_\_\_\_. Spielst du \_\_\_\_\_? Ja, ich spiele \_\_\_\_\_. Nein ich spiele \_\_\_\_\_ nicht.* [This is \_\_\_\_\_. Do you play \_\_\_\_\_? Yes, I play \_\_\_\_\_. No, I don't play \_\_\_\_\_.]

*Wie heißt du? Was ist dein Lieblingsinstrument? Spielst du ein Instrument?* [What is your name? What is your favorite instrument? Do you play an instrument?]

*Topf, Loch, zustopfen, Stroh, zuschneiden, Beil, Stein, nass, Wasser* [pot, hole, to plug, straw, to cut, ax, stone, wet, water]

### Materials:

PowerPoint presentation with instruments, a worksheet for *Autogrammjagd* [signature hunt], materials for making props for the song (construction paper, yarn, glue, tape, scissors, crayons), pencils, song on YouTube (Solomons, 2009) (use audio only), lyrics (transcribed by the instructor)

### Procedure:

1. Welcome children and play warm-up games:
  - a. Have children sit in a circle and model the activity: Toss the ball to a volunteer and say *Ich heiße \_\_\_\_\_*. *Wie heißt du?* [My name is \_\_\_\_\_. What's your name?].
  - b. Play some warm-up games, such as How do you like your neighbors?
2. Introduce the topic (musical instruments):
  - a. Show children the PowerPoint presentation with pictures of instruments and introduce the instruments to them.
  - b. Have students repeat the words for instruments and form complete sentences.
  - c. Have students ask their partners if they play the shown instrument: *Spielst du Geige?* [Do you play the violin?]. Teach them how to answer the question.
  - d. Teach students how to say what instrument they play and what their favorite instrument is.
3. Review new vocabulary by playing a signature hunt:
  - a. Give children a worksheet, and ask them to go around the classroom interviewing their partners and asking their names, their favorite instruments, and what instruments they play.
  - b. Have children write the answers in each column, and have their partners sign the sheet.
4. Learn the song *Wenn der Pott aber nun ein Loch hat* [What if the pot had a hole] (Solomons, 2009):
  - a. Play the song, and act it out with objects.

- b. Hand out the lyrics with pictures. More proficient children can read along, other children can look at the pictures.
  - c. Have all children hum along.
  - d. Form two groups (boys and girls), and have them practice their respective parts.
  - e. Prepare props to demonstrate the meaning of the song.
  - f. Practice the song with the props in groups.
5. Take a lunch break.
6. Conduct the outdoor activity:
  - a. Gather materials to make musical instruments outside.
7. Review the instruments:
  - a. Play Pictionary.
8. Review the song:
  - a. Students sing the song again before going home for the day.



# 2

## Service learning as a pedagogical tool for language teachers

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### Abstract

The article defines service learning and its essential elements and provides a historical outlook at the movement. It presents a review of L2 K-16 service-learning projects from the survey of L2 teachers in Ohio, with interview samples from the responding teachers and students. In addition, the author summarizes best practices and offers guidelines for teachers interested in implementing service learning, including a variety of sample projects with course objectives that can be met through service learning, suggestions for preparing students to make the most of their participation in the projects, reflection prompts, and pre- and post-evaluation questions.

### Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to clarify the definition of service learning for L2 teachers wishing to integrate a target language service component into their courses. The author administered a survey to K-16 L2 teachers in the state of Ohio to explore how hands-on community-based projects are currently being used as a pedagogical tool to authenticate target language acquisition. Most L2 respondents indicated that incorporating the Communities standard (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 1996) presented a challenge due to a lack of time and money. Some teachers mentioned their involvement with foreign language clubs and occasional guest speakers or field trips, but many felt too overwhelmed with daily responsibilities to develop service-learning projects as a fulfillment of the fifth C. Later in this paper, the author will further discuss survey

results detailing L2 teachers' attitudes toward service learning and focus on the target language service projects described by the respondents. The obtained data from the survey responses and the summary of current best practices in the area of service learning provide ideas and models to develop challenging and meaningful service-learning courses within foreign language curricula.

An education should develop hearts, not just minds, so that people can live noble lives as well as have productive careers. An education should be, then, the development of character, a quest for values, the raising of visions, not merely the hoarding of facts and honing of skills. It should be the creation of a way of life—a way of looking at people and things—not a problem or an assignment or a job. (Schmier, 2005, p. 151)

### **Distinguishing Service Learning from Civic Engagement and Community Service**

The non-academic counterparts of service learning, civic engagement and community service continue to play a significant role in education, especially through club activities, in which members participate in one-time events or ongoing club-sponsored projects. Civic engagement fosters a sense of personal responsibility and individual obligation to positively affect quality of life in the community (Ehrlich, 2000b). Like civic engagement, community service is offered for the benefit of local groups or institutions. The term is also used for work that is required in the judicial system as rehabilitation or payback for an offense. Many universities and secondary schools offer service and outreach opportunities, such as community workdays, to encourage participation of the whole campus community. This type of activity signals the importance of school involvement with local community projects. Such projects involve a variety of tasks, from park landscaping, tutoring at a refugee center, to work at a children's museum or at a YWCA domestic violence shelter. While these projects are needed by the communities they benefit, and participation in them can enrich the experiences for students engaged in the service, they do not, in and of themselves, link service to learning. For example, students participating in a community service project, if not given the tools to question their preconceptions, may find that their stereotypes about a certain population are reinforced rather than challenged. By the same token, projects undertaken as components of service-learning classes, can be very similar in terms of activities and services rendered, but they provide an educational framework that allows students to apply analytical skills and insights gained in the classroom to real-life service experiences. Thus, while volunteering is a common thread, participating in a volunteer community activity is not by itself service learning. Even though the term service learning has been generally accepted, some practitioners prefer the term community-based learning (CBL). CBL emphasizes the aspect of reciprocity between community partners and students (Boyle & Overfield, 1999). Service learning has been defined broadly to include experiential education endeavors, such as internships, field experiences and academically supported volunteer projects. Service learning is defined as:

A method under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs...that are integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provide structured time for [reflection], ... and that enhance what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community. (Corporation for National and Community Service, n.d., p. 2)

For Carnegie Senior Scholar Thomas Ehrlich (2000a), service learning and civic engagement are closely intertwined. They both promote civic responsibility, especially when combined with two other modes of active learning, collaborative learning, and problem-based learning. Service learning “connects thought and feeling in a deliberate way”, and creates “a context in which students can explore how they feel about what they are thinking and what they think about how they feel.” Moreover, students “explore the relationship between their academic learning and their civic values and commitments” (Ehrlich, 2000a, Civic Engagement section, para. 13). In short, service learning combines service and learning intentionally, as a pedagogical tool to help students meet the goals and objectives of a rigorous academic course.

### **Historical Background**

Although K-16 teachers incorporated service into their pedagogy before the coining of the term service learning in the late 1960s (Giles & Eyler, 1994), the popularity of this approach has increased since Campus Compact (<http://www.compact.org>), an organization with the aim of facilitating and coordinating campus-based civic engagement, was founded in 1985 by the presidents of Brown, Stanford, and Georgetown Universities. A few years later, in 1990, Congress passed the National and Community Service Act, giving birth to the Corporation for National and Community Service (See Appendix E), whose mission is to provide K-16 service-learning opportunities and resources. The Corporation's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (<http://www.servicelearning.org>) is America's most comprehensive service-learning resource, and currently it provides 37 foreign language service-learning topics. In 1999, Campus Compact instituted the Presidents' Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education, whose aim is to “articulate the commitment of all sectors of higher education--public and private, two- and four-year--to their civic purposes” (Campus Compact, 2012, Presidents' Statement of Principles section, para. 2). Of the current 1,100 members, 565 college and university presidents have signed the declaration, stating that: “This country cannot afford to educate a generation that acquires knowledge without ever understanding how that knowledge can benefit society” (Campus Compact, 2012, Presidents' Statement of Principles section, para. 3).

During the same time period, K-16 foreign language educators were collaborating to define educational and assessment goals for L2 students and teachers. In 1996, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) published the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the*

21<sup>st</sup> Century (National Standards in Foreign Language Project). The 5Cs include Communication (using the L2 for communication in “real-life” situations), Cultures (gaining cultural knowledge and understanding), Connections (using the L2 to access other disciplines), Comparisons (comparing and contrasting languages and cultures), and Communities (extending L2 experiences beyond the classroom).

In 2007, the Modern Language Association released a study of the best ways to implement the teaching of language and culture in higher education in the United States. The study report, *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World* called for: “[A] broader and more coherent curriculum in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole” (Modern Language Association, 2007, Transforming Academic Programs section, para. 3). It stressed the importance of alliances with other departments through interdisciplinary courses. Furthermore, the report challenged L2 teachers to use resources beyond literature (e.g., film, television, radio, advertising, journalism, humor, political rhetoric, performance, visual arts, and music) to help students “consider alternative ways of seeing, feeling, and understanding things” (Modern Language Association, 2007, The Goal: Translingual and Transcultural Competence section, para. 2). In addition to guiding students toward translingual and transcultural competencies, the broader curriculum was expected to boost retention rates among language students. Continuing priorities outlined in the report urged alliances and collaboration between K-12 and college and university educators and discussion of ideas for curricular transformation.

Although the *Standards* and the MLA’s *New Structures* do not specifically point to service learning as a way to attain the goals set forth for language educators and students, service learning provides an environment for curricular modifications to address many of these goals and priorities. Through service-learning projects, students are integrated into the broader community of language speakers, and have the opportunity to (1) communicate in the target language with native and nonnative speakers; (2) deepen their knowledge and understanding of the L2 culture; (3) learn about other disciplines; (4) make comparisons between their culture and language and the L2 culture and language; (5) forge relationships with L2 speakers through shared activities; (6) collaborate with K-16 students, educators, and members of the broader community; and (7) use a panoply of interdisciplinary resources.

The following section examines the characteristics of service learning and its benefits.

### **Essential Elements of Service Learning**

One of the most important elements of service learning is its cooperative nature, based on genuine contextualized encounters and shared goals. Students and community partners are engaged in a common pursuit in which the process and the outcomes are significant (Faber, 2009). Collaborative work creates a student-centered environment, in which they take ownership of the learning process (Student Horizons Inc, 2009). Collaborative learning places students outside the

walled classroom, giving them authentic and meaningful experiences (Martinsen, Baker, Dewey, Bown, & Johnson, 2010; Zapata, 2011). Service learning stresses cooperation and teamwork and requires compassion, trust, and communication (Pak, 2007).

Service-learning classes could have three different emphases: (1) service-oriented; (2) subject matter/academic discipline-driven; and (3) project-oriented, client-centered (Bryant, Schönemann, & Karpa, 2011). While it goes without saying that the service element in service learning is primordial, a service-oriented course is focused on service and issues relating to it, such as advocacy for the community partner or social change. Academic discipline-driven service learning focuses on the subject matter as a basis for the cooperative experience (e.g., L2 students teaching an L2 to children, or students in a statistics class teaching statistics to adults). In a project-oriented, client-centered service-learning class, students produce a needed item for the community partner (e.g., a graphic design class may create logo designs, brochure templates, or posters, for a public agency, or an advanced L2 class may translate brochures and other documents). It should be noted that care must be taken when designing a project-oriented, client-centered service-learning class, because student and partner interaction may take a back seat to the goal of creating a product.

No matter the orientation of the course, there are five generally accepted stages of service learning from inception to culmination: preparation, planning, action, reflection, and demonstration/celebration (Kaye, 2010; Levesque-Bristol, Knapp, & Fisher, 2010; Student Horizons Inc, 2009). Cathryn Berger Kaye (2010) begins her courses with inventory and investigation, followed by preparation and planning. The developer (a teacher or a curriculum team) is usually in charge in the beginning stages of inventory, investigation, preparation, and planning. Students can, however, also be engaged in the process from the very beginning (Student Horizons Inc, 2009). In schools with established community ties, the inventory and investigation stages for some repeated projects may already be completed, with the information on file, including lists of community partners that could become L2 service-learning participants. Preparation for the experience begins as the teacher determines what community needs could be met by students' involvement, and how the project could meet the students' needs. Key items that must be developed to help students understand the broader scope of the project include: a syllabus with objectives showing how the service-learning project will help to meet the learning goals; expectations for students; and articulation with the community (Grim, 2010; Jorge, López, & Raschio, 2008).

The following common characteristics of service learning, as outlined by the Corporation for National and Community Service (<http://www.servicelearning.org>) and Giles & Elyer (1994), include:

1. Experiences that are positive and meaningful to the participants;
2. Cooperative experiences promoting teamwork;
3. Complex problems in complex settings;
4. Engaging in problem solving that combines abstract and specific contextual knowledge;

5. Reflective activity before, during, and post experience;
6. Deeper learning through immediacy of results.

Another important aspect of service learning that shifts the responsibility for learning from the teacher to the student is active learning intertwined with reflection. In active learning, students are engaged in purposeful pursuits that benefit others, and they strive to meet the expectations of an outside community. In order to focus on the learning aspect and to remember that they are not solely providing a service, students can benefit from a preliminary reflective question, such as, “What do I have to learn and who can teach me?” (Tacelosky, 2008, p. 882). In active learning, students reflect on their experiences through written prompts and group discussions. These analytical assignments engage students in an examination of their beliefs and prejudices. This mediated dialogue becomes a significant factor in their active learning in a complex, real world. Thus, students experience the educational process as it happens, through inquiry and interaction inside and outside the classroom. They encounter unlikely teachers in community partners.

Reflection activities may vary, from journal writing, to discussion, and to role-play. They are essential for connecting feeling and learning. In a study by Molee, Henry, Sessa, & McKinney-Prupis (2010), in which students’ critical reflections were used to assess the depth of learning and critical thinking, the researchers note that critical reflection deepens the students’ capacity to analyze their experiences and to make adjustments. Others agree that teacher and group response through verbal and written feedback are an integral part of the reflection process. When academic learning and community service are connected through reflection, experiential and multicultural learning acquired in the community increase (Eyler, 2002; Grim, 2010; Molee et al., 2010) (See Appendix C for sample reflection prompts used in the author’s advanced language class).

### **Service Learning and the L2 Curriculum**

The author’s survey was sent to a list serve of public and private K-16 language teachers. Of the 16 respondents, 12 incorporated some form of service learning into their curriculum. The major hurdles were not knowing where to begin and how to create meaningful and doable projects. One teacher responded, “I have not done any service learning yet, but I would love to. I just don’t know what options are available for me.” Other respondents voiced feelings of inadequacy when it came to envisioning what could be developed for the languages they taught, and thinking that doing such a project in another language would be much easier. A French teacher acknowledged, “I had never thought of service learning with a foreign language. I can see the possibilities for Spanish but not for German or French.” A Spanish teacher, on the other hand, avowed, “I’m not sure what type of need in my community could be met by a Spanish service-learning project.”

The respondents acknowledged that service projects can be daunting, given the time demands of making community contacts and developing challenging and educationally sound target language projects, not to mention the logistics of

ensuring the security of minors and resolving transportation issues. In addition, many teachers feel overwhelmed by curricular demands and think there is no room for community involvement in their programs. Moreover, budgetary issues also play a role in dissuading L2 teachers from undertaking off-campus projects. The current fiscal challenges of federal, state, and local governments mean that teachers must be even more resourceful to find ways to creatively fund the costs of service projects. In fact, several teachers noted that they are no longer able to conduct service learning due to budget reductions. L2 teacher respondents said that implementing the fifth C of Communities (L2 within and beyond the classroom) is difficult. According to one survey respondent, the fifth C is “covered” by tacking on the sentence “Have students share their work with their parents” to each lesson plan. Despite these obstacles, nearly all of the L2 teacher respondents said they wanted to get on board and expand the walls of their classrooms.

### **Why Should L2 Teachers Use Service Learning as a Pedagogical Tool?**

Service learning has been more embraced in the areas of social sciences and health care, compared to course development in the modern languages. Language teachers have largely focused on the proficiency-based and communicative approaches to language acquisition, but have been slow to include service learning as a means to helping their students become linguistically and culturally competent (Barreneche, 2011; Hale, 1999; Ter Horst & Pearce, 2010). Service learning supports the 5Cs, as outlined in the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 1996): communicating via the L2; gaining cultural knowledge and understanding; connecting to other disciplines; making comparisons between the L2’s language and culture and one’s own; and accessing communities of L2 speakers within and beyond the classroom.

An increasing amount of published papers on combining service learning and language teaching indicates that teachers are beginning to embrace service learning, because it facilitates learning with rather than about communities of language speakers (Caldwell, 2007; Marks, 2008; Student Horizons Inc, 2009), as “[R]eal learning is not merely a degree with which you go out into the world to earn a living; it is far more a way of living in the world” (Schmier, 2002, para. 5). For instance, in a Spanish service-learning honors colloquium at Ball State University, the students assisted several immigrant families with everyday needs, such as accessing the public transportation system, teaching survival English, literacy and basic computer skills, and interpreting and explaining written documents (Pak, 2007). The students learned first-hand about the challenges and economic, political, and social issues facing the Hispanic community in their area. Another service-learning course in an urban women’s college brought together low- and high-intermediate Spanish students to work with a small group of recently arrived Cuban refugees. Participation in several social events exposed the students to the Cuban culture and gave them the opportunity to interact socially in Spanish. To examine their preconceived ideas about the refugees, the students wrote a composition on a specific topic prior to each social event. After speaking with at least one Cuban about the topic, they had to incorporate the information into

their revised compositions (Boyle & Overfield, 1999). At Rollins College, a small comprehensive liberal arts institution, advanced students of Spanish, including international business majors, partnered with Junior Achievement of Central Florida (See Appendix E), an international organization that provides hands-on financial education to young students by community volunteers. Alongside the English-speaking volunteers, the students used the organization's scripted lesson plans, handouts, and illustrated story books and spoke Spanish to expose K-5 bilingual children to the concepts of economics, entrepreneurship, and community development (Barreneche, 2011).

A summer program in Germany blended service learning and study-abroad for students from a U. S. university. The American students taught English to German elementary students and assisted in the classroom. They were hosted by the cooperating German teachers. The participants practiced their German with their hosts and were fully immersed in the culture (Ducate, 2009). Another German project involved virtual service learning (Ter Horst & Pearce, 2010). It allowed students of German to learn about environmental issues by contributing to the wiki-based website, Appropedia.org, "a site for collaborative solutions in sustainability, poverty reduction, and international development" (Ter Horst & Pearce, 2010, p. 368). The students uploaded documents they had translated from English into German, and the German visitors to the site were invited to edit the students' translations. This course modeled "successful content-based instruction that facilitated cultural and linguistic comparisons, created connections to other disciplines, and made possible the use of the German language in the context of the global community of German speakers" (Ter Horst & Pearce, 2010, p. 371).

In most cases, the learners see the benefits of their participation in service-learning projects. For students in the Colorado State University program (Grim, 2010), most participants reported that their French had improved, and they attributed their own improvement to the preparation necessary for creating their lesson plans. Since the students worked in pairs, they used French to communicate with their partners while preparing their lessons and teaching. A recent study (Martinsen et al., 2010) compared L2 gains among three groups of students: 1) traditional study-abroad students; 2) service-learning study-abroad students; and 3) L2 students living in an on-campus language house. The results showed more significant linguistic gains in groups two and three, where the students had a non-linguistic purpose embedded in a real-life context for communicating in the target language. The service-learning study-abroad students rendered a service to the native community, and the language house students communicated about daily life and social issues.

In addition to language acquisition, other important outcomes included development of empathy, motivation, self-confidence, and professional aspirations. A recent study on empathy (Wilson, 2011) analyzed students' reflective writing and found that students who are involved in service learning are more likely to be empathetic toward others than students who are not. Students surveyed reported increased motivation and enthusiasm for the L2. Data for one program (Grim, 2010) that tracked the students who took the service-learning class in their freshman

or sophomore years showed that many of them went on to major or minor in French. For some students, the experience can also significantly influence their professional future. Students in the service-learning program in Paris had mostly decided upon their career and found validation in the experience. Frédérique Grim (2010) reported that the experience helped clarify students' career direction; many were confirmed in their choice to become teachers, several were able to rule out teaching or were encouraged to consider teaching a different grade level, and yet others added teaching as a future professional option.

### **Creating Service-Learning Projects**

#### *Step One: Identifying a Need in the Community and Setting Academic Goals*

If, as previously stated, service learning is a means of engaging students in active learning through academically structured experiences that meet community needs, designing service-learning courses requires a well-defined set of goals to guide the experience. According to research (Barreneche, 2011; Schönemann, 2011) and the aforementioned survey results, L2 teachers who successfully incorporated a service-learning component, were those who identified a need and set concrete academic goals for the course prior to planning project details. The goals provide the framework to guide students toward mature interactions and critical analysis. The following project goals may be considered for planning a successful service-learning project:

1. Speaking and listening comprehension: speaking the target language with native speakers and with other L2 speakers.
2. Writing practice: writing reflection papers, translating documents, developing documents in the target language.
3. Reading in the target language: reading articles that introduce issues and prepare for the project, reading native language documents and correspondence.
4. Cultural knowledge and understanding: researching cultural information before interacting with native speakers, exposure to issues important to the target community, conducting research to present to other L2 learners.
5. Altruism: benefitting others, creating partnerships.
6. Developing personal skills: increasing confidence, learning organizational skills.
7. Developing interpersonal skills: collaborating with other students and with community partners.
8. Career direction and exploration: acquiring experience in a professional field, teaching the L2 to others.
9. Advocacy: promoting the L2 and its culture and the L2 teaching profession.

To avoid redundancy, specific learning goals and the service-learning courses they accompany are presented in *Step Three: Service Learning in Action*.

*Step Two: Planning and Preparation*

Teachers who have implemented service-learning courses stress the necessity to allow plenty of time to plan and prepare, and to clarify expectations and needs of the community partner and the students. For example, if a community partner's proposed project requires office work, where students complete the assignments independently, an interactive social component could be added to the project to involve the students with the community. Although changing projects or community partners during the development of service-learning courses is not common, it does happen.

The planning and preparation stages involve many administrative tasks. For instance, college students who partner with K-12 classrooms will need to undergo a background check. Another administrative task may include finding businesses, organizations, or university departments to donate the needed items or sponsor the community project. One survey respondent, a French teacher who developed a service-learning program with a private elementary school for children ages three to eight in Paris, needed American children's books. The books were to be translated into French by the university students, used during the teaching sessions in France, and ultimately to be donated to the school library. The book donations came from the teacher's college bookstore and a nearby major commercial bookstore, and the teacher's administrative department donated supplies for the craft projects.

Scheduling is extremely important when developing a service-learning program and is germane to its success. Before students sign up for a service-learning class, they must make sure that the service-learning component fits into their academic, work, and personal schedules. Scheduling is just as important in the choice of a community partner. In a service-learning program at Oberlin College in Ohio, aimed to introduce Spanish to elementary school students, the major challenge was dealing with the schedules and the limited time available in the public schools. Even though the teachers felt that languages are best learned at a young age, they had a hard time fitting one more obligation in their already jam-packed schedules (Faber, 2009). The professor persisted and was finally able to schedule dozens of student participants according to teachers' needs, to create a fully volunteer in-school elementary Spanish program. Despite the scheduling difficulties, the first pilot semesters were a success, and most parents were enthusiastic and excited to see the program continue (Faber, 2009).

As noted previously, reflection is integral to service-learning courses because it helps students develop knowledge, skills, and cognitive capacities. In reflection activities, such as journal writing, reflection papers (See Appendix C), and discussion, students "describe what happened; examine the difference made; discuss thoughts and feelings; place experience in a larger context; consider project improvements; generate ideas; identify questions; encourage comments from partners and recipients; and receive feedback" (Kaye, 2010, CD-ROM). Individual meetings with the students and written evaluations are also an important part of the reflection process. They enable teachers to make changes during the course of

the service-learning project and engage in intervention as needed. Results from a study on the effectiveness of service learning (Levesque-Bristol, Knapp, & Fisher, 2010) show that in-class discussion and reflective writing are important factors in contributing to positive feelings about the service-learning involvement and enhancing the learning climate.

### *Step Three: Service Learning in Action*

In this section, the author provides a review of a variety of K-16 L2 service-learning courses and projects, ranging from stand-alone to fully integrated into curricula, from the survey of Ohio K-16 language teachers. The purpose of this survey was to see the types of courses and projects offered, as well as to gather teachers' comments about the value and challenges of combining L2 acquisition and service learning (see Appendix D). Though these service-learning courses and projects are language specific, the examples can be adapted to any L2 course, taking into consideration community partner needs. For instance, noting a lack of elementary foreign language education in local districts, one college and four high school French instructors developed similar "buddy" tutoring projects that involved advanced level high school and elementary students. The projects' academic goals included: lesson planning; gaining knowledge about the teaching profession; articulating the benefits of learning another language; and meeting the state's standards of communities and connections. Another respondent, a Spanish teacher in the author's survey, designed a course to meet a practical need in the community, when she learned that a computer lab in a Latino community was being under utilized. She created a project in which her students publicized and gave a presentation in the lab to increase its visibility and use in the target community. The project's academic goals included: increasing student knowledge about the challenges of Spanish-speaking immigrants; sharpening oral and written L2 skills; honing collaborative skills through group work; developing writing and marketing skills by creating a brochure in the target language; creating partnerships between the university and the community; and contributing a needed service to the local Hispanic community.

To provide another immersion experience for high school students, a respondent to the author's survey described an immersion day project developed by a university French program. Advanced college French students organized the activities, which included unfinished plays, break-out sessions, and cultural presentations, and served as table leaders to promote target-language practice. The academic goals for the project included: developing leadership, collaborative, planning, and organizational skills; gaining professional experience by interacting with teachers and high school students; preparing interesting and meaningful lesson plans; and advocating for language programs. Another university project involved students returning from study-abroad programs to give presentations about their experiences at local high schools. The academic goals for this project included: advocating for foreign language study and study-abroad; reflecting on personal academic experiences by sharing them with others; gaining public speaking experience; and learning about the teaching profession.

One on-going service-learning course in French at Colorado State University began in 2007 (Grim, 2010). Typically, 16 to 25 students with at least two semesters of French enroll in a stand-alone course each semester and provide 30-minute language lessons to children in before- or after-school elementary programs once a week for 10 weeks. The impetus for this program was to expose young children in the community to the French language and francophone cultures, to provide a positive role in the community, and to encourage school children to learn French or another L2 in the future, and prepare the college students for future roles as civic servants. While it is too early to see the long-term impact, the experience was positive for the majority of the students involved in the project. The project goals were as follows: 1) using knowledge of the French language and francophone cultures in an authentic setting outside the college classroom; 2) using L2 to benefit others; 3) increasing confidence in speaking French; and 4) acquiring teaching experience to help in choosing a career path. The university students attended three initial class meetings and met with an expert in early childhood education, reflected on their progress and experience, and organized a carnival and fund raiser. After that, they created lesson plans, conducted 10 weekly 30-minute lessons, and reflected on their teaching experience and participation in 10 weekly journals with regular instructor feedback.

Another respondent from the author's survey described a university-level course in Spanish conversation that met once a week on a high school campus, where students engaged in conversation with Spanish-speaking adolescents. Conversation was in Spanish for 30 minutes, then in English for the rest of the hour, giving both native and nonnative Spanish speakers the opportunity to practice their second language. The goals of the course included: 1) increasing student knowledge about the challenges that Spanish-speaking immigrants face; 2) sharpening students' oral and written skills; 3) increasing student knowledge about the culture of the local Hispanic community; 4) providing a useful service for the Hispanic community; 5) creating partnerships between the university and the community; and 6) developing collaboration skills. Another similar course, taught in French at the college level, involved college students meeting once a week with French-speaking African immigrant students at a local high school. Since this was a composition course, more academic emphasis was placed on the reflective phase of the experience, as students kept journals describing their challenges and successes in connecting with native French speakers. While the academic goals listed above apply to the college classes, the service-learning projects also allow high school teachers to meet the standards of Communities and Connections.

#### *Step Four: Demonstration and Celebration*

The survey respondents say that, for the most part, the extra effort was well worth the payoff, even if the experience was frustrating at times. Bringing a celebratory closure to the project is important for the participants, as this student's comment shows: "Because of the lack of communication, (between the organization and the students) at first I was frustrated, but the final meeting with the parents and their children was a great and fun experience." Student response

papers, journals, and final evaluations document their progress and growth throughout the experience. Beyond their value to the students, they provide an administrative record for the program, a justification that may be necessary for future course development.

Public celebration provides a platform for genuine advocacy for language learning and community involvement. One respondent's college students planned and presented the target-language activities for a large group of high school language students. Because the success of the college students' projects depended on their high school counterparts' reactions, the college students critiqued each other's proposed projects, took extra care in their preparation, and rehearsed their activities. The college instructor was very proud of her students. Opening the final presentation to the public at large is an effective way to advocate for language study and community involvement, as evidenced by this respondent who incorporates service learning into a course on the theory and practice of teaching French: "The student [cultural] presentations have been quite successful, and the audience seems to grow each year. [We receive] very positive feedback from the student performers and the target audiences."

#### *Student Achievement and Teacher Satisfaction*

In one program in the author's survey, the professor noted that, just like in the traditional classroom, the student outcomes varied dramatically according to individual student preparation. Another teacher stressed the importance of remembering that not all students are equally motivated. She went on to say: "For those students who upheld their part of the bargain, outcomes were overwhelmingly positive." Survey respondents in other programs noted that their students felt that practice with native speakers was the key to their progress. One student wrote: "It was easier than what I thought. It made me realize that I can communicate in Spanish."

Students from the programs described in the author's survey reported increased self-confidence from participation in service-learning courses. They had to face their fears about interacting with native speakers: "Before this project, I was always afraid to talk to native speakers because I thought they would make fun of me and my Spanish." Students also felt they were useful to the community and empowered to know that their contribution was well received and important. In addition, students got to know their classmates better and began to establish a network within the community. One survey respondent had just received an e-mail from a former student, who wrote to say how significant the service-learning projects had been for him:

I can hardly believe that it has been almost a year and a half since I graduated. I think that the service learning project and immersion day during my first quarter of studies had the greatest impact on me out of all my time in college. This experience helped me to stay motivated and focused as I made the trips to campus and worked to complete my degree.

Organizing a service-learning course can be time-consuming, and the course itself requires additional time commitment. One professor reported in the survey that there was less time for the subject content (advanced language grammar review), because class time was used to test and practice activities that would be used with the community partner. Another professor also voiced concern about taking time away from L2 practice during the student-community interaction:

I still hesitate to use class time for any language other than French, but I see a growing need for foreign language educators to be advocates for the profession. Future teachers will need to go beyond the classroom setting to inspire enthusiasm for learning languages and studying other cultures.

Teachers also must be prepared to relinquish control over what students take to the service-learning experience, and what they get out of it. Student engagement and achievement within the classroom obviously matter to the teachers, but they matter even more when students are expected to be ambassadors in the community. Though one teacher from the author's survey loved the service-learning experience, she "could not help being disappointed when some students were not well prepared." However, this lack of control also gives teachers the opportunity to become more resilient and responsive to the flow of the service-learning experience. As Schönemann (2011), points out, "As exciting as that might seem, it does add a component of uncertainty.... The text of real-world experience, however, is largely uncontrollable and unpredictable...not knowing exactly what to expect keeps the course fresh for me and the students" (p. 28).

This "real-world" learning through service learning in the language classroom embodies the thinking of John Dewey, an American educator and public philosopher of the 20th century, and preeminent contemporary educators, such as Thomas Ehrlich and Louis Schmier, among others, and their vision of our society "as one in which citizens should interact with each other, learn from each other, grow with each other, and together make their communities more than the sum of their parts" (Ehrlich, 2000a, para. 16). Language educators must make their contribution in preparing future citizens of the world.

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**Appendix A**

*Brainstorming for Projects for High School and College Students*

L2	Target language knowledge/skills; other skills	Community needs	How students use their skills or knowledge	Source (if applicable)
Int./Adv.	Conversation skills	Senior center	Interviewing seniors for oral history project	
Int./Adv.	All; study & organizational skills	Beginning/freshmen/transfer language students are paired with int./adv. majors/minors	One-on-one mentoring; tutoring	

All	Research, leadership, organizational, presentational skills	Residents interested in L2 language/culture in the community	Research and map all language/culture resources available in community	
All	Vocabulary and pronunciation	Child care center; pre-school and elementary before- and after-school programs; Montessori	Teaching numbers and alphabet; colors; body parts; animals; culture, etc.	Grim, 2010
Int./ Adv.	Grammar, vocabulary, spelling	Middle and high school language students	“Saturday Academy” tutoring	
Int./ Adv.	Grammar, vocabulary, spelling	Immigrants (illiterate)	Teaching reading in immigrants’ native language	
All	Conversation	Immigrants (illiterate)	Sort mail; conversation	
Int./ Adv.	Conversation, writing	Immigrants (literate or illiterate)	Interviewing immigrants for oral history project	
Int./ Adv.	Conversation, writing	Immigrants (illiterate)	Writing letters to send back home	
All	Conversation	Sister City	Project volunteer	
All	Conversation	Immigrants (newly arrived)	Weekly discovery outing	Boyle & Overfield, 1999
All	Conversation	Foreign students on campus	Student host	
All	Conversation, language skills	Immigrants	Weekly exchange of L2 study and community integration information/ discussion	

All	Conversation	Immigrants	Conversation exchange in English and L2	
Int./ Adv.	Conversation	Immigrants	Money management using Junior Achievement lessons	Barreneche
Int./ Adv.	Conversation	Immigrants	Disaster readiness	
Int./ Adv.	Conversation	Immigrants	Teaching computer skills	
Adv.	Pronunciation	High school L2 students	Pronunciation workshops	Marks, 2008
Int./ Adv.	All	K-12 and college L2 students	Tutoring in L2	
Int./ Adv.	Vocabulary and Pronunciation	Local children	Teaching children L2 at a local library reading program	
All	Conversation	Elementary school children from immigrant homes	Introducing target group to college life (fieldtrip, career exploration, etc.)	Student Horizons Inc,
All	Conversation	Children from immigrant homes	Summer day camp: learning activities, mentoring	Student Horizons Inc,
All	Conversation, research, leadership, organizational, presentational skills	Community residents	Design community celebrations to promote local culture awareness	Student Horizons Inc,
Adv.	Conversation	Immigrants needing health care	Translating and interpreting medical information, assistance with grant applications	Student Horizons Inc,

All	Grammar, vocabulary, spelling, organization	Immigrant children in health care establishments	Design and write activity book (stories, games) for young patients	Student Horizons Inc, 2009, p. 110
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## Appendix B

### *Curricular Connections K-12 (Elementary, Middle, and High School Levels) and Languages*

The following chart, excerpted from Cathryn Berger Kaye (2010) shows ideas for projects, levels, and the suggested language tasks. These can be adapted for college and university service learning. Each language task involves multiple curricular connections (English/Language Arts, Social Studies/History, Mathematics, Science, Art and Music, Journalism, and Technology). Many of the projects are geared toward a particular Hispanic community, so the language mentioned is Spanish. In the language classroom, the language component can and should be enhanced and adapted to suit the students and the community involved.

Project	Level	Language and task
<b>AIDS Education &amp; Awareness:</b> “Prepare and perform skits to depict youth in situations where choices must be made, including those involving HIV and AIDS.”	High School: 9-12	“Find students to translate handout materials into Spanish.”
<b>Elders:</b> “Teach yoga to elders and promote exercise throughout the community.”	E: 3	“Learn basic greetings in Russian (there are many Russian immigrants at the senior center).”
“Middle school students partner with senior citizens to learn about nutrition, share meals, and create a community cookbook.”	M: 7	“Learn polite expressions in different languages to correlate with ethnic recipes and celebrations.”
“Interview people who lived during times of war or unrest and create books and a website with the gathered stories.”	H: 11	“Bilingual students assist in conducting select interviews.”

<p><b>Emergency Readiness:</b>          “Write a book for elementary children to inform about natural disasters. For every disaster report, include both facts and an original folktale about the cause in English and Spanish.”</p>	<p>E:</p>	<p>“Work with ELL students to translate the facts and folktales into Spanish.”</p>
<p>“Assist in county-wide survey to find emergency resources for families in need and conduct a campaign to prepare and distribute kits.”</p>	<p>M: 8</p>	<p>“Spanish classes assist with translation of promotional flyers and instructions for kit use.”</p>
<p><b>The Environment</b></p>	<p>E: 3</p>	<p>“Create Spanish-language signs to place by the compost and worm bins.”</p>
<p>“Restore a town park with native woodland habitat and historical information about settlers.”</p>	<p>H: 9-12</p>	<p>“Research languages of indigenous Native Americans in the area and include words and translations in materials.”</p>
<p><b>Gardening</b></p>	<p>E: 2 &amp; 7</p>	<p>“Students learn how to say the word ‘butterfly’ in every language spoken in the community and use these words in the art and posters.”</p>
<p>“Create a garden in memory of 9/11 victims on the school site in public view.”</p>	<p>M: 7</p>	<p>“Spanish language class translates the brochure.”</p>
<p><b>Hunger, Homelessness and Poverty</b></p>	<p>E: 2</p>	<p>“Learn the names of foods in Spanish.”</p>
<p>“Supply new and gently used books for a children’s library at a family shelter; make educational workbooks.”</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>“Include outreach to collect Spanish language and bilingual children’s books.” (This was done through presentation at PTSA meetings by advanced language classes.)</p>

<b>Immigrants:</b> “Students learn about Hmong story cloths [Cambodia] and create a museum to showcase this art. Students create their own story cloths.”	E	“Contact local agency to translate museum brochure and museum placards into Hmong language, learn simple greetings and words to integrate into presentations.”
“Sponsor a citizenship swearing-in ceremony at school.”	M: 6-7	“Identify greetings in the language of the countries studied, including the correct pronunciations; use the greetings on banners.”
“Document stories, experiences, and history of recent immigrants for the community and for the immigrants’ families.”	H: 11-12 Spanish	“Use of Spanish, interaction with native speakers, written interviews.”
<b>Literacy:</b> “Second-graders in two different schools (one primarily English-speaking and one Russian-speaking) work in pairs to collaborate on a book that helps children of all language backgrounds to understand common English-language idioms.”	E: 2 Language Arts	“Both groups of students practice greetings for each other in Russian English.”
“Instruct young children in book-making and collaborate on making books for the community.”	H: 9	“Prepare for working with young bilingual children with assistance from a Spanish teacher.”

## Appendix C

### *Reflection*

Prompts one through four (out of six) for a college L2 composition class teaching a unit on immigration in five high school French I-V classes:

**Reflection #1:** Using the target language, reflect on your first impressions of the school. Use the present tense (250 words). Post on Pilot Discussion before Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

Elements to include:

1. The condition of the school (exterior grounds and parking lot; interior (old/new, clean/dirty, furniture, etc.)
2. The students (where you see them; how they act—loud, silent, smiling, sad, tired, etc.; what they are doing—arguing, studying, etc.; what they are wearing and carrying)
3. The teachers; the L2 teacher (what they are like—attitude, rapport with the students, dress, etc.)
4. You (how you feel—enthusiastic, uptight, eager, etc.; your reaction to the students and their reaction to you)
5. The activities (how prepared you are; how well the activities worked; what you need to change)
6. Your university group (who you are; how well you work together; attitude toward the project)

**Reflection #2:** Using the target language, write a description of your first experience at the school. Use the past indicative tenses (recent past, imperfect, perfect, and past perfect; 250 words). Post on Pilot Discussion before Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

Elements to include: 1-6 of Reflection #1.

**Reflection #3:** Using the target language, share what you have learned about your personal values and beliefs regarding stereotypes? Use the past indicative tenses (recent past, imperfect, perfect, and past perfect; 250 words). Post on Pilot Discussion before Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

**Reflection #4:** An observed and analyzed critical incident. Use the past indicative tenses. Post on Pilot Discussion before Thursday at 5:00 p.m.

#### A. Interaction Observed

1. Choose a situation that involved you and one or more of the high school students, your classmates, or the supervising teacher.
2. Describe the interaction between you and these people. Incorporate a) what you observed, b) what you and the others said and did, and c) body language, looks, gestures, etc.
3. Reserve judgment; be as neutral as you can in your description of the interaction.

#### B. Analyzing the Incident

1. What are your feelings when you reflect on this interaction?
2. Was the situation resolved as you thought it would be? How or how not?
3. In your opinion, what did the others expect would happen?
4. What were your expectations? What would account for the difference or similarity in both parties' expectations?
5. How was the incident influenced by cultural or other (age, sex, ability to speak the L2, authority, etc.) factors?

## **Appendix D**

*Categories from the Survey Instrument on Service Learning in the L2 Classroom  
(sent to L2 teacher list serve)*

- Target language
- Elementary school, middle school, high school, university (please circle)
- Course level, course name & # of students
- Project description
- Community need that project meets
- Learning objective(s) the project helps meet
- Materials and exercises used (include as attachments)
  - Orientation to project
  - Readings, writings, presentations, activities
  - Reflection activities/paper topics
- Student Achievement
  - Target-language acquisition
  - Cultural understanding
  - Community engagement
  - Advocacy enthusiasm for community population
  - Overall effect
- Teacher Satisfaction
  - With student outcomes
  - With community partners
  - With project as a whole
- Quotable Quotes
- Recommendations
- Other: Did you develop your project because of community need or student need? Will you continue this project?

## **Appendix E**

*Organizations with Accessible Resources on Websites*

Campus Compact: <http://www.compact.org>

- 34 states have a Campus Compact website. Click on “State Offices.”

Corporation for National Service (CNS): <http://www.cns.gov/>

Florida Gulf Coast University: [www.fgcu.edu/Connect](http://www.fgcu.edu/Connect)

Junior Achievement Worldwide: <http://www.jaworldwide.org>

- Click on “JA Near You.”

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse: <http://www.servicelearning.org>

University of California at Berkeley: <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/civic.html>

Virtual Volunteering Project (Virtual Verve is the on-line newsletter for the project based at the University of Texas at Austin): <http://www.serviceleader.org/vv>

### *Appendix F*

#### *Articles and Books*

There are many excellent books and articles about service learning. The following publications are especially helpful, because they incorporate both the theory and the practical steps.

Eyler, J., Giles, D., & Schmiede, A. (1996). *A practitioner's guide to reflection in service-learning: Student voices and reflections*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University.

- This classic and easy-to-use guide is geared toward higher education, but the activities can be adapted for any level. It reviews the four principles of reflection, the experiential learning cycle, learning styles, and suggests reflection activities in the categories of reading, writing, and doing, as well as critical questions the teacher can use to encourage students to deepen their reflection.

Hellebrandt, J., & Varona, L.T. (Eds.). (1999). *Construyendo puentes (Building bridges): Concepts and models for service-learning in Spanish*. Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education.

- This landmark monograph (volume 13 in a series of 18) is devoted to service-learning and academic discipline areas. Though this volume focuses on Spanish, it can be applied to all languages. The volume begins with theory on relating service learning to experiential learning and language acquisition theory. The second section is devoted to service-learning courses that bring the campus and local community together. The third section showcases courses that expand beyond the local community to international communities. Most articles are followed by useful documents (e.g., syllabi, letters to community partners, reading lists, evaluation forms, and follow-up questionnaires).

Kaye, C. B. (2010). *The complete guide to service learning: Proven, practical ways to engage students in civic responsibility, academic curriculum, & social action* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. with CD-ROM of Reproducible Forms). Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing.

- This is an excellent and thorough guide to K-12 service-learning. Topics include: benefits, vocabulary, K-12 standards for quality practice (as cited in National Youth Leadership Council, 2008), a step-by-step guide, establishing curricular connections, building foundations, parent involvement, and

establishing authentic community partnerships. It also includes a CD-ROM of reproducible forms and bonus materials (e.g., interviews with authors), as well as the templates with information on planning, clarifying roles (of teacher and students) for success, student self-evaluation, and assessment.

## **Appendix G**

### *Possible Sources of Funding*

- National and local chapters of American Association of Teachers of [L2]
- Campus Compact (national and state offices)
- Language-specific National Honor Societies
- Service-Learning mini-grants (local school/university)
- State foreign language associations

# 3

## **Cultural humility and cultural competence in foreign language instruction**

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### **Abstract**

This article discusses how the concepts of cultural humility and cultural competence are related and why foreign language educators in the United States might consider incorporating the perspective of cultural humility as a curriculum component. In the diverse and internationalized 21st century workplace, students without language and cultural competence are at a disadvantage. Language educators may consider adapting the way they teach culture to better serve the needs of people who work in situations that include people from many cultures. Cultural humility is a perspective foreign language instructors can incorporate to support the needs of the modern workplace. The authors suggest that the practice of cultural humility can be structured explicitly for students, and it can be used as the foundation for more meaningful and effective acquisition of cultural competence.

**T**eaching about culture is one of the key components of foreign language instruction and has cultural competence as its goal. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has begun a discussion to establish proficiency guidelines for cultural competence. A roundtable session took place during its annual conference in 2007 and included ACTFL and Department of Defense (DoD) representatives and academics. ACTFL has developed program guidelines for cultural knowledge, and DoD has provided a system of definitions and training materials. Draft guidelines have been written by academics in an attempt to meld the two different systems used by DoD and ACTFL. While this

has been an ongoing project, there has been a parallel movement to define and teach cultural competence in the health industry.

ACTFL proceeds from the viewpoint that language and culture are inseparable; DoD and health industries assert that general cultural competence can be taught without a foreign language component. Department of Defense invests in language training for specialist interpreters, and the health industry also uses trained professionals for interpreting. However, there is still a need for all professionals, soldiers, and health practitioners included, to interact effectively with people of different cultural backgrounds. This article argues that cultural humility is a basic skill set that translates to many situations, and the practice of the reflective skills characteristic of cultural humility in the language class can also support learning languages more effectively. Adding cultural humility instruction and practices to language instruction and study-abroad programs may help students practice this perspective and be better prepared for the challenges of multicultural workplaces.

Increasingly diverse populations present a unique opportunity to language professionals. Regardless of level, all foreign language instructors teach language and culture in their courses. They strongly value teaching the culture of the language of instruction. ACTFL has embedded teaching of the target culture in the National Standards for Foreign Language Education (American Council for Teaching Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 2006). While most lessons based on these standards define what discrete items are expected to be learned for each level of the target culture, this paper will show that a wider view of culture may put students at an advantage when they enter the 21st century workforce. Foreign language instructors might consider expanding the ways in which they teach culture, so that students can develop a culturally sensitive foundation. In disciplines outside of foreign language instruction, this culturally sensitive foundation is referred to as cultural humility. Cultural humility involves reflecting on one's own experiences, being able to appreciate other points of view, and engaging in the personal insight that there are multiple perspectives available (Tervalon & Murray-García, 1998). People trained in the metacognitive skills of cultural humility are prepared to engage in reflection and willing to modify their behavior to meet the requirements of encounters with members of other cultures.

While language professionals want students to learn about the target culture, the current method of instruction has not necessarily produced workers able to transfer cultural sensitivity to unique situations or to cultures other than the target culture. Researchers in pharmacy (Pless & Maak, 2004), business (Hunt, 2007), and nursing (Quist & Law, 2006) all note a lack of cultural competence and sensitivity in the workforce. There is an obvious need for cultural adaptability, and the opportunity for language professionals to position themselves as leaders in this kind of training is clear. It is their area of expertise. This paper will propose a series of activities to teach cultural humility as a foundational skill for learning cultural competence. These activities (See Appendix A) can be included in any foreign language course and are adaptable to any level of instruction.

## Background

Culturally appropriate language use and behavior are a well-recognized component of second language acquisition as outlined in the Cultures Standard (ACTFL, 2006), which states that students should “gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures”. Foreign Language instruction should focus on the traditions and beliefs of a given culture and modeling culturally appropriate behavior. With the turn of the century, the emphasis in social services, health care, and other industries has moved from the concept of teaching cultural competence as a set of rules to fostering cultural humility. Tervalon and Murray-García (1998) urge a move away from teaching cultural competence as a set of behaviors to fostering an attitude of openness and critical self-reflection that would emerge as cultural humility. Furthermore, they suggest that it is not possible to teach a student all the rules of a given culture because there is, perhaps, just as much variation within a culture as between cultures. In their opinion, the idea of teaching cultural competence as a series of rules and behaviors stereotypes a culture or simplifies interactions in a way that may not be useful to the learner in actual practice or may even lead to a false sense of knowledge. Reynoso-Vallejo (2009) also suggests that focusing on cultural competence alone may not be sufficient for health care providers in multi-cultural environments because it “does not include self-evaluation and self-critique from professionals, as well as power imbalances in the relationship” (p. 68). In other words, cultural competence is a set of necessary skills, but it is not enough to just know the rules of another culture. In multi-cultural interactions, the perspective of cultural humility may allow professionals to react more effectively.

Health care providers find themselves at the center of this issue as they strive to train practitioners for an increasingly heterogeneous client base. Hunt (2001) emphasizes the importance of cultural competence for successful communication. In addition to cultural knowledge, she cites the need for sensitivity training, especially for health care workers who care for minority groups. She states that the lack of a clear definition of cultural competence or specific criteria is due to the difficulty of a precise definition of culture: “Culture is neither a blueprint nor an identity; individuals choose between various cultural options. It is not possible to predict the beliefs and behaviors of individuals based on their race, ethnicity, or national origin” (p. 1882). Hunt suggests that training begin with helping health care providers examine and reflect on their own culture in order to develop cultural humility.

Cultural humility does not replace cultural competence. Rather, it can be viewed as the natural path to developing cultural competence, or as a predisposition required for the development of cultural competence. Tervalon and Murray-García (1998) emphasize that cultural humility is not necessarily a goal but a process. Cultural humility is more dynamic than cultural competence in that it requires commitment to ongoing self-reflection and self-critique, particularly identifying and examining one’s own patterns of belief. By practicing cultural humility, the student approaches situations open to the cues for effective communication rather

than as an opportunity to practice a set of rules regardless of the interlocutor's feedback. Moreover, a focus on cultural humility helps professionals become "flexible and humble enough to let go of the false sense of security that stereotyping brings" (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998, p. 119).

Fostering humility requires self-reflection leading to self-awareness. Humility also implies that individuals are both willing and able to perceive events outside their personal frame of reference, or at least acknowledge that an alternative frame of reference may be needed to understand a communicative event. Snow (1995) suggests that humility is an important form of self-development:

Self-knowledge is also generally regarded as intrinsically good, something to be valued apart from its effects. This attitude is reflected in the view that you are better off knowing the truth about yourself than not, even though the knowledge is painful. But knowledge of limitations is proper to humility. Consequently, humility is a form of self-knowledge and thereby is intrinsically valuable. (p. 211)

Snow explains that humility is not necessarily a low opinion of oneself; rather, it is a realistic assessment of one's abilities and recognition that one might have gaps in one's knowledge. This acknowledgment of limitations implies a predisposition to learn in order to address those limitations. Thus, cultural humility is a predisposition to learn new cultural perspectives.

The most cited method of learning cultural humility is through experiential learning and critical self-reflection. Tervalon and Murray-García (1998) suggest to have trainees think consciously about "their own, often ill-defined and multidimensional cultural identities and backgrounds" (p. 120). Boutin-Foster, Foster, and Konopasek (2008) outline a curriculum that follows this guidance, where students are led through a series of reflective exercises involving film and literature discussions, self-reflective writing, and role playing. Ross (2010) documents a learning experience that includes service learning and community-based research. Critical reflection on these experiences is key to the development of cultural humility.

In the area of language pedagogy, Byram (2011) recommends similar strategies in cultivating what she calls "perspective," referencing the ACTFL Standards. She suggests that instructors can help students understand the multiple points of view and distinctive viewpoints that are part of belonging to another culture. She asserts, "Because of its central bond to culture and to language, the concept of perspective is useful in linking these two facets of study...it can help [students] grasp and appreciate the link between form and meaning..." (Byram, 2011, p. 529). To promote this appreciation, Byram recommends reflections on the specific cultural perspectives that are invoked by using certain language forms, such as formal and informal pronouns, expressing opinions, or employing the subjunctive. This strategy helps students link the way they use language to cultural perspectives.

The Comparisons standard seeks to "develop insight into the nature of language and culture," (ACTFL, 2006), and includes tasks that ask students to reflect on alternative points of view "through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own." The perspective of cultural humility also prepares students to be able to

consider alternative cultural points of view through critical reflection on their own culture. If students understand their own cultural biases, they may be able to deal with unfamiliar cultural situations that have not been reviewed in class. What is key in Standard 4 (ACTFL, 2006) is the idea of comparisons. In the perspective of cultural humility, individuals are aware of how their own cultural predispositions influence how they interact with and accommodate people from another culture.

This idea of understanding other perspectives in relation to one's own is slightly different from the idea of perspectives outlined in ACTFL (2006) Standard 2 which focuses on student understanding of "the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied" and "the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied" (Cultures). In this standard, the focus is entirely on the other culture and knowledge of that culture. Knowing the culture-specific practices and perspectives is an important component of cultural competence. The practice of cultural humility, however, is inherently about the interaction between two people from different cultures, in which each individual may have incomplete knowledge of the other culture. The concept of comparisons mentioned in Standard 4 is about understanding how two different perspectives can accommodate each other, while Standard 2 is about having knowledge about another culture. Both relational knowledge and culture-specific knowledge are important to teach. In this case, cultural humility focuses on situations where culture-specific knowledge may be incomplete. This difference is important, since sometimes all a person can rely on for successful interactions is awareness of cultural biases and openness to learning about the other culture. In this way, cultural humility is preparation for students to acquire the knowledge outlined in Standard 2.

As students learn about cultural competence and cultural humility, instructors must also consider assessment. While cultural competence includes the knowledge and skills that allow a person to function appropriately in interactions, cultural humility is an attitude of being ready to acquire this knowledge and these skills. However, assessing cultural humility in foreign language courses may be challenging because "we may find that competency-based education can be applied more easily to the domains of knowledge and skills than to attitudes" (Hixon, 2003, p. 634). Finding student learning outcomes that can demonstrate an attitude can be as challenging, because attitudes are difficult to quantify. Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964), in their early work on the affective domain of learning, assert that the affective domain relates to the internalization of values and overlaps with the cognitive domain. Hurst (1980) concludes in her research that both cognitive and affective elements are part of student performance. Similarly, Horne (1980) points out that educators need to set learning objectives for affective domain skills, even though quantifying an attitude can be difficult. Both Hurst (1980) and Horne (1980) conclude that it is possible to create activities and assessments that can indicate changes in students' attitudes. Cultural humility can be viewed as an expression of the affective domain, since it can be considered "an emotion or a degree of acceptance or rejection" (Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964, p. 7).

If the cognitive and affective domains may be seen as overlapping, it is possible that the perspective of cultural humility may be fostered through critical thinking, to help students learn the awareness they need in order to learn the cultural expectations for behavior and language use. Instructors can focus not only on the linguistic forms and behaviors that are culturally appropriate, but also on reflective skills, so that students can learn how to recognize new behaviors and have the disposition to accept new behaviors.

### **Program Assessment of Trying to Teach Cultural Humility**

In an effort to assess the effectiveness of teaching cultural humility, the authors examined data for the evaluation of their study-abroad programs over the course of two years. The authors, who were also the program leaders, began considering how they might be able to help students critically reflect on their cultural experiences and cultivate a perspective of cultural humility. During the evaluation of these programs, the authors looked at the student products from the study-abroad courses to rate the students' success in learning the course content. Students in all of the study-abroad programs kept blogs as part of the program requirements. The authors were interested to see if certain assignments were more effective in eliciting responses that indicated student expression of perspectives of cultural humility. In the students' products collected for program assessment, the authors looked for student writing that indicated that they noticed and analyzed details and events and added personal insight to create a new point of view beyond just personal feelings.

The study-abroad programs at the authors' institution are short-term, with small numbers of students. The students are generally slightly older than the typical undergraduate population of 18-22 year-olds. The program leaders teach the culture component, and instructors at the host institution often conduct the language instruction component. In every case discussed below, the program leaders wrote the blog assignments for the cultural component of the courses. Appendix B outlines sample blog prompts written by the program leaders. The writing assignments were collected as one part of program assessment for student learning outcomes. The observations made concerning cultural humility in these courses are anecdotal, and they are only suggestions for including cultural humility in foreign language program curricula.

In 2008, a group of nine students comprised the German study-abroad group. This group included 5 males and 4 females who had novice- to intermediate level proficiency in German. The students attended language courses at the host university in Germany, and they attended a culture course conducted by the program leader. Part of the course included requiring the students to keep blogs that chronicled their experiences in Germany during their three-week stay. These blogs were written in English, as the students' German proficiency was insufficient for expressing their perceptions of their experiences.

In a review of the student writing in these blogs, it was clear that the majority of them focused on descriptions with some comparisons of the writers' expectations to the cultural practices in Germany. There were very few indications

that these students could appreciate German points of view, reflect on how their own behavior might be perceived by the Germans, or any new cultural insights generated by their experiences. An example of a typical student blog entry focuses on merely observing: “I don’t have anything to say about Eisenach, but I think I can say more about [the] Wartburg...it was a very nice castle that sat high on top of a mountain...” Since the students were writing in their native language, linguistic barriers were probably not inhibiting their expression. The authors wondered if the prompts were not asking the right questions.

When the authors looked back at the prompts the program leader had written, they found that the prompts were, indeed, only asking for descriptions. For example, a typical prompt asked: “You’ve reached the halfway point in the program. Reflect on how you are feeling physically and mentally/spiritually. How are you coping with the language and culture?” Another blog prompt did go further and ask: “What differences between American culture and German culture have you experienced?” One student was able to respond describing a personal insight: “It was really uncomfortable for me...to blend in, and it was a little difficult for me to accept that I can never blend in as a European.” However, the majority of the students only described events and did not reflect on their experiences.

As a result of this program evaluation, the authors decided that they should design prompts that would more explicitly elicit the critical reflections that would lead to personal insights from the perspective of cultural humility. From the 2008 German program, it seemed that just being in the foreign culture might not naturally engender this perspective. With this challenge in mind, the program leader of the 2009 United Kingdom study-abroad program designed the prompts to ask students to first describe a topic, then analyze what might be happening, and finally evaluate what kind of personal insight might arise from this reflection.

The 2009 United Kingdom study-abroad program was a three-and-a-half week program that included eight females and no males. The program included blogs as part of the required course assignments. The blogs were written in English, which was the students’ native language. The review of the blogs written with the goal of cultivating the perspective of cultural humility revealed that the students responded very well. After the initial adjustment period where the students needed some coaching to understand that they had to write more than description, the students eventually understood the task and were able to consistently write critical reflections that lead to personal insights about their learning in the new culture. An example of the blog prompts on the nature of learning follows.

Notice what is being taught in your classes. Pay attention to what you are learning in class and how it relates to daily life or daily practices. Note how your learning is different during study abroad compared to learning in the classroom or at home.

- a. Describe the new things you are learning.
- b. Critique how you are learning things differently here than at home.
- c. Explain what important new knowledge you have acquired during your study-abroad experience.

In these redesigned prompts, the program director included a series of steps that would help students complete easier steps, like describe, and then build up to more difficult tasks, like “explain your new perspective.”

The students responded well to these prompts. Their answers were thoughtful, and the critical reflections seemed to translate into the students’ behavior in the program. For example, they discussed how Americans were louder than the British, and then later deliberately hushed each other on the train when they felt they were becoming inappropriately loud. In response to the prompt cited above concerning learning, one student responded:

Class? What class? Since we have arrived, we have done nothing but acquire knowledge. Just by watching people...you can gain an immense amount of knowledge about the culture and attitudes that surround you... [you] become more aware of your own natural inclinations, whether they match or contrast with the local behavior.

Nearly all the students were able to consistently produce the critical reflections and insights prompted by the course assignments.

Following the 2009 United Kingdom study abroad, a group of German students came to the authors’ University for an intensive English program. These students included four females and six males. The students attended a language and culture course hosted by the American university. The writing assignments of this intensive language course were in English, the students’ second language. Their English language writing proficiency was at the intermediate level, so the program directors thought that the students would have the facility to do the cultural humility writing assignments in their second language.

Keeping the lessons of the previous study abroad courses in mind, blog prompts for this group were designed to would specifically cultivate the perspective of cultural humility. The blog prompts asked the students to describe, analyze, and then evaluate their experiences. A sample blog prompt asked:

Listen carefully to the language being used around you. Consider what you have heard as common formulas, such as greetings, introductions, saying good-bye, apologizing, or asking for favors. Think about how loudly or softly people in groups speak. Notice non-verbal behavior, such as how much people touch each other, smile, shake hands, etc. Listen also for words you don’t know.

- a. Describe what you observe/hear about English use.
- b. Compare it to your native language.
- c. What can you conclude about the appropriate use of what you observe?  
Provide any cultural insights from your observations.

These prompts were intended to help the students sharpen their observation skills and practice developing multiple perspectives of their experiences.

Unfortunately, the majority of the student writing for this course did not consistently exhibit the expression of new insights as a result of their observations. These students were able to describe their experiences consistently, and the majority of the assignment responses showed students comparing and contrasting

American culture and German culture. However, only two of the students in the group were regularly able to express new insights they gained as a result of these observations. A typical response for this program is as follows:

I've learnt a lot through listening to other people for grammar and pronunciation. I also think that my corrections from the blog texts helped me to see my own mistakes. I think, learning here was more effective than all my English lessons at home because in Cincinnati someone told me my own grammar mistakes and I could correct them... I could acquire new knowledge in the importance of culture and the understanding of culture.

Here the student is focused on his language skills. While he describes that he has new knowledge of the culture, he does not express his insights, even though it is the third component of the prompt. Since students in the 2009 United Kingdom study-abroad program did reflect on insights in their native language successfully, it is possible that this student might have been able to take this next step if he had been writing in his native language.

### **Discussion**

From these program assessments, one conclusion may be that explicitly structuring the blogs to elicit critical reflections that lead to a perspective of cultural humility is important for this learning process. Students do not necessarily practice this perspective naturally on their own, even when immersed in a foreign culture. However, it seems that they are able to do so when sufficiently prompted. It is possible that the language of reflection may have an effect on the depth of reflection. Despite having clearly structured prompts, students writing in their second language seemed to have difficulty, even though they had achieved an intermediate level of proficiency. One possible conclusion is that these reflections are more effective in advancing their cultural humility when written in the student's native language.

The principal difficulty students experienced seemed to be reaching the point of critical reflection, where the learners are able to accommodate and synthesize views different from their own. This key element of cultural humility does not seem to come naturally, regardless of language facility. It is possible for a person to be quite proficient linguistically and cognizant of the social language use and cultural behavior rules. Nevertheless, this person may still be unable to adapt to new situations that require accommodating different cultural expectations. Some students were able to make very clear observations about different cultural practices in their blogs, and then critically reflect on their own beliefs. However, articulating how they might need to adapt their behavior to accommodate the practices of the new culture was challenging to other students.

Since cultural humility does not come with rules, and is really a personal perspective, it is difficult to teach. In the authors' experience of study abroad, cultural humility is not so much taught as cultivated or prompted, and it requires intention. Certainly, in conversations, the students are asked to reflect and think beyond their own points of view, but deliberately structuring those reflections in

the blogs seemed to be a more effective way to encourage daily focused practice. Indeed, over time, the students did seem able to improve in their reflection practice, even if all were not entirely successful in the practice of expressing cultural humility.

### **Practical Applications**

Practicing cultural humility in study-abroad programs is ideal, since the urgency of adaptation is part of everyday life. The traditional foreign language classroom, however, is often very far removed from the culture of study. Nevertheless, blogs may also be useful in this context for structured critical reflection. The benefit of a blog is that it is inherently interactive, since it implies a dialog with people who will read the blog and comment. The basic cultural humility exercise of exploring one's own cultural identity is a good place to begin to realize how individuals cannot be understood through cultural stereotypes. The next exercise could be to identify the stereotype of the culture the class is studying, and then watch a movie or read a story from that culture. With this cultural data, students can compare the expression of the culture in the film or story to the stereotype. This exercise helps students understand the multi-faceted nature of the culture under study. Since this kind of personal exploration can be challenging, it is helpful for the instructor to guide students through the process of cultural humility reflection: to describe what is happening, analyze what cultural expectations may be influencing events, and create a new perspective on their own behavior.

Another set of exercises for the practice of cultural humility is in information-gap role-playing with observers as active participants in the role-play. In general, a role-play includes a passive audience, while the principle actors are the people engaged in the role-play. In this alternative kind of role-play, two participants do the role-play, and the rest of the class is assigned to be the observers. The information-gap role-play includes details of the interaction that are not shared by the two participants, and which need to be negotiated in the interaction. The observers are given the task of analyzing where the interaction breaks down, and what strategies the role players used to solve the problem posed in the assignment. At the conclusion of the role-play, the observers offer their analysis and compare it with the role players' perceptions. This type of exercise helps students practice observation and analysis. Students can be supported in evaluation by finishing the exercise with, "What could you do differently next time?" Examples of such a role-play are available in Appendix A.

As students complete foreign language courses or study-abroad courses, instructors hope that they will continue to use their foreign language skills. However, the present day work environment is such that students will come into contact with more people who speak languages other than the one they studied in class. The experience of learning a foreign language can help students be more empathetic to the situations of recent immigrants or colleagues who may be new to the local culture. If the skills for cultural humility, as well as specific cultural rules, are explicitly taught in foreign language classes, students can be even better prepared for their future employment and studies at home or in another country.

Cultural humility is a basic skill that translates to many situations, and the practice of the reflective skills of cultural humility in the language class can support learning the language of study more effectively.

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## Appendix A

### Sample Activities to Teach Cultural Humility

These activities are basic exercises the authors have used in their study abroad and foreign language classrooms. The problem the students address in the role-play can be changed to match whatever topic the class is studying. These are cooperative activities, and the instructor must emphasize to the students that both participants are responsible for the success of the interaction. Students can perform the role-play in their native or target language, depending on their proficiency. The self-reflection activity can be modified to suit the age and proficiency level of students.

#### *Role-Play for Secondary or University-Level Students*

Give cards to students explaining that they need to step away from the role of an expert and acknowledge when they might not know what to do next. Tell them to make the interaction work out well with whatever language they have. Instruct students to come to a clear conclusion, and be careful not to insult their partners.

Student 1: You are a border patrol officer. A person is trying to cross with an apple and a ham sandwich. According to your country's laws, neither fruit nor meat can be permitted to enter the country.

Student 2: You have been travelling for 22 hours, you have one more flight to go, and you are really hungry, but you haven't had time to eat the food you brought with you because the connection times were too short. Now you have to go through customs.

#### *Role-Play for Elementary or Middle School-Level Students*

Give situation cards to students explaining that they need to solve a problem. Tell them to talk with their partners using whatever language skills they have. Instruct students to come to a good solution and to be nice to their partners.

Student 1: You found a video game in a parking lot of the local shopping mall when you were there with friends. It is a game you have wanted to have. You take it with you to school.

Student 2: You lost a video game and notice another child playing it. You think it might be yours, since you know this student did not have this game a week ago.

#### *Self-Reflection (for all levels)*

Students receive the following writing prompts and turn in individual responses.

- (1) Define your culture in Anytown, USA. You may want to consider your race, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, level of education, work experience, socioeconomic status, religion, etc. How might this influence how you know who you are?
- (2) What are your own cultural beliefs and values? What are your family's cultural beliefs, and how do they differ from your own? How do they differ from what is considered normal where you live?
- (3) What stereotypes or beliefs do you have about persons from other cultures living in your town? What do you assume about them?
- (4) Think about a time when you became aware of being different from other people. Describe that situation and explain what effect it had on you.

The instructor collates anonymous comments for a general class discussion. The conclusion of the class discussion includes the same questions, but now the students are asked to talk about the culture of the language they are learning. The writing may be assigned as homework or an in-class activity. The amount of time given to the writing will depend on the students' writing proficiency. In classes of lower levels of writing proficiency, this assignment may work best in the students' native language. In classes of higher levels of writing proficiency, this assignment may work well in the language of study.

## Appendix B

### Sample Blog Prompts 2008 Germany Study Abroad

- (1) Your First Week
  - Reflect on your first week.
  - How are you coping with the language and culture? What differences between American culture and German culture have you experienced?
  - Describe your language class activities, as well as the afternoon and evening activities in which you participated this week.
  - What are your impressions of the *Mensa* [cafeteria] and how often do you eat there?
  - Describe *Kaufland* [shopping center] and your impressions of shopping there.
- (2) *Bergfest* [mid-point celebration]
  - You've reached the halfway point in the program. Reflect on how you are feeling physically and mentally/spiritually. How are you coping with the language and culture?
  - Describe one new friend in detail. Upload a photo or two.
- (3) Home
  - What was the highlight of the program for you?
  - Describe what surprised you most about living in German culture.
  - Reflect on the German you learned in the last three weeks.

### **2009 United Kingdom Study Abroad**

- (1) Listen carefully to the language being used around you. Listen for common ways people use conversational formulas such as greetings, introductions, saying good-bye, apologizing, or asking for favors. Pay attention to how loudly or softly people in groups talk with one another. Note the non-verbal behavior, such as how much people touch one another, smile, shake hands, etc. Also listen for words you don't know.
  - a. Describe what you observe/hear.
  - b. Compare it to your native language.
  - c. What can you conclude about appropriate use of what you observe? Share your cultural insights from this critique.
- (2) Notice what surprises you in this new place. Pay attention to how you react to things that you don't expect or you don't understand. Note which surprises are pleasant and which ones are uncomfortable.
  - a. Describe the pleasant and unpleasant surprises.
  - b. Compare how you deal with novelty here vs. when you approach novelty at home.
  - c. Explain what you are learning about yourself and the new place and how you are reacting to novelty.

### **2009 Study Abroad Hosted in the United States**

- (1) We visited the Freedom Center and learned about the history of slavery, the Underground Railroad, and the experiences of African Americans in the United States.
  - a. Describe the part of the museum that you found interesting, provoking, or disturbing.
  - b. Compare your experience in this museum to the experiences you have had visiting the WWII concentration camps.
  - c. Evaluate the value of keeping alive disturbing memories, and explain what kinds of benefits a culture can have from learning about historical violence.
- (2) We have visited three types of food stores common in urban America: a farmers market, a grocery store, and an international mega-store. How do food choices express cultural values? What are the values you perceive in these three stores?
  - a. Describe the differences between the three types of stores, such as the physical appearance, the goods sold (price, display), and the customers who shop there.
  - b. Analyze the benefits of shopping at each store.
  - c. Evaluate the socioeconomic status of customers who would be attracted to shop here.

# 4

## **A certificate of competence in language and culture**

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### **Abstract**

Small language programs and larger programs impacted by budgetary limitations often struggle to offer the full range of courses. Heavy teaching loads in lower-level courses and cuts to the number of faculty positions make the availability of majors and minors difficult or impossible. This paper describes an alternative for those programs unable to provide their students with the curriculum necessary for majors and minors: a Certificate of Competence in Language and Culture. The 14-credit-hour certificate has a central focus and includes a mandatory study-abroad experience. The focus of the certificate is both linguistic and cultural in nature, requiring upper-level language courses, a course in intercultural communication, and courses related to the study-abroad experience. Student demand for such recognition has been high, and the implementation of the program has provided very positive results.

**S**maller colleges and universities have dealt with numerous difficulties in providing a full language curriculum for many years. Faculty at these institutions ask themselves how one or two instructors can offer enough courses to justify allowing students to major in a language. Pedagogical concerns also exist with giving students the opportunity to minor in the language if there is only one instructor.

Additionally, the economic variables of the previous several years have had a severe impact on larger institutions. Federal and state budget cuts have decimated the number of language faculty at colleges and universities, not to mention the situation with K-12 instruction, where languages, music, and “extras” are the first subject areas dropped during tough deliberations. Less commonly taught

languages have been cut in ever-growing numbers. At the same time, the need for them appears to be greater than ever. Although enrollments in Spanish continue to grow, staple languages, such as French and German, come under close scrutiny from legislatures and administrators.

This article describes one way of addressing these difficulties. A transcriptable certificate with a focused and unifying theme can offer some satisfaction to students who both want and need to be recognized in some way for their language studies.

### **Review of the Literature**

Students are often encouraged to study abroad to take advantage of potentially life-altering interactions and the opportunities to improve language skills and cultural understanding through greater access to native speakers. As DeKeyser (2007) notes, “For some students, parents, teachers, administrators, and prospective employers, study abroad is not only the best form of practice, sometimes it is the only form they consider to be useful” (p. 208). However, research into actual linguistic and cultural gains from study abroad has produced mixed findings that may puzzle language educators and study abroad advisors. On the one hand, some studies reveal that immersion in another culture cannot guarantee gains in listening comprehension (Cubillos, Chieffo, & Fan, 2008), grammatical accuracy (Isabelli-García, 2010) and pragmatics (Taguchi, 2011). Moreover, living abroad and contact with authentic media may not “differentiate students who improve from those who do not” (Magnan & Back, 2007, p. 58; Martinsen, 2010).

On the other hand, some studies report significant gains in proficiency. For example, an increase in student proficiency is documented after study programs in Spain (Hernández, 2010) and Germany, where those who studied abroad after the third semester of college instruction have improved the most (Lindseth, 2010). Additionally, Badstübner and Ecke (2009) and Davidson (2010) report the greatest gains in the areas of cultural understanding, followed by gains in the areas of listening, reading, and speaking. Davidson (2010) also points out several factors that might determine the degree of gain, including the duration of study abroad, the initial level of proficiency, listening comprehension, and control of structures. Summarizing the literature, Kinginger (2008) states that, while study abroad is a venue that is conducive to language learning, the outcomes are not the panacea for which students and educators might hope. In other words, study abroad is not a guarantee in and of itself, but it does provide for the possibility that the gains may occur.

### **Economic Considerations**

Most language educators are fully cognizant of the stark reality of struggling to justify their programs directly to administrators and indirectly to legislatures. Local, regional, and national organizations sponsor letter-writing campaigns, and instructors lobby their senators and representatives. Despite these laudable efforts, language programs continue to decline in both the number of languages offered and the number of educators available to teach them.

These budgetary cuts have not been limited to smaller institutions seeking to balance their financial statements. Large state institutions have perhaps been most severely affected by the cuts. The degree to which curricula have been trimmed is too extensive to allow a comprehensive listing here. A few examples will suffice for the purpose of this article.

In 2010, Louisiana State University released 14 instructors of German, Greek, and Latin; majors in these three languages were phased out, and curricular offerings diminished considerably. Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Swahili were completely eliminated (Threlkeld, 2010). In the same year, according to Foderaro (2010), the State University of New York-Albany discontinued offering majors in French, Italian, Russian, and the classics. Several reasons were given for this decision, including the high cost of small programs, the ubiquity of English, and websites and other technological advances that offer immediate translations. Foderaro (2010) further notes the irony of enacting these curricular changes, especially when the mission statements emphasize the goal of preparing responsible, global, international citizens. Indeed, in 2010 the University of Maine halted offering degrees in German and Latin. The University of Nevada-Reno discontinued offering new majors in German studies and minors in Italian in 2011. In 2009, Winona State University temporarily ceased offering majors in French and German until the curriculum has been redesigned and made more relevant (Foderaro, 2010).

The budget compromise of 2011 did arguably the most devastating damage to schools, colleges, universities, and resource centers. Two Department of Education programs, Title VI of the Higher Education Act and the Fulbright-Hays Act, were slashed by 40% or \$50 million. Their remaining budget is \$76 million (Field, 2011). According to the website of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 2011), in 2010, the Senate Appropriations Committee eliminated all funding for the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP), the sole provider of federal funding for K-12 language learning. The results of this action remain to be seen, but it is possible that fewer students will consequently be entering college and university programs with intermediate or advanced levels of language proficiency. As state legislatures and the federal government cut funding for world language education, colleges and universities will likely continue to reduce the number of language majors and minors.

Certificates of proficiency are one alternative for programs that have suffered as a result of these cuts. Certificates have existed for some time in higher education. However, the requirements students must fulfill in order to receive a certificate vary greatly among institutions. For example, Georgia Tech University offers certificates in several languages and areas: Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Linguistics, Russian Studies, and Spanish. According to its website, the requirement is 12 hours in the language beyond the third semester (Georgia Tech University, 2011). At the University of Pennsylvania (2011), students are required to complete three courses composing nine credit hours cumulatively. Students must also, however, pass a proficiency exam prior to receiving the certificate. New York University (2011) offers various professional certificates, and students at different

levels of proficiency receive different certificates. A certificate model found at Brigham Young University (2011) provides an addition to majors and minors. At BYU, certificates are available to students majoring or minoring in a language, to students majoring in other disciplines, and to graduates of the institution. The appropriate level of proficiency according to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (1999) is shown on the transcript. As indicated by these examples, either the number of credit hours or the level of proficiency determines whether a student is eligible. Another thing that all the above mentioned certificate programs have in common is the apparent lack of a unifying theme.

The Global Studies minor at the State University of New York-Binghamton (2011) differs significantly from the models described above. Although it is a minor and not a certificate, it most closely resembles the certificate that is the primary focus of this paper. The minor has a unifying theme of global studies, and students are required to either study a language for one semester beyond the general education requirement or complete eight credit hours in non-language courses that focus on content that is global and/or international, including three mandatory study- abroad related courses.

### **The Certificate of Competence in Language and Culture at Drake University**

The Certificate of Competence in Language and Culture at Drake University, currently offered in Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian, and Spanish, is loosely based on the elements shared by several of the programs discussed above. It has a unifying theme that centers on the study-abroad experience and is focused on developing and demonstrating linguistic and cultural competence. The students interact directly with citizens of another country and act as cultural ambassadors for the U.S. or their home country. They both impact and are impacted by each person with whom they communicate.

In order to be admitted into the certificate program, students must complete an application. They must have a 2.5 overall grade point average (GPA) and a 3.0 GPA in language courses. The same must hold true at the time of graduation for the certificate to be awarded. The certificate consists of 14 credit-hours (See Table 1). Certificate seekers at Drake are required to complete six hours at the advanced level of language study. In order to fulfill the requirement, most students take two courses beyond the fifth semester. The courses offered at this level include a film course, literature courses, national identity courses, and several courses for special purposes, such as Spanish Health Communication and Spanish for Business. At least three of these six hours must be completed at the University.

Another three hours are devoted to intercultural communication. Because the certificate includes both language and culture, this course is a vehicle that provides students with a means of identifying distinguishing factors of the culture in which they plan to study, as well as analyzing elements of their own identity. Students are able to assess the target culture more effectively if they first look at themselves as individuals and as members of several larger cultures. This course focuses on un-

**Table 1.** Requirements for the Certificate of Competence in Language and Culture

<b>Name of Course</b>	<b>Credit Hours</b>	<b>When Taken</b>
<i>Study Abroad Experience I</i>	1	prior to study abroad
<i>Study Abroad Experience II</i>	1	during study abroad
<i>Study Abroad Experience III</i>	3	after study abroad
<i>Intercultural Communication</i>	3	anytime but encouraged before study abroad
Two language courses beyond the fifth semester	6	anytime but one of the courses must be taken at Drake

derstanding of basic concepts and principles of communication between people from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, within and outside the United States. Through reading, discussing, writing, and reflecting on relevant texts and films, students become acquainted not only with the theory and research in the area of intercultural communication but also learn to apply that knowledge. The goal is understanding and improving human interactions in both global and domestic contexts.

Courses associated with the study abroad experience comprise the remaining five hours. The pre-study abroad course (Study Abroad Experience I) is a one-credit-hour course. The course is by necessity taught in English, because the participants study different languages, and its focus is on culture and preparing students to live in a target culture and maximizing the benefits of study abroad. An instructor from the International Center on campus co-teaches the course. She also teaches a different two-hour “crash course” unrelated to the Certificate, for all students intending to study abroad. In the Study Abroad Experience I course, however, she expands the materials and conversation to allow for a more in-depth discussion. A professor of the World Languages and Cultures program is the other instructor for the course. He leads discussions on the culture-related articles.. Some scaffolding is built into the Study Abroad Experience I course, as students are asked to examine their own identities to better understand the identities of individuals in the target culture. Students write an identity paper that consists of an analysis of how their racial, ethnic, gender, and class identities were socially constructed (See Appendix A for the requirements).

The cultural topics examined in the course include the role of family, gender, work, race, food, customs, and values. For example, students may be assigned articles focusing on the role of women. They read about stereotypes associated with Latinas. They are then asked to answer the following questions: “What evidence is there of discrimination against women in a target country? For example, do fewer

women pursue higher education than men? Do they earn less?” The students then share in class what they have learned about their own culture. They also learn about the cultures of their classmates.

The other major assignment in the Study Abroad Experience I course consists of asking students to familiarize themselves with the vocabulary and cultural information needed to prepare for the culture-specific tasks. The students complete the actual 12 tasks as part of the subsequent course (Study Abroad Experience II). These 12 tasks require them to interact with native speakers while abroad. The list of tasks can be found in Appendix B. The primary rationale for developing the tasks was based on the observation that many students were willing to study in a country where English is not the native language, but they primarily interacted with fellow English speakers. Although language students almost unanimously claim that they want to become “fluent” while abroad, their experiences do not necessarily indicate that they are prepared to do what may be necessary to achieve the desired fluency.

The course that Drake students take while studying abroad (Study Abroad Experience II) does require them to take advantage of the linguistic immersion environment. When completing the tasks, students in this course, blog about what they have experienced. Because the students are studying in a variety of countries, they read and comment on the blogs of all their classmates in English. The assessment is based on their posts and their blog comments. It is the depth of their reflections, and not how successfully they complete the tasks that is the primary determinant of their grade.

Once students have studied abroad and returned to Drake, they enroll in a three-credit-hour capstone course (Study Abroad Experience III). The classroom atmosphere is very energetic. The discussions are engaging because all enrolled students have similar experiences, and their classmates are a captive audience interested to hear every detail. This capstone course requires a synthesis of all the preceding 11 credit hours taken toward earning the Certificate. The objectives of the course are listed below:

1. Students will demonstrate their linguistic and cultural competencies by taking a position on a number of global issues and will support that position orally and in writing utilizing critical-thinking skills. Students will reflect on how their opinions on the assigned topics have changed since studying abroad and why they believe they have changed.
2. Students will explore issues such as cultural, historical, geographic, and sociological characteristics of the country in which they have studied. Each of these topics from the Study Abroad Experience I course is revisited, and differences in students’ perceptions of these topics are examined.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to self-assess how well they have developed their intercultural communication skills (as discussed in the prerequisite Intercultural Communication course).
4. Students will analyze differences in values and customs between their

own culture and the target culture, and explain the differences in their perception. They will demonstrate the ability to analyze their own cultural values and behaviors, in order to better understand a member of another culture.

5. Students will analyze their study abroad experiences and reflect on how these experiences relate to their academic area of investigation (major).
6. Students will demonstrate awareness of the behavioral and attitudinal requirements for responsible global citizenship (a component of the University's mission statement).
7. Students will produce a cumulative, reflective electronic portfolio similar to those in each of the language courses. The ePortfolio will include samples of the students' work demonstrating linguistic competence, as well as reflective essays demonstrating understanding of significant cultural issues.
8. Students will mentor other Drake students interested in language studies and study abroad, and conduct presentations about their study abroad and language experiences.

The Study Abroad Experience III course has ambitious goals. Through self-reflection, the students assess the extent of their linguistic progress during their language study and compile the evidence in electronic portfolios for each semester. The depth of their cultural understanding is also revealed after they revisit comments in their culture blogs for each language course. Each course in the World Languages and Cultures program has eight objectives, including five linguistic and three cultural. The linguistic objectives involve listening, reading, writing, interpersonal speaking, and presentational speaking. The three cultural objectives cover three major areas: social structures, social behaviors and values, and social phenomena.

In addition, the course connects to the students' individual major through a written thesis and an oral presentation. The thesis is written in the target language on a global topic previously discussed in the course. The readings for the course focus on globalization. Students propose thesis topics that both relate to their major and to the course readings. Representative topics include population issues, issues of aging, environmental issues, and future sources of energy. The language instructor evaluates the thesis. That instructor communicates with the Study Abroad Experience III course instructor, who then issues a grade for the paper and sends comments from the language instructor to the student. The thesis is presented in English because students complete the Certificate at different levels of proficiency and in different languages. For the same reason, the language instructor determines an appropriate length for the thesis for each individual student. For example, students of Arabic with three years of the language are generally not able to write as much as students who have studied three years of Spanish. All students receive the same certificate, because there is no exit examination in which they must demonstrate a particular level of proficiency. The thesis is the main and final assignment in the Study Abroad Experience III. The assignment requires that students continue to use their language skills in their discussions of

global topics and apply their knowledge and experiences in the target culture. The students become “experts” on how global issues impact the culture in which they have studied, and all previous coursework becomes more relevant to them.

Drake University has offered the Certificate for only two years, and student interest has remained high. Currently 37 students are pursuing the Certificate. This number is significantly higher than the number of students majoring or minoring in languages during previous semesters. It appears that the Certificate and its requirements allow much more flexibility to more students. To date, students have studied in Egypt (and transferred to Morocco and Oman during the recent revolution there), Jordan, France, Austria, Germany, Japan, Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, and Spain. Although the Certificate does not offer the range of curricular options of a major or a minor, it has more coherence and focus than some larger programs. Revisiting topics in several courses, compiling electronic portfolios of work, and collaborating with others who have had similar study abroad experiences help to produce what the University and the language faculty desire: responsible global citizens. Having studied abroad and completed the Certificate, these students view the world differently and may be more likely to have a positive global impact during their lives.

In small colleges, whether they offer majors, minors, or certificates, students generally do not work with many different instructors. Students who take, for example, all six upper-level hours in Drake’s program with the same instructor may not be exposed to different accents, perspectives, and pedagogies. This gives one more reason for requiring the study-abroad experience. Some students, however, may not be able to study abroad for several reasons, including affordability, family obligations, or academic programs that offer few or no study abroad opportunities.

## **Conclusions**

Despite some limitations, the Certificate offers several benefits. While most small language departments would like to offer majors and minors, certificates provide a viable alternative when offering majors and minors is not possible. Compared to majors and minors, certificates do not require a wide range of courses. Programs that have always been small or forced, for one reason or another, to downsize, may still be able to recognize students’ linguistic achievement.

The development of the Certificate of Competence in Language and Culture was largely a response to student demand. The faculty members of the World Languages and Cultures program at Drake University have been surprised at the level of student and parent interest in the Certificate. Overall, the program’s enrollment numbers have increased by 49 students in the fall of 2011, compared to the same semester of 2010. The administration has also been very pleased by the increase in enrollment. This increase may be attributed to a variety of factors, but the addition of the Certificate is likely the most significant one, with minimal costs to the University. Recently, the program has become more visible in the campus community. Additionally, the Admissions office has marketed the Certificate to prospective students and their parents during campus visits. Being able to say that

the University offers a certificate is much more attractive than saying that there are no majors or minors.

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## Appendix A

### Guidelines for the Identity Paper for the Study Abroad I course

The assignment for this paper is to write an autobiographical report about how your present identity has been shaped by your race, ethnicity, gender, class, and any events that you feel have determined who you are. You will have spent the semester reading about these aspects of other cultures. Now you are being asked to examine your own culture.

When writing about your racial and ethnic identity, consider your ancestral origins and how your heritage has influenced who you are today. Reflect on such factors as physical characteristics, language, religion, and family customs and traditions. Also, think about such expressive factors as dress, music, dance, family stories, holidays, and celebrations. These all may be markers of your ethnic heritage. As you consider these factors in your paper, be certain to organize them logically within the text.

Remember that in the United States everyone has a racial and ethnic heritage. While it is central to some people's identity, others may not be conscious of it at all. This is often because they are members of the dominant racial and ethnic culture, which assumes its values and traditions are universal, or at least most significant or appropriate. If you belong to this group, look at yourself from the outside, from the perspective of another cultural system, several of which have been represented in the readings.

Also, consider how you learned to behave according to your gender. Think back to your earliest memories. When were you first aware of being male or female? How did your birth order (first-born, the only child, etc.) affect your family's expectations of you? If you have siblings of a different gender, were they treated differently than you? Were the expectations and behavioral standards different for them? Also, your own gender awareness has probably undergone changes. Record these changes and try to figure out what triggered them. After you have reflected on these matters, include them in your identity paper.

Finally, consider how your socioeconomic status reflects your family values, manners, dress, possessions, and education. Describe how this was evident during your own childhood and youth. Since socioeconomic status is strongly influenced by race and ethnicity, some of your considerations may overlap with those discussed previously in the paper. Careful thinking should help you gain a deeper understanding of complex socioeconomic factors that shape your identity.

### Appendix B

<b>Twelve Tasks for the Study Abroad Experience II</b>	
Task One	<p>Identify a current event that is controversial. Read two newspapers and compare/contrast the information. Also, speak to at least one member of the culture other than your own about the event. Ask how important it is, whether it will have a long-term impact, etc., as appropriate.</p> <p>Did you experience culture shock? When you spoke with someone about the event, did you notice any differences in the way you would discuss current events and the way the subject did? For example, was your subject more or less formal or direct than you? Did you have any difficulties understanding your conversation partner? If so, what did you do about it?</p>
Task Two	<p>Introduce yourself to at least three representatives of another culture. What did you say about yourself? What questions were you asked? Were you asked anything that you didn't expect? Was it easy or difficult to speak with these people? Why? Did you experience culture shock? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have any difficulties understanding your subjects? If so, what did you do about it?</p>
Task Three	<p>Identify an ethnic dish that is not readily available in your culture. Go to a restaurant, store, etc., where that food can be found and ask a server, a cook, or a store employee about that dish.</p> <p>What is its history? Why is it unique or representative of that culture? Could you easily prepare that dish in your culture? Why or why not? How is it prepared? Did you experience culture shock? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have any difficulties understanding your subject? If so, what did you do about it?</p>

Task Four	<p>Identify a place or a thing (a museum, a park, etc.) that is representative of the culture. Find at least two members of the culture and inquire about why it represents that culture.</p> <p>Did you experience culture shock while talking about the place or thing? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have any difficulties understanding your subjects? If so, what did you do about it?</p>
Task Five	<p>Identify and attend a public event (a festival, a fair, etc.) that is celebrated in the culture. Speak with at least two members of the culture who are present. Choose two representatives who are quite different, e.g., young vs. old, male vs. female, etc. Ask why the event is important.</p> <p>What is its history? Did you experience culture shock while talking about the event? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have any difficulties understanding your subjects? If so, what did you do about it?</p>
Task Six	<p>Speak to at least two people close to your age or younger who would be familiar with some of the slang that is currently used in the target language. Ask for their help in identifying at least 15 words or phrases. In your post, list these words and expressions and provide English translations.</p> <p>Did you experience culture shock while talking to the members of the culture? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have any difficulties understanding your conversation partners? If so, what did you do about it?</p>
Task Seven	<p>Call a business owned and run by someone from the target culture. Ask when it is open and where it is located.</p> <p>How do people answer the phone there? Did you find it is more difficult to speak on the phone than in person? Why or why not? Did you experience culture shock while talking on the phone? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have any difficulties understanding the person on the phone? If so, what did you do about it?</p>
Task Eight	<p>Go to a post office in the target country and mail something. Compare this experience to your home culture.</p> <p>How different are the mailing costs? How did the person working there interact with you? Did the other customers speak to you? Did you experience culture shock while there? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have difficulties understanding the people? If so, what did you do about it?</p>

Task Nine	<p>Ask three members of the culture for directions to one of the following: a bank, a restaurant, a post office, a movie theater, etc. How did they respond to you? Were they ready to help? Did they ask where you are from or other questions? How does asking questions and getting responses differ between this culture and your own? Did you experience culture shock while asking for directions? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have any difficulties understanding the people? If so, what did you do about it?</p>
Task Ten	<p>Ask two representatives of the target culture for their views of the U.S. Ask if they view the people in the U.S. differently than they view the government. Did you experience culture shock while talking about this topic? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have any difficulties understanding the subjects? If so, what did you do about it?</p>
Task Eleven	<p>Find two people who are members of a minority in your country or culture. Ask about how they feel they are treated, why they are there, what kind of work they do, etc. Learn as much as you can without becoming too offensive or obtrusive. Did you experience culture shock while talking with them? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have any difficulties understanding the people? If so, what did you do about it?</p>
Task Twelve	<p>Find two members of the target culture and ask about giving gifts in that culture. When do people give gifts? What kinds of things are given for various events? Is one expected to reciprocate? Should one bring a gift when invited to someone's house? Do different flowers have different meanings in the culture? Did you experience culture shock while talking about gift giving? Did you learn anything meaningful about the culture? If so, what? Did you notice any differences between your style of communication and theirs? If so, what were they? Did you have difficulties understanding the people? If so, what did you do about it?</p>



# 5

## Teaching culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century language classroom

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### Abstract

The paper presents an overview of the research on teaching culture and describes effective pedagogical practices that can be integrated into the second language curriculum. Particularly, this overview tries to advance an approach for teaching culture and language through the theoretical construct of the 3Ps (Products, Practices, Perspectives), combined with an inquiry-based teaching approach utilizing instructional technology. This approach promotes student motivation and engagement that can help overcome past issues of stereotyping and lack of intercultural awareness. The authors summarize the research articles illustrating how teachers successfully integrate digital media together with inquiry learning into instruction to create a rich and meaningful environment in which students interact with authentic data and build their own understanding of a foreign culture's products, practices, and perspectives. In addition, the authors review the articles that describe more traditional methods of teaching culture and demonstrate how they can be enhanced with technology.

**“The digital revolution is far more significant than the invention of writing or even of printing. It offers the potential for humans to learn new ways of thinking and organizing social structures.”**

Douglas Engelbard (1997)

**T**he advent of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) drew attention to the vital role of culture in language classrooms and defined culture as a fundamental part of the second language (L2) learning

process. Professional conferences and journals focused on cultural learning “as an instructional objective equally as important as communication” (Moore, 2006, p. 4). While language teachers have recognized the need to incorporate more cultural activities in order to promote students’ cultural and intercultural understanding to “help combat the ethnocentrism that often dominates the thinking of our young people” (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999, p. 47), the question lingers as to how such cultural teaching should and could most effectively occur at the classroom level.

The purpose of this article is to summarize the research related to the teaching of culture that describes effective pedagogical practices and can be integrated into the second language curriculum in ways that engage learners actively in the acquisition of language and culture. This overview will attempt to advance an approach to the teaching of culture and language through the theoretical construct of the 3Ps (Products, Practices, Perspectives) (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999), or content, combined with an inquiry teaching approach (pedagogy) utilizing digital media (instructional technology) and provide guidelines for successful classroom application.

The benefits reaped by students through authentic, collaborative, and contextualized learning tasks that result in digital products for an audience are well documented in the research (Maor & Roberts, 2011). When teachers integrate powerful technological tools into their instruction, students are allowed to personally interact with real data and solve open-ended problems. Integrating technology in this manner places the majority of responsibility for negotiating meaning in the hands of the learners. This learner-centered approach allows students to start with what they know and build their own understanding of culture. The integration of content, pedagogy, and instructional technology when constructing knowledge promotes a rich and engaging learning environment for foreign language learners. In addition, the authors will review the research that illustrates how teachers can utilize more traditional methods of teaching culture (e.g., folklore, fairytales, authentic pictures, art, etc.) and improve them with technology to make them more effective.

### **Culture in a Foreign Language Classroom**

Research on teaching culture has shown that language and culture are closely related (e.g., Brown, 2007; Kramsch, 1998; Kuang, 2007; Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005; Schulz, 2007; Tang, 1999) and are best acquired together (Schulz, 2007). Brown (2007) describes the interrelatedness of language and culture stating “that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. The acquisition of a second language, except for specialized, instrumental acquisition [...], is also the acquisition of a second culture” (p. 189-190). Based on these findings, it is clear that language and culture learning are inextricably linked, but what role does culture play in language teaching and how is it being taught? Lafayette (1988) noted that teachers spent the greatest amount of time and effort on teaching grammatical and lexical components of the language, leaving the culture as the weakest component in the curriculum. Strasheim (1981) concluded

earlier that teachers spent approximately 10% of teaching time on culture, whereas a study conducted 25 years later by Moore (2006) found that at least 80% of the teachers surveyed indicated they were teaching culture more than half of their instructional time. Although teachers have begun to incorporate more culture in the lesson, the major concern that remains is finding effective ways for integrating culture and language that prepare the learners to communicate and collaborate effectively in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A number of definitions of culture have emerged over the past 50 years. In the 1960s, social scientists viewed culture as closely related to human learning. Since that time, there has been an ongoing discussion on the definition of culture. Despite multiple attempts and continuous efforts to define the term “culture,” researchers have not yet come up with a single agreed-upon definition (Tang, 2006) or a common denominator, because culture is a “very broad concept embracing all aspects of human life” (Seelye, 1993, p. 15). The lack of an overarching definition presents foreign language teachers with the challenge of determining which components or segments of the target culture should be taught. As a result, culture is viewed as composed of many different parts, some of which are emphasized in the classroom, while others are not. Moreover, this lack of a common definition results in a separation of culture in terms of the fine arts, history, and geography that does not represent the full range of features involved in a culture. Tang (2006) cautions teachers to remember that “in categorizing culture for practical purposes, [they] should be cautious not to lose sight of the inherently holistic nature of this concept” (p. 86). Although foreign languages may be no longer taught as a compendium of rules through drills and contrived dialogues, culture is still often taught separately and not integrated in the process of foreign language learning. According to the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999), “the true content of the foreign language course is not the grammar and the vocabulary of the language, but the cultures expressed through that language” (p. 43).

According to research, classroom activities that are not contextualized and attached to real life issues, activities, and concerns, do not help the students learn to use L2 (e.g., Firth & Wagner, 1997; Hall, 1997; Stoller, 2006; van Lier, 2000, 2002). Second language learning has been reconceptualized over the last decade as a participatory process, in which a learner is not only a learner of new ways of expressing ideas but rather the learner becomes a learner of new ways of thinking, behaving, and living in an L2 community (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Young & Miller, 2004). Below, the authors will review the research pertaining to the three components – 3Ps, inquiry-based instruction, and technology, that supports the importance of incorporating them in the teaching of culture.

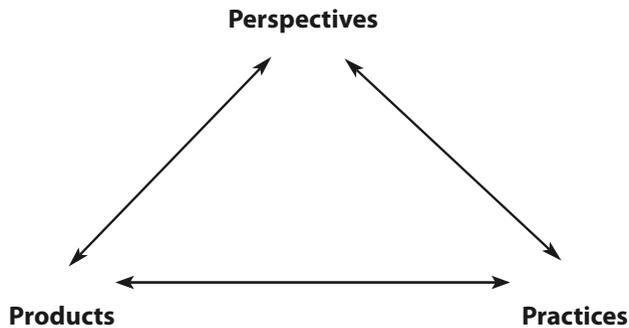
### **Products, Practices, Perspectives (3Ps)**

Germane to this discussion is an examination of the currently available most effective practices in teaching culture to achieve the cultural goals stated in the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1999):

- 2.1 Students should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.
- 2.2 Students should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Although there has been an extensive discussion on how to teach culture in a foreign language classroom, educators are still looking for effective techniques and approaches that allow language teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to teach culture in ways that promote authentic communication.

Since language emerges from societal interactions, L2 learners cannot truly learn the language without acquiring knowledge about its culture and native speakers. As mentioned earlier, learning about another culture is now one of the core objectives in the foreign language classroom. *The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for K-12 Learners* include sections on both cultural competence and linguistic performance and delineate how well students should perform in L2 linguistic and cultural domains as a result of foreign language instruction. These guidelines come from the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999), a document which describes a set of goals for foreign language learning. These Standards, organized around five main goals (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) articulate the essential skills and knowledge an L2 student needs in order to achieve language proficiency. The definition of culture that the authors will be using and consistently referring to in this article emanates from the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) and its Cultures goal, in which the term “culture” [...] includes the philosophical perspectives, the behavioral practices, and the products – both tangible and intangible – of a society” (p. 47). Such a categorical approach and the relationship among the three components are represented in a triangle diagram that reflects “how the products and practices are derived from the philosophical perspectives that form the world view of a cultural group” (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999, p. 47). In this context, cultural practices are “patterns of behavior accepted by a society” or, in other words, “what to do where and when” (Lafayette, 1988, p. 213), as well as other forms of procedural aspects of culture (e.g., rites of passage, use of the forms of discourse, etc.). Cultural products might be tangible (e.g., a sculpture, a painting, a piece of literature, etc.) or intangible (e.g., political system, a system of education, a dance, etc.). Cultural perspectives can be described as popular beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions held by the members of L2 culture. Figure 1 depicts the relationship of the three components of culture (3Ps) according to the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (1999). This triangle model of the cultural framework represents how products, practices, and perspectives are interrelated, and allows teachers to see the relationships among the three elements of culture to consider when planning instructional lessons.



**Figure 1.** The Culture Triangle (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999, p. 47) [Note: Reprinted with permission from ACTFL.]

The most significant improvement of the 3P framework in comparison to its preceding concept of the “big C” and “little c” cultures (Alatis, Straehle, Gallenberger, & Ronkin, 1996; Phillips & Terry, 1999) is the expansion of the definition of culture to include how a specific culture behaves and interacts. According to Lange (1999), defining culture in terms of the 3Ps avoids “the common, overworked conflict between C and c by interweaving the formal and informal aspects of daily life, as one normally lives it in any culture” (p. 60). Regarding materials and resources for teaching culture, the 3P approach “permits the use of any document — be it an advertisement, newspaper article, or literature text — for cultural learning where appropriate” (Lange, 1999, p. 60).

This re-conceptualized approach to culture shifted the focus of teaching culture to a study of underlying values, attitudes, and beliefs, rather than simply learning about cultural products and practices. As pointed out by Morain (1997), L2 learners experience little difficulty with understanding L2 cultural products and practices, however, they have trouble identifying and understanding cultural perspectives. According to Morain (1997), the challenge with cultural perspectives lies in the fact that values, beliefs, and attitudes are intangible, and therefore cannot be easily introduced by a teacher. Textbooks also rarely contain any information on values, attitudes, and beliefs in L2 culture, making the teacher’s task even more challenging.

One of the challenges teachers face when introducing cultural products or practices is that delivered information, such as bits of trivia, can appear to be disconnected, and possibly lead to stereotypes. By using the 3P cultural framework in their planning, teachers can ensure that culture is explored in a systematic and contextual way, as well as allow for some flexibility (Lange, 1999). In addition, this framework helps teachers tie together the disparate knowledge about products and practices, while helping students begin to relate products and practices to perspectives and acquire a deeper understanding of culture overall.

### **Inquiry Teaching Approach**

There has been no shortage of methods and approaches for teaching culture. These include the use of authentic materials (Galloway, 1985; Omaggio, 1986), cultural capsules (Taylor & Sorensen, 1961), culture clusters (Meade & Morain, 1973), culture assimilators (Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis, 1971), incorporation of proverbs, music, songs, celebrations of festivals (Hendon, 1980), and finally, study-abroad programs. For example, Hughes (1986) proposed teaching strategies for cultural awareness that include the comparison method, culture assimilators, drama, TPR (Total Physical Response), newspapers, and media. Krasner (1999) promoted observations through movies and other authentic materials, having students visit ethnic restaurants or sections of their hometown, presentations on the customs and traditions of L2 culture, and role-plays in which students demonstrate appropriate cultural behavior in a given situation. Peterson and Coltrane (2003) recommended opportunities for students to communicate with L2 native speakers and the use of literature.

Moore (1996) examined the teaching of culture in high school foreign language classrooms, specifically how frequently it was taught, which teaching techniques were most frequently used, and how effective they were in achieving the stated cultural objectives. Moore (1996) grouped the identified ten techniques into two types: 1) techniques that focus on the products and practices only; and 2) techniques that allow for the discussion of the relationship between the 3Ps – products, practices, and perspectives. A questionnaire was sent to 210 randomly selected foreign language teachers in upstate New York. The results of the study indicated that only 26% of the respondents taught culture in all their lessons. More than half of the respondents (54%) indicated that the most frequent activity for teaching culture in their classrooms was asking students to read the notes in the textbooks, followed by 46% of teachers who used authentic materials, whereas 41% of the respondents used lecture to present information. These findings indicate that the teachers tend to resort to sources like textbooks and lectures to teach basic facts about the L2 culture that do not engage students in the process of deeper understanding of the target culture. As a result of the shift from teaching to learning, the acquisition of culture, much like that of language, should be changing from teacher lectures about culture to students discovering culture first hand through inquiry projects and activities, placing the learner at the center of the learning process. Such an approach changes the nature of a classroom from a place where language is taught, to one where opportunities for learning of various kinds are provided through the interactions that take place between and among the participants (Kramsch, 1993). It is important that teachers recognize that students need to have sufficient knowledge and understanding of their own culture that will allow them to create a bridge from their culture to L2 culture (Kramsch, 1993).

A deeper understanding of daily life culture, such as housing, food, and patterns of behavior through the lens of sociological and anthropological studies can be achieved through the integration of the theoretical model of the practices, perspectives, and products by using digital media. According to Savignon and

Sysoyev (2005), “cultures are never static” (p. 36). Certainly, there are aspects of culture that do not change or change at a slower rate, such as values, norms, and historical heritage (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005), but teachers need “to recognize the limits of this static nature and to understand that the teaching of culture is more related to the process of discovery than it is to static information” (Lange, 1999, p. 60). This underscores that culture, as well as language, is constantly changing, it is in flux (Lange, 1999). The dynamic nature of culture brings a number of challenges and concerns for teachers trying to choose relevant teaching materials and activities (Savignon & Sysoyev, 2005). While textbooks often depict culture as static, the digital media, authentic products and texts provide a more dynamic environment through direct access to most current practices, perspectives, and products. The teachers’ major task is to bring both language and culture in their social reality (Lange, 1999), in order to make sure that the students do not possess incomplete or outdated knowledge about the target language and its culture. With the development of the 3P model, according to Lange (1999), there is a new focus “on learner performance with products, practices, and perspectives” (p. 106).

This paradigm shift from passive receivers of information to active constructors of knowledge places the learners in the role of inquirers who investigate and discover their own, as well as a second or third culture. In inquiry-based teaching, the students are engaged in meaningful learning that fosters higher-order thinking to assist students in uncovering and exploring the hidden meanings and significances embedded in L2 culture. According to Tang (2006), “not only should students know the *what* and *how* about a culture, but also the *why*. It is the *why*, as has been argued previously, that enriches and sustains the memory about a second culture accumulated in the learning process” (p. 89). Since the Standards promote making meaningful connections and comparisons (Goal 3, Connections and Goal 4, Comparisons), it is important that students develop reasoning skills to make these kinds of connections and comparisons. One of the major goals for a teacher is create inquiry questions that provoke interest in the target culture and will lead to important discoveries about the L2 culture and people and thus, develop understanding of cultural differences. According to Short, Harste, and Burke (1996), “curriculum as inquiry is a philosophy, a way to view education... Inquiry is more than problem solving...inquiry suggests alternate answers,” (p. 51). A number of researchers (Allen, 2004; Grittner, 1996; Tavares & Cavalcanti, 1996) state that the teaching of culture is most effective when students discover L2 culture, rather than having information delivered. For instance, Tavares and Cavalcanti (1996) believe that the main aim of teaching culture is “to increase students’ awareness and to develop their curiosity towards the target culture and their own, to make comparisons among cultures” (p. 19). Grittner (1996) acknowledges that culture learning should give students multiple opportunities to explore various facets of L2 culture and make meaning of their discoveries. Allen (2004) supports this idea indicating that being actively involved in the discovery process develops students’ ability for deeper thinking that promotes comparing and contrasting L2 and L1 cultures and becoming “more aware of their own metacognitive processes and developed critical thinking skills” (p. 238). Thus, an

inquiry approach to teaching allows students to ask questions that are relevant or particularly interesting to them, collect necessary information, create answers by investigation, generate a theory, present their findings to other students, and then formulate new questions that are derived from the original questions.

### **Technology in Teaching Culture**

Technology has changed the nature of instruction and learning. Teachers are exploring digital technologies to make learning more effective and engage students actively. Technology promotes socially active language in multiple authentic contexts due to its “accessibility, flexibility, connectivity speed and independence of methodological approach” (Gonzalez, 2009, p. 62). It gives foreign language teachers various opportunities to create better and more effective instructional materials to teach not only the language structure, but also the target culture. Students can take advantage of technology by learning in formal and informal settings through interactive social spaces (Kukulska-Hulme, 2010). Technological devices such as smart phones, laptops and computers, PDAs, etc., as well as Web 2.0 technologies are widely used to support student learning in a classroom setting, and they have opened new vistas for language learning and teaching in particular (Lee, 2009). One of the alluring benefits of technology is that it provides authentic communication in an interactive environment that facilitates the teaching of culture (Lee, 2009). Through the use of interactive media, students become less dependent on the printed word and more engaged with authentic cultural content they can access and explore freely, because they have more control of the selection and application of materials and resources. These numerous resources and materials allow teachers to tailor digital media to make culture learning more relevant and accessible to the students in their classroom (Moore, 2006). With the incorporation of technology, both the teacher and the students become part of the interactive environment. Technology creates an “open-ended” (Hellebrandt, 1996, p. 257) learning environment in which the results are not predetermined. More importantly, with interactive web resources that provide the benefits of networking and real time communication, the students can continue to learn the target language and enhance their cultural understanding outside the classroom (Moore, 2006). Technology permits both teachers and students “to go beyond quick and superficial stops on the information highway and establish meaningful interactive learning scenarios” (Hellebrandt, 1996, p. 263).

A number of researchers have investigated the use of technology in an L2 classroom. For instance, Levy (2009) describes technologies that can be used in a foreign language classroom in relation to skills, including grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, pronunciation, listening, speaking, and culture. Levy (2009) suggests that “simply accessing an L2 Web site can expose learners to numerous aspects of the target culture” (p. 776). However, when exploring the websites, learners are engaged passively, which may result in low retention. Similar results were found in Moore’s study (2006), in which it was concluded that the majority of classroom students simply “surf the net” rather than being engaged in the

learning. On the other hand, only a few teachers indicated that they use Internet for meaningful activities.

Kukulska-Hulme (2010) and Lee (2009) provide a list of various activities, which have emerged during the period of 2005-2010, that can be used in a FL classroom. These activities include social applications (e.g., Facebook) and blogging (e.g., Twitter); mobile Internet access (browsing websites and reading news); use of multiple media (watching movies, listening to audio books, podcasts and vodcasts); location-based activities (using GPS to find a place); and user-created content (making a film, creating a podcast) (Kukulska-Hulme, 2010, p. 8). Such activities allow language learners to maximize the opportunity to be exposed to L2 in meaningful and authentic contexts and audiences. This leads to learners' construction of their own L2 cultural knowledge (Kukulska-Hulme, 2010). In addition, these tools increase opportunities for students to communicate in L2 not only within the classroom walls, but also outside the classroom (Lee, 2009).

#### *Web 2.0 Media*

Teachers find blogs attractive for at least two reasons—interactivity and collaboration (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008). Blogs promote reading and writing, knowledge sharing, feedback and reflection, as well as cultural learning. By reading blogs written by native speakers, students can gain cultural understanding of different perspectives of L2 native speakers (Lee, 2009). There are a number of freely available blog publishing tools, such as LiveJournal, Edublogs, Blogger, etc., that can be adapted in a foreign language classroom. Blogs are powerful vehicles for self-expression and self-empowerment (Blood, 2002). Oravec (2002) suggests that blogs can enhance students' critical-thinking ability, literacy skills, as well as assist in using the Internet as a research tool. Although the research on blogging in a FL classroom is still emerging, teachers are beginning to incorporate blog projects in FL instruction in order to teach practices and perspectives of the target culture (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008).

For instance, Ducate and Lomicka (2008) conducted a study on a year-long blogging project in French and German classrooms. In particular, the researchers explored the steps students go through when reading and writing blogs, using a blog server in the target language, their reaction to blogging, and how self-expression is characterized in blogs. Topics for blogging varied from daily life, to current events, to popular culture of the target language. According to researchers, from these varied topics, students could “get a taste of everyday German and French culture, such as public transportation or striking, as well as a feel for the blogger's personality and interests, including both practices and perspectives of the Bloggers regarding French/German and international issues” (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008, p. 15). The students were surveyed at the end of the semester, and the results from these surveys demonstrate that the students found blogging helpful in terms of improving their reading and writing skills, in particular vocabulary and grammar, as well as their knowledge of L2 culture. The students were able to gain a better understanding of not only the target language products and practices, but also its perspectives. Blogs “provided students with a window into the target culture that

they would never get from their textbook alone” (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008, p. 24) and presented “the opportunity to understand their own culture in a new way while learning about the foreign culture” (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008, p. 22).

Another digital application, podcasting, has become a popular Web 2.0 tool in the FL classroom (Lee, 2009). This online audio file allows L2 learners to listen digitally to authentic recordings and record and publish their own original contributions. Such online native speaker podcasts make it possible for the students to explore the target language and culture at their own pace (Lee, 2009). Lee (2009) conducted a study that explored language learners’ perspectives on the use of blogs and podcasts in a foreign language classroom and reports that students had a positive attitude towards the inclusion of these digital technologies. Students reported that they were able to exchange cultural perspectives with native speakers that helped them develop cross-cultural knowledge and a deeper understanding of certain aspects of the target culture. Lee (2009) suggested that “learning the target culture from native speakers’ experiences and perspectives is more meaningful than the surface learning of a set of simple facts about the target culture in a traditional classroom setting, as shown in the previous research” (p. 433). Foreign language teachers can engage the students in listening to native speaker podcasts and have them create their own with such popular software programs as Audacity (<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>) and iMovie (<http://www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/>) (Lee, 2009). For example, Notes in Spanish ([www.notesinspanish.com](http://www.notesinspanish.com)) contains a number of podcasts about conversations in Spanish on real-life topics that range from beginning to advanced levels (Lee, 2009).

Incorporating virtual worlds in classroom instruction presents an opportunity for learners to experience L2 culture online (Levy, 2009). For instance, Active Worlds (<http://www.activeworlds.com/>) and Second Life (<http://www.secondlife.com/>) are popular online programs that are “richly articulated examples of a virtual world, in which avatars that represent individual users can interact with one another in a wide variety of situations, including dedicated spaces for language learning” (Levy, 2009, p. 777). For teachers of Spanish, virtual world—Croquelandia (<http://sites.google.com/site/croquelandia/>) engages students in additional practice of Spanish pragmatics (Levy, 2009).

#### *Traditional Methods of Teaching Culture Improved with Technology*

The more traditional methods and approaches to teaching culture, such as movies and video, can be enhanced through the integration of digital media. Feature films have become readily available and have been included in numerous textbooks and designed to actively involve the learner (Aparisi, Blanco, & Rinka, 2007; Blanco & Tocaimaza-Hatch, 2007). Foreign language instructors are beginning to incorporate more movies in the FL classroom as “an accessible window” (Bueno, 2009, p. 319) to the target culture through “combined effects of images, sounds, camera, plots and dialogue” (Stephens, 2001, p. 2). According to Bueno (2009), media literacy promotes cross-cultural competence and comprehension focused on meaning rather than on form, as well as repeated exposure to L2 cultural products, practices, and perspectives, and the target language itself.

Herron, Cole, Corrie, and Dubreil (1999) conducted a study investigating the effectiveness of using FL video with sound to improve students' cultural knowledge. Video was incorporated in a university first-semester French coursework, and students were required to listen to French scripted videos which introduced the students to French people, customs, traditions, food, cities, and dwellings presented in culturally authentic situations. The overall finding revealed that students were able to significantly improve their knowledge of French culture from watching videos and participating in the activities associated with the videos (Herron et al., 1999). Videos place students in the role of observers of first-hand images of L2 culture, social norms, habits, and interactions. This helps students be less apt to make judgments on whether these practices are "good" or "bad." In turn, this leads to less stereotyping and a realization that customs, values, and language vary by regions, country, or culture (Bueno, 2009).

Folklore and fairytales have been examined as effective venues for teaching culture in a foreign language classroom (Akpınar & Ozturk, 2009; Davidheiser, 2007; Gholson & Stumpf, 2005; Kowalski, 2002; Morain, 1997; Seelye, 1993) because they are an integral part of people's everyday life (Gholson & Stumpf, 2005). Morain (1997) proposed the idea that folklore is superior to literary writing because it depicts the attitudes of large groups of people. According to Seelye (1993), "a study of carefully selected folk materials could illuminate some of the important cultural themes that underlie a country's thought and action" (p. 19). Gholson and Stumpf (2005) believe that folklore might help promote cultural dialogue in which L2 learners gain respect for differences between their native culture and L2 culture, as well as acknowledge the similarities in both cultures. Akpınar and Ozturk (2009) suggest that folklore can be taught in an L2 classroom through an inquiry approach. Folklore engages the students in exploring the theme and structure of a folktale, relating these to their L1 background knowledge, and then drawing conclusions about the target culture, its beliefs, values, lifestyles, history, etc. (Akpınar & Ozturk, 2009). Furthermore, such use of an inquiry approach to teaching L2 culture through folklore "broadens the pool of ideas from which they [L2 learners] expand their problem-solving and decision-making skills" (Temple, Martinez, Yokota, & Naylor, 2002, p. 160).

In particular, fairytales provide students with opportunities to explore not only the historical background information, but also learn about values and morals and to construct their own judgment (Davidheiser, 2007). As one of the ways to incorporate technology in teaching culture with folklore and fairytales, a teacher can ask the students to write their own conclusion to the fairytale or folklore story they are reading, or create their own story using storybird.com. Storybird (<http://storybird.com>) is a virtual collection of artwork writers can use to build their stories. Students can work either independently or collaboratively, and the finished work can be easily shared with peers and even with a global audience. Such a learning activity fosters interpretation of the cultural information the students learned from the fairytale, promotes creative writing, and contextualized language practice. Having the students write their own conclusion, or a new fairytale, makes

them process cultural knowledge they gained while working with the authentic fairytale, as well as its vocabulary, on a deeper level (Davidheiser, 2007).

The availability of technology resources at a teacher's disposal has made it easier for teachers to find culturally authentic materials (Bush, 2007). When instructors integrate authentic images found online, the teaching of cultural awareness becomes more motivating and effective, as it increases the cultural content of the course (Bush, 2007). In addition to authentic pictures, art is another venue for teaching culture in an L2 classroom. Berho and Defferding (2005) propose the incorporation of target culture artwork, as well as student-created art pieces. Since culture is claimed to be an integral part of language learning, using art, as well as the study of artists' lives, presents L2 learners with the opportunities to explore the values and themes of the target culture (Berho & Defferding, 2005). One of the ways to incorporate art that can be used to visit museums in the target language country is Google Art Project ([www.googleartproject.com](http://www.googleartproject.com)). It allows the learners to virtually tour museums and peruse artwork. Students can collect pieces of art that appeal to them and save them in their own collection using "Create an Artwork Collection" feature. They can also add comments to each painting explaining why they chose that particular artwork. The whole collection can then be shared with the teacher and the classmates by either presenting it to the whole class or discussing it in small groups. The students can analyze the common themes, write stories inspired by the art piece, research the artists' lives, and what inspired them to create their particular masterpieces. These can then be shared digitally with audiences using Prezi (<http://prezi.com>), a free Web 2.0 presentation tool.

Berho and Defferding (2005) observed college-level Spanish and French classes in which art and student art projects were incorporated in the instruction. Target culture artwork provided abundant resources for language development while examining the history and culture of the foreign language (Berho & Defferding, 2005). Presenting various art works from a target culture that have a common theme allowed the students to practice comparing and contrasting skills either orally or in writing; asking students to create their own pieces of art encourages them to be creative, to communicate their ideas through art and later share them with the class (Berho & Defferding, 2005). Organizing exhibitions of student artwork engaged the students in a communicative activity during which they had to describe their work, talk about the inspiration, the techniques, colors, materials, the message behind their work, as well as to practice giving and receiving praise and expressions of emotion. Such a student-centered communicative activity provided "a welcome venue for communication, both as receptor and producer" (Berho & Defferding, 2005, p. 272). VoiceThread (<http://voicethread.com>), a totally web-based application, allows the teacher to place collections of media, such as images, videos, documents, and presentations at the center of an asynchronous conversation. A VoiceThread allows language learners to have conversations and to make comments using any mix of text, a microphone, a web cam, a telephone, or an uploaded audio file. VoiceThread runs inside a web browser, so there is no software to download, install, or update. By placing an image of a work of art or

an artifact on the screen, students can share insights and reactions through oral or written comments.

### Conclusion

The digital resources allow teachers to create new techniques, as well as reevaluate and improve the more traditional techniques that help bring the target culture into the classroom. Research has shown that language learning should occur in a dynamic and active manner. Technology-based activities together with an inquiry learning approach allow students to interact directly with the second language and its culture without time and place restrictions and to explore and construct a deeper understanding of L2 cultural knowledge.

Technology incorporated in the existing 3P model can expand teaching opportunities and offer new venues for the learners through which they can build their language and culture knowledge. As illustrated in this article, a variety of technology tools and applications exist to allow the teacher to tailor language learning to individual students as they interact, explore, and experiment with the target language and culture. The digital platform serves as a dynamic learning environment that promotes an understanding of the intersection of culture and language in all aspects of cultural understandings, both tangible and intangible, and develops and improves strategies that are conducive for learning the L2 cultural concepts.

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# 6

## **Practical implementation of technology into foreign language curricula**

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### **Abstract**

Traditionally, foreign language teachers have accepted technology as a necessary tool to encourage their students to practice hearing and speaking the language. However, today's technology is continually evolving, and implementing technology can be overwhelming. In this article the author shares strategies for implementing low-to-no-cost technology into the foreign language classroom. Foreign language teachers need not fear technology. Instead, they can use the ideas presented here to help students "touch the world" by using simple communication and presentation tools like Skype, Google, Facebook, PowerPoint, online portfolios, YouTube, TeacherTube, and "smart" devices, to bring culture and language into their classrooms in new and exciting ways.

**T**here is no avoiding technology in education. Foreign language education is no exception. Technology can be the connection teachers are looking for with the next generation of students. Educators must find ways to engage students, maintain their interest in the topics, and equip students with the skills they need to become productive global citizens. In essence, no matter how students become engaged in the lesson or how they are motivated to practice the language, it is imperative to reach them on their level of technology. When teachers carefully choose, monitor and implement technology in their classrooms, the four modes of communication can be enhanced. Teachers can implement technology to reinforce student learning, provide access to authentic materials, and enhance communication in real-world scenarios with speakers of the target language locally and throughout the world. The purpose of this article is to offer

several easy to implement choices for teachers interested in infusing technology into their curricula.

### **Literature Review**

Studies show that students learn differently now than in the past. Technology so often enhances student learning and productivity (Hoopingarner & Bansal, 2007) in virtually all subjects, that it cannot be ignored. A recent study indicates that teachers' attitudes toward new information and communication technologies make them hesitant to incorporate anything beyond what is now considered the basic tools, namely PowerPoint, Microsoft Word, Web searches and online postings (Gallardo del Puerto & Gamboa, 2009). Coupled with students' varying attitudes toward using technology in different scenarios, this hesitation can create hardships for teachers whose methodology is more traditional. In the study, such teachers expressed doubts that technology could enhance group-oriented tasks, but seemed to believe that technology as a classroom tool was geared instead toward helping individuals tackle certain topics (Gallardo del Puerto & Gamboa, 2009). As noted in an earlier issue of the Central States Conference Report (Hachtmann, Hayes, Masmaliyeva, & Perkins, 2007), "While the world of technology may seem daunting, teachers do not have to remain in the digital dark ages", and electronic resources and the variety of applications they provide for student learning "make them a reasonable and relatively unthreatening choice for all instructors" (p. 1).

Topical and annotated bibliographies (Eaton, 2011; Kiliçkaya, 2009) can be useful for gleaning knowledge about the effects of technology on learners' skills. Researchers point out the benefits of implementing technology "to promote greater language production and a higher level of language sophistication, as well as enhance critical-thinking skills according to particular contexts" (Erben, Ruth, Jin, Summers, & Eisenhower, 2008, p. 17). Technology can be particularly effective in foreign language teaching in the context of collaborative learning. Researchers note that whether two learners of differing abilities work together or if several students perform a task-based assignment together, technology can enable an effective implementation of collaborative tasks (Erben et al., 2008). Moreover, whether oral interaction is performed as an individual or collaborative effort, technology enhances its efficacy by offering feedback on students' abilities and allowing group members to make use of one another's skills (AbuSeileek, 2007). In addition, research reveals that the casual chat environment allows shy learners to excel. In fact, in one example of a CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) class, the students who normally struggled improved their oral skills. The students themselves admitted having "more chances to benefit from the computer in learning oral skills" (AbuSeileek, 2007, p. 510).

In addition, technology offers a variety of opportunities to develop communicative competence. An enhanced form of online communication (videoconferencing) can help students to hear and speak more of the language in real time. A 2010 report indicated that Skype alone had 124 million users who participated in 95 billion calls in the first half of that year, and approximately 40% of those calls were video-based (Melanson, 2010). Sarah Eaton (2010) notes

the advantage of Skype's simplicity, which allows educators with less technology experience to learn without anxiety. The sheer number of users worldwide provides for a wealth of ways to connect young people of different languages and cultures.

Language teachers search continually for ways to infuse culture into their lessons. Pervasive in language teaching is the view that "culture cannot be taught without language, and similarly, that language cannot be taught without culture" (Fleet, 2006, p. 6). Culture can be infused easily into classroom instruction through technology, and technology can serve to track a student's encounters with culture, as well as improvements in communication.

One tool of emerging popularity for tracking progress of language learners is the *LinguaFolio* (University of Oregon CASLS, 2011) created by the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages and hosted online by the University of Oregon's Center for Applied Second Language Studies (See Appendix A). Digital and hybrid (digital and paper) portfolios capture the range of abilities learners possess (National Capital Language Resource Center, 2010).

### **Practical Ideas for Technology Implementation**

There are some practical considerations for bringing technology into the foreign language classroom: Teachers should consider what their students are doing (e.g., using their cellphones, playing video games, and texting), as well as what other teachers are doing in their classrooms, be they foreign language classrooms or not. Making note of students' needs is important (e.g., they need more pronunciation practice). This can help teachers decide whether technology would be appropriate for a particular task, and which types of technology would help students practice and develop their skills in a specific situation.

#### *Reinforcing Student Learning*

The wealth of information on the Internet about many topics allows students to find cultural and grammatical explanations and materials almost effortlessly. Within mere seconds, a Google search can provide many options for a particular topic. In fact, students have more options than they or their teachers may realize when it comes to studying a particular language topic outside of class. Students can use technology resources independently or as a group to either reinforce a topic learned in class, or informally test their understanding of said topic. An instructor with a simply designed website can list recommended links based on topics.

For instance, the author has designed her website in a table format (Miller, 2011a), so that students are able to find their assignments coupled with links, to review or reteach any of the information contained in the assignment (See Figure 1). A particular assignment under Chapter 1 is to write a brief autobiography in Spanish. Students can seek help in the "Resources for this Chapter" section, which contains class notes and links for outside sites that explain the verb *ser* [to be], as an example. Another link might send a student to a video explanation of gender and number agreement in Spanish.

 	
<a href="#">Home</a>   <a href="#">SPA 131</a>   <a href="#">SPA 132</a>   <a href="#">Contact</a>	
<h3>Capítulo Preliminar</h3>	
<p><b>MWF 2:00 and 4:00</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Due Friday, 08.26 in class:</b> Bring either a photo of yourself or a clipart photo to represent you.</li> <li>• <b>Due Monday, 08.22 in class:</b> On p. 3, Read the top right box "En Este Capítulo (In this Chapter)". Of these topics, make two lists:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which topics sound familiar to you?</li> <li>2. Which topics do not ring a bell?</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Turn in on a notecard.</li> </ul>	<p><b>TR 11:00</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Due Thursday, 08.25 in class:</b> Bring either a photo of yourself or a clipart photo to represent you.</li> <li>• <b>Due Thursday, 08.25 in class:</b> On p. 3, Read the top right box "En Este Capítulo (In this Chapter)". Of these topics, make two lists:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which topics sound familiar to you?</li> <li>2. Which topics do not ring a bell?</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Turn in on a notecard.</li> </ul>
<p><b>TR 1:00 (Honors)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Due Thursday, 08.25 in class:</b> Bring either a photo of yourself or a clipart photo to represent you.</li> <li>• <b>Due Thursday, 08.25 in class:</b> On p. 3, Read the top right box "En Este Capítulo (In this Chapter)". Of these topics, make two lists:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which topics sound familiar to you?</li> <li>2. Which topics do not ring a bell?</li> </ol> </li> <li>• Turn in on a notecard.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Resources for this chapter</b></p>	
<p><b>Download class notes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Capítulo Preliminar: Part 1</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Capítulo Preliminar: Part 2</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Websites to view/read/practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Spaniards greeting one another in videos with Spanish and English transcripts</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Audio conversation w/downloadable text</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Listen and repeat</a></li> <li>• Basic chart of greetings</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.** Students visit the author's website (Miller, 2011a) to read about assignments and search for class notes and Internet resources for explanations.

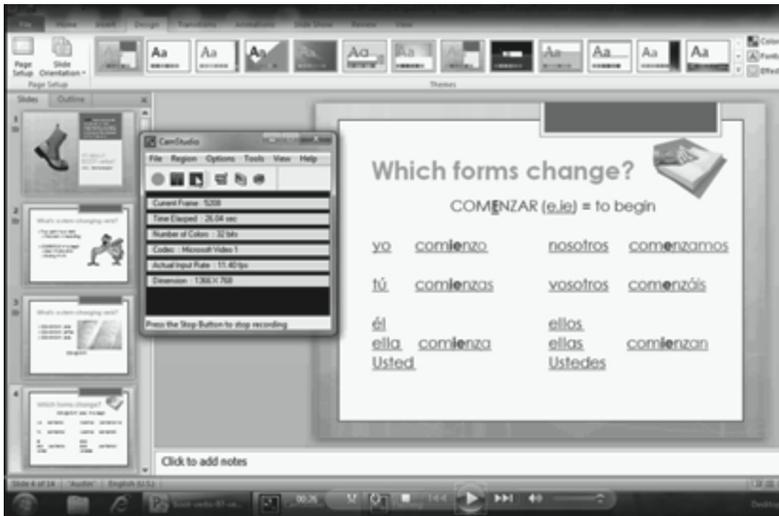
It is helpful for the instructor to take on the task of finding and listing useful websites, since students may not be skilled at identifying incorrect explanations of grammatical topics. Such lists also provide easy access to students who simply want to obtain a different explanation to enhance their understanding of material covered in class, rather than having them take the time to search for information themselves. An abundance of homemade videos, self-correcting quizzes and games are also available to supplement classroom lessons. The author uses the Spanish Proficiency Exercises at the University of Texas at Austin (Kelm, 2011) to show examples of native speakers using common Spanish phrases. In order to teach or even reteach a particular grammatical topic, the author frequently employs videos by "Tonito Frito" (2008) (See Figure 2, next page), because his lessons are easy to understand, thorough and fun to watch (See Appendix A).

Teachers may be surprised by how little technology is needed to make a big impact on student learning. The author used voice-over-PowerPoint to create a lecture to be posted online, but later decided to play it in class. The students paid very close attention, even though there was little difference in hearing their teacher explain the concept in person. Expounding upon this technology, the author has designed a video to teach other educators how to employ the voice-over-PowerPoint feature, as seen in Figure 3 (the video can be accessed via <http://profemiller.net/voiceover.php>) (Miller, 2011b). The technology used was

CamStudio, (2011), free software that records everything that happens on the computer screen in real time (See Appendix A).



**Figure 2.** “Tonito Frito” explains how to conjugate regular –AR verbs in the present tense in Spanish. (Reprinted with permission from Jeremy Jordan.)



**Figure 3.** CamStudio is combined with PowerPoint to create a video for teaching educators how to use the voice-over feature to create lectures and instructional presentations.

Teachers can connect with students on a variety of other platforms. Podcasting is the relatively simple process of recording and posting a particular message

for public consumption. Podbean.com (2011) provides hosting for free, but teachers may wish to purchase a domain name. Using Web design tools provided through the host (e.g., Yahoo Small Business), teachers may choose to set up a full Website with sections for blogging, podcasting, chatting, and posting student and teacher work. Numerous sites provide tutorials on these technologies. One particularly useful site is Technology Tutorials for Teachers (Johnson & Lamb, 2007). YouTube (2011) also has many videos to help users learn certain types of technology. Of course, educators have the option of using only one form of Internet communication at a time.

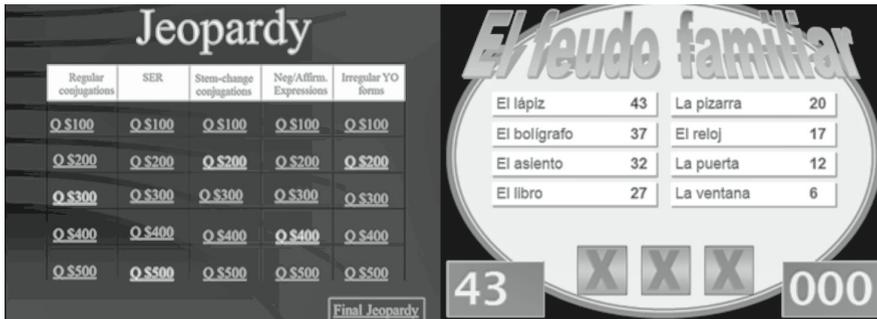
Surprisingly, podcasts are not necessarily an input-only method of communication. Students can listen to a particular podcast that tells a story and later incorporate what they heard into another activity: they can answer questions in writing or orally; a skit can be performed based on the story; or a retelling of the story can produce target language output. The author uses podcasts before oral exams to illustrate how the questions will sound coming from the instructor and to offer an example of how the questions could be answered by the students. Students download the content or listen to it while logged in to Blackboard (2011). The author's students have created their own podcasts about their daily routines.

Whether they create their own podcasts, use Skype to talk with new friends, or create a PowerPoint presentation with audio, if offered options, students can easily design some of their own homework, study sessions, and projects. They can use cell phones, flip-style cameras, digital cameras, digital sound recorders, and webcams to produce audio and video for skits, oral exams, and presentations. In the author's experience, the use of PowerPoint, digital photos, clipart, embedded video, and voice-over can produce presentations that students would be eager to share, and their peers are less likely to be bored watching. The author's students have used technology in the target language in the following ways:

- PowerPoint presentations as a background for a weather report.
- A video tour of their home, describing their living space and what they do in it.
- A 3-D design of their ideal homes, with narration in Spanish. The free site they used was Floorplanner (2011).

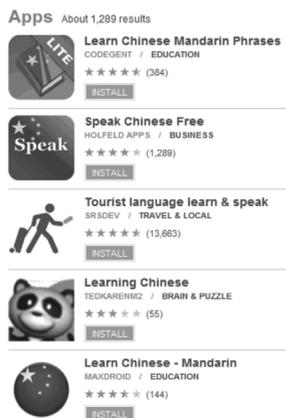
While many schools and institutions are investing in more sophisticated technology, sometimes a projector and a PowerPoint game provide for an exciting review of concepts. Much of technology can be time consuming to implement, but Internet searches for shared material can provide a wealth of resources that are, for the most part, ready to use (See Appendix A for specific URLs). Games like Jeopardy (Ertzberger, n.d.), Who Wants to be a Millionaire (Damon, 2000) and Family Feud (Tangient LLC, 2011) are found as digital versions on the Internet (See Figure 4). Many educators have created free versions of these games using PowerPoint, and they are willing to share them with others (See Appendix A). Since it is a relatively simple process to replace questions and answers in these games (and most games come with instructions), teachers can easily create their own versions, with or without theme music and other media. Quia (IXL Learning,

2011) is another resource that organizes games, self-check quizzes, and tests online and allows teachers to share their materials with others.



**Figure 4.** Jeopardy and Family Feud are two examples of many games available in free, easily adaptable PowerPoint templates.

Often, teachers complain about their students’ continuous use of the many devices they carry with them. However, if teachers are willing to embrace the technology and carefully regulate its use in class, smartphones, iPods, iPads, and netbooks all offer students the capability to take their learning with them wherever they are. Students can search for applications (“apps”) on their mobile devices, and download (mostly free or low-cost) programs that allow them to learn some aspects of virtually any language. Dictionary.com (2011) provides a word-of-the-day feature in Spanish (at the time of preparing this article, the word was *despierto*, an adjective meaning [awake; bright]), along with a grammatical tip (“Despierto also means bright in the sense of lively and intelligent”). Also, as seen in Figure 5, a simple search on “Learn Chinese” produces a phrasebook, a study app, and a language trainer with audio clips and Chinese characters.



**Figure 5.** Truncated search results for smartphone applications for learning Chinese.

*Providing Access to Authentic Information*

Technology has made it easier to include realia in language study. It allows students to experience the culture in a much different way than typical vacation slideshows, textbook videos, or newspapers, brochures, and trinkets brought back by teachers from their trips abroad in years past. While a comprehensive website list can help students outside of class, a lesson can be enhanced with a brief video in the target language. Now, a simple Internet search provides examples of realia that teachers could not easily obtain before. Teachers can include links in PowerPoint and Word, or reach links from their Internet browser's bookmark list. Figure 6, for example, shows a young woman of Mexican heritage who is living in New York. In her video, she tells her audience in Spanish that she is missing home and has decided to make her favorite tortilla recipe (Lizilla, 2011). She has recorded the process on video and uploaded it to YouTube.com to share it worldwide, with anyone who wishes to watch. Since it is in Spanish, it is perfect for a unit on cooking. Titled *Tortillas de maiz [sic] hechas en casa* [Homemade corn tortillas], the video offers students a closer look at a native speaker's life and connects them to another culture.



**Figure 6.** *Tortillas hechas de maiz [sic] en casa* [Homemade corn tortillas]. YouTube user lizilla (2011) reminisces about home in Mexico and demonstrates her recipe for homemade tortillas. (Reprinted with permission from Elizabeth Butcher.)

These videos may appeal more to students, because the participants are so similar to them. Users like lizilla have opened a “page” from their video diary to the world, a sign of their desire to express themselves and share that expression with a global community. Students are familiar with this process, because they and many of their friends do the same things. Therefore, this particular video can be much more effective in capturing the attention of young language students and can even prompt discussion through comment sections some sites offer for each video. Students can actually offer their impressions of the videos they are seeing,

and will often receive a response, making the video and its creator much more real and meaningful to the learner. Indeed, what more authentic environment exists than the one where real people are exchanging and negotiating for information?

Although a global perspective is ideal, some students have never considered their own communities as a source of authentic culture. They can work alone or in groups and record volunteer work or other interactions with speakers of the target language. As they continue to experience authentic scenarios in the language, students can gather information for a portfolio or other assessment. The author recently recorded an honors-level student speaking with children in Spanish at a local Head Start. Her volunteer work was not initially designated for Spanish practice, but her experience speaking Spanish to small children can now be part of her portfolio.

To provide access to the opinions of ordinary people, both of Hispanic heritage and native-born U.S. citizens, the author used Blackboard (2011), an online learning management system, to post an assignment on the very general topic of immigration in the United States. The assignment asked students to do the following:

- (1) Read an assigned article online about Arizona's controversial immigration law of 2010 (Archibold, 2010).
- (2) Watch two videos showing differing viewpoints on U.S. immigration policy:
  - Take Our Jobs (RTAmerica, 2010)
  - Arizona Sheriff, Larry King, New immigration law (Easylivesearch.com, 2010)
- (3) Find one more article and one more video, cite all sources, and comment on one of five essay questions about U.S. immigration.

After their assignments were submitted, the students participated in a discussion about the national immigration debate and voiced informed opinions based on the instructor's assignment and their own research.

#### *Communicating via Social Media*

A much more personal and interactive way to practice the target language is through social media. Facebook (2011), one social media application, connects users worldwide. Facebook is a hybrid of synchronous and asynchronous discussion that can also be accomplished via social networking sites like Google Plus and Twitter. A user typically builds a profile (in any language) and connects to friends anywhere in the world. When Facebook made its debut, the author was hesitant to use it, believing it to be a fad that would diminish in popularity over time. When the application became so popular that it seemed almost everyone was using it, the author finally incorporated it into her teaching. She created a special separate account for student communication. Students visit her Facebook page, and most of the time, their comments are in Spanish.

The author also uses her class account to post questions, such as *¿Qué te gusta hacer los fines de semana?* [What do you like to do on the weekends?] (Figure 7). As seen in Figure 7, students answered this question with ease, since they had

studied the verb *gustar* [to be pleasing to; to like] earlier that day. Students may find themselves helping one another and reminding their peers of corrections that can be made to their posts. It may be difficult to require a social networking activity as a gradable assignment, but it can certainly replace a missed assignment or provide a place for students to practice. The teacher may offer students the option of turning in a traditional homework assignment on paper or posting on Facebook. Options like this often create enthusiasm for homework.



**Figure 7.** Students respond in Spanish to the posting *¿Qué te gusta hacer los fines de semana?* [What do you like to do on the weekends?] on the author's Facebook page for student communication.

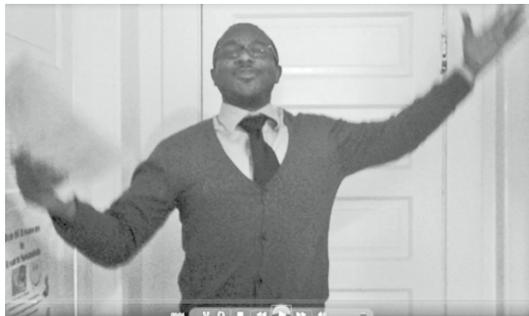
With the help of technology, today's learners have more opportunities for firsthand communication with people from other cultures. The online chat feature can be even more effective via videoconferencing software to involve students in real communication (a two-way affair) and interact with speakers worldwide. Skype (2011), Facebook (2011), and other applications allow people to talk to one another no matter where they are. All a user needs is the software, a reliable Internet connection, and an inexpensive webcam. At present, the author communicates with Iván Oñate, an Ecuadorian poet and short story writer, via Skype, and collaborates with him on translations of his work. He plans to "visit" the author's classroom to speak with her students in Spanish. Because the author has become comfortable using Skype, making the transition to the classroom setting will likely not be difficult. Admittedly, such an event will require much planning, especially for the first implementation. Students will study one of Oñate's poems before the "meeting," hear him read it aloud, and ask him questions about his work. Students will need time to work on the poem, and a preparatory activity will allow them to practice essential vocabulary to get ready for the discussion.

During the discussion, displaying the image on a projector, television, or SMARTBoard allows students to see the speaker. The students are then able to view the teacher in person, the other participant on video, and possibly their own faces if a webcam is focused on the group. Thus, the instructor has the ability to facilitate the discussion by helping learners at different levels understand the native speaker's accent and dialect. In lower-level courses, the instructor may rephrase questions asked by the native speaker and assist her students in responding in coherent and complete phrases.

In the author's classes, students use technology to accomplish a variety of tasks in the target language through a variety of media. For instance, for speaking assessments, they are asked to increase the number of tasks with each project and follow specific guidelines and rubrics. Students are not allowed to repeat the same delivery method in a semester. The methods they can choose from include, but are not limited to video, podcast, PowerPoint, a skit or another presentational method that they discuss with the instructor first. They must work with at least one other person on one project, to enhance communication. One example of a series of projects for Elementary Spanish I at the college level follows.

- Project One: Students must introduce themselves, tell where they are from, how old they are, give their phone numbers, spell their email addresses, and say good-bye.
- Project Two: Students must do all the tasks in Project One and talk about their classes, describe themselves and a friend, and talk about what they like and do not like to do.
- Project Three: Students must do all the tasks in Projects One and Two and use verbs they know to tell their daily routine, talk about chores and preferences, and talk briefly about their families.

Even the final exams can be turned into creative productions sent to the instructor to prepare for viewing and discussing in class. These assignments need not be stressful for students, and they often find the process fun and enriching. One student reduced his anxiety by performing his oral exam just outside the author's office, as seen in Figure 8.



**Figure 8.** Student performs an enthusiastic oral exam about his daily routine. (Reprinted with permission from Richard Lewis.)

## Conclusion

Educators must embrace technology, but in ways that will mostly benefit them and their students. Technology is not a panacea for teaching; neither is it a replacement for the classroom experience. Technological tools should only be used to enhance instructional practices. However, educators can use these tools to cure a few of the ills of foreign language learning: boredom, timidity, and hesitancy toward extracurricular practice of the language. It is also up to the instructors to make administrators aware of the clear benefits technology can offer in their classrooms. At the same time, instructors implementing technology have an obligation to monitor its use.

To help defray the costs of implementing technology, there are resources available, and it is possible to apply for grants. Educators need to consider some options and decide which technology will be worth the investment. Teachers often use the website DonorsChoose (2011) to find financial assistance. It is a database which pairs donors with public school teachers in need of supplies, materials, and equipment. Anyone can donate any amount. A teacher lists a project, detailing its needs, and then waits for users to donate to the project until it is fully funded. Once the students have accomplished their project, the teacher sends photos and thank-you notes to DonorsChoose (2011), where they are distributed to the donors. This and other foundations make it possible for teachers to continue implementing new resources in difficult economic times, so that their students are truly able to “touch the world,” if only by touching a mouse or a touch-screen device. The world, simply put, is at students’ fingertips.

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## Appendix A

### Additional Internet Resources

This section contains an annotated list of Web resources for teachers of foreign languages. All sites were last accessed in November 2011.

#### *Online Lessons and Games*

1. “Tonito Frito” (2008), found on YouTube, teaches lessons on Spanish grammar. There are too many other teaching videos to name, but he is one of the author’s favorites.
2. Studyspanish.com (Study Languages, LLC, 2011) is a free site with every Spanish-language grammatical topic available, taught via text explanations and tested through self-corrected quizzes. Membership for teachers, along with student codes and additional activities, is not prohibitively expensive; however, most of the free activities will suffice for supplementing lessons.
3. At quia.com (IXL Learning, 2011), teachers create their own surveys, quizzes, games, and class webpages. Teachers share their activities with one another to save time, and offer ideas. A nominal fee for membership is worth it.
4. PowerPoint Games at [http://people.uncw.edu/ertzbergerj/ppt\\_games.html](http://people.uncw.edu/ertzbergerj/ppt_games.html) (Ertzberger, n.d.) and <http://jc-schools.net/tutorials/ppt-games/> (Jefferson County Schools, n.d.) offers templates for well-known games.
5. Be a game show host at <http://be-a-gameshow-host.wikispaces.com/PowerPointTempates> (Tangient LLC, 2011). This site also has PowerPoint game templates.

#### *Dictionaries and Thesauri*

1. Spanishdict.com (Curiosity Media, Inc., n.d.) is an easy-to-use dictionary with a great number of helpful features. It contains teaching videos, flashcards, a conjugation “machine,” has an online dictionary component with video, chat and blog features, and a mobile app.
2. The Reverso Collins online dictionary (Softissimo, 2008), found at <http://dictionary.reverso.net/>, provides notably thorough lists of definitions for more advanced language users.

*Video Collections*

1. Youtube.com (YouTube, LLC, 2011) has non-vetted videos from users all over the world. Instructors may want to watch each video in its entirety to screen for appropriateness for a class. YouTube is completely free and allows all users to upload videos in a simple process.
2. Teachtube.com (2010) collects vetted videos for use in the classroom.

*Podcasts and Social Networking*

1. Facebook.com (Facebook, 2011) is a social networking site; users may create a profile, send messages asynchronously, “chat” synchronously online, post photos and videos of themselves, and play a number of games with users from all over the world.
2. Google+ (Google, 2011), at [plus.google.com](http://plus.google.com), is also a social networking site that expands upon what sites like Facebook already do, by offering several technologies that users are already familiar with and putting them in one place.
3. Podbean.com (2011) allows for free hosting of podcasts. Instructions offer users a pain-free way to post their podcasts.
4. Twitter.com (2011) allows users to create and send short messages of 140 characters or less. It can be used for course updates, homework reminders, and food-for-thought statements. Students can find tweet threads of interest to them. A video on using Twitter can be found at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NshQFrpC2O4> (Twitter, 2010).

*Open-Source and Other Applications*

1. Camstudio.org (2011) has a downloadable application that allows for creation of instructional videos, or any video that captures live action on a user’s desktop, coupled, if desired, with audio narration.
2. Fraps (Beepa Pty Ltd, 2010), found at [www.fraps.com](http://www.fraps.com), provides another live-action video capture application for a nominal fee.

*Miscellaneous*

1. DonorsChoose.org (2011) is a database linking donors (companies and individuals) who wish to assist public school teachers with their needs via mini-grants.
2. The author’s website (Miller, 2011a), <http://www.profemiller.net/>, shows how simple web design can offer students access to lists of online explanations and activities relating to particular topics.
3. Technology Tutorials (Johnson & Lamb, 2007), <http://eduscapes.com/tap/topic76.htm>, collects links to many helpful explanations for how to use technology effectively in the classroom.
4. Floorplanner (2011), <http://www.floorplanner.com>, allows students and teachers to design free 3-D models of homes.

*Portfolios*

1. Linguafolio (University of Oregon CASLS, 2011), found at <https://linguafolio.uoregon.edu/>, allows students, teachers, and parents to monitor students' progress in the language via an online portfolio. Students use "can-do" statements to tell which practical tasks they can complete in the target language. Educators who wish to embellish their own teaching portfolios might choose to incorporate several forms of technology into DVD or Web formats, which showcase their work with students.
2. Europass (European Union, 2011), at <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/vernav/Europass+Documents/Europass+CV.csp>, is an online portfolio geared primarily toward finding employment in Europe; however, students can use such a portfolio for entrance into college and employment in the United States as well.



# 7

## **Web 2.0 and language learners: Moving from consumers to creators**

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### **Abstract**

Web 2.0 offers opportunities for creating a student-centered environment that maximizes use of the target language while integrating the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational). Learners produce language output as they interpret content and create products that demonstrate their understanding and document their language abilities. This article provides exemplars of activities that use Web 2.0 resources that can be integrated into the language classroom to create an engaging learning environment.

**T**he shift from using digital technology as a means of seeking information to one where the user provides and creates information has democratized education, extending the classroom walls to the world at large. Students are coming to the classroom increasingly proficient in the use of technology, savvy at locating information and connected to the world in myriad ways, both social and cognitive. The role of the teacher is to find ways to capitalize on these skills and channel them into learning experiences that are real and engage the learners in problem solving tasks that maximize critical thinking and creativity,

while bringing students into the “flow” of the joy of learning (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

When information is given, or delivered, it belongs to the teacher, not the learner. Technology allows the teacher a venue to create engaging tasks that put the tools in the hands of the learner. Through carefully structured steps, the learner can achieve the learning goals. Web 2.0 offers multiple opportunities for creating a student-centered learning environment that maximizes use of the target language, models best pedagogical practices, and promotes a standards-based curriculum through integration of the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, presentational). The paradigm shift from a teaching to a learning centered classroom places the responsibility for learning on the learner who must be fully engaged in the act of learning through authentic tasks that emulate the real world. The learning tasks are determined by the teacher but must be carried out by the learner. The learner interprets the content and produces artifacts and products using Web 2.0 that provide evidence of understanding and language achievement.

Technology offers the language teacher the ability to create a learning environment where language communication is authentic, relevant, and meaningful to learners. Such an engaging learning environment can lead to higher motivation, higher student achievement, and a greater appreciation of language study. This article summarizes the results of research on technology impact on language learning and the implications of these findings for the language classroom, providing exemplars for integration of Web 2.0 into the language-learning experience.

### **Literature Review**

In the foreign language classroom, three conditions contribute to an optimal language-learning environment (Zhang & Zhao, 2011): comprehensible and rich language input (Cobb & Stevens, 1996; Krashen, 1981), opportunities for output or practice (Lantolf, 2000; Swain, 1985), and quality feedback (Brandl, 2008; Lysakowski & Walberg, 1982). Technology has allowed foreign language teachers to provide comprehensible language input through the use of images together with spoken or written words (i.e., television, films, SMART Boards, or software such as PowerPoint). Multimedia input supports the comprehension process as it promotes a meaningful connection between the verbal or textual input and its visual representation. It supports the retention process as well, helping to embed this information in long-term memory (Mayer & Clark, 2003). Traditionally, technology has been used by language teachers in order to provide language input through texts, videos, and informational websites. With the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies, learners themselves can produce language output and move from consumers to producers of information, as they interpret content and create artifacts.

The term Web 2.0 was first used in 2004 and refers to the second generation of the Internet, namely the promotion of production, creativity, information sharing, and collaboration (Schrum & Levin, 2009). Anderson (2006) defines Web 2.0 applications as “networked tools that support and encourage individuals to

learn together while retaining individual control over their time, space, presence, activity, identity, and relationship” (p. 4). Ko and Rossen (2010) find Web 2.0 tools easy to learn and apply with built-in sharing and collaboration features. These tools become ideal vehicles in the language classroom to promote authentic language use, negotiation of meaning, and language output.

The benefits and uses of Web 2.0 tools in the language classroom have been widely recognized, not only as a means to establish contact with native speakers through forums or social networks, but also as a motivator for students to engage in collaboration and communication (Curwood, 2010; Hanna & de Nooy, 2003; Kern, 2006; Sharma, 2010). Web 2.0 offers innovative ways to interact with a variety of language texts and aural input, and the opportunity to create products that use the target language through digital storytelling, online posters, comic generators, and wikis. Web 2.0 tools can also serve as powerful socialization and communication tools when used in cooperative learning activities that promote language negotiation among learners.

The use of Web 2.0 tools offers several advantages: they are Web-based, have a collaborative character allowing for multiple users, provide storage for online content, and allow for shared content (Schrum & Levin, 2009). Because of these characteristics, Web 2.0 tools promote active involvement of the students in the learning process as they produce artifacts using the target language and interpret texts and content through visuals.

Meaningful contexts within real communication are needed for language acquisition to occur (Hall, 1995; Shrum & Glisan, 2009). By using literature or authentic texts/content in the language classroom in combination with Web 2.0 tools, learners are provided a meaningful context that can serve as the springboard for communication, collaboration, and interaction. By analyzing literary/textual content through carefully planned instructional activities, students are able to create and publish quality products that allow them to personalize such content. For example, after carefully exploring a major character in a novel through a detailed reading, students can create an avatar to present that character to an audience (See Appendix D).

Learning by doing has been identified as a methodological principle for implementing communicative language teaching practices (Brandl, 2008). If new knowledge is tied to real-world activities, it is better integrated into long-term memory and more easily retrieved (Doughty & Long, 2003). Creating products such as comic books, digital stories, or podcasts promotes language output through a hands-on approach to language learning. Furthermore, these products are ideally created as collaborative projects, promoting interaction among learners. Collaboration has been recognized as a strong facilitator of learning, and it is representative of a student-centered environment (Kagan, 1992).

### **Incorporating Web 2.0 into Standards-Based Instruction**

The incorporation of Web 2.0 applications allows students the opportunity to create original language products that motivate learners. However, integrating these applications in ways that support standards-based instruction is sometimes

challenging for teachers. Standards-based instruction espouses that students should learn to use their new language for three purposes: to communicate interpersonally, to interpret, or to present information and ideas (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999). Tied intimately to these standards is assessment focused on capturing evidence of how students can demonstrate their use of the language.

The first step in a successful lesson is to carefully identify the learning objectives in terms of measurable performance. For example, “I can introduce myself in formal and informal situations using the appropriate non-verbal gestures.” An example based on a literary text might be stated as follows: “I can create an alternative ending to the short story we read.” Students are then required to demonstrate achievement of these learning objectives at the conclusion of the lesson. The three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational) are incorporated into the lesson, as students receive textual or audio-visual language input (interpretive), practice with this input through communicative tasks (interpersonal) and demonstrate their language skills and understanding (presentational).

By adding the element of Web 2.0 to this process, students are now empowered to choose their own sources of input, work with that input in personalized ways, and create their own product to demonstrate achievement of learning objectives. Motivation and creativity can be greatly enhanced when students have choices. For example, students can demonstrate their ability to introduce themselves by creating online digital posters or presentations that spark creativity and allow for personalization of learning using audio, video, and text. These Web 2.0 applications promote a deeper level of engagement with the language content, as the learner has to determine what to include on the personalized digital poster, which features to use to communicate various information, and what to share with an at-large audience (publishing online). Such deliberate and intentional learning tasks may increase motivation and ultimately lead to language achievement. With online comic generators, students can create an alternative ending to a story by using visuals and text to represent the content in a series of cartoon panels. In order to present the story in its truest form, students will have to read the text carefully for an accurate visual representation of the characters, and use the written target language to narrate the action. Students create their own ending based on their understanding of the story and/or their own background experiences and share these cartoons online with peers. These activities provide motivation to optimize accuracy, creativity, and humor.

### **Examples of Web 2.0 Tools for the Foreign Language Classroom**

The following exemplars represent activities that incorporate Web 2.0 technologies appropriate for foreign language classrooms. In all cases, the only technical requirement is Internet access. All applications presented below have no costs associated with them at the time of this publication. These activities can be modified to fit most curricula and are meant to be used as summative assessments and can be adapted for any language and proficiency level. All

are examples of standards-based tasks in that they ask students to produce an authentic product, integrate all three modes of communication, and demonstrate language achievement. Each activity includes a brief description of the Web 2.0 technology involved, information about the pedagogical underpinnings of the task, a description of the activity itself, step-by-step instructions, and examples and rubrics.

### *Wiki and Online Quiz*

**Web 2.0 Technology.** Wiki: sites.google.com Quiz: docs.google.com

**Description.** Google Sites (Google, 2011b) provides a user-friendly, Web-based platform on which to create wikis. Google Docs (Google, 2011a) is a series of document types including word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation formats that are Web-based and available free of charge. A wiki is a communal space on the Web where students can work collaboratively to create a product that incorporates images, video, audio, and written information. Both of these Web 2.0 applications support collaboration among users.

**Pedagogy.** Based upon the reading of literary or authentic texts/content (interpretive mode of communication), group members combine their information to create a wiki describing events during a specific historical period (presentational mode of communication). To follow up, students peer review another group's wiki using a rubric to evaluate the accuracy of information, organization, clarity, appearance, and content. They also provide suggestions for improvement. Through this process, participants compare and contrast their own information with the information from the other groups, engaging in deeper processing (interpretive mode of communication). Groups then discuss how they can improve their wikis based upon the peer reviews they receive from other groups (interpersonal mode of communication). The improved wikis are presented to the class (presentational mode of communication).

An additional supplementary task involves group members creating an online quiz using Google Docs based on the information in their wiki. These quizzes are embedded into their wiki sites. Each student completes a quiz from a different group, and finally, group members gather to evaluate the responses (interpretive mode of communication). This set of activities promotes the recycling of vocabulary and grammatical structures. Students work with the same content in a variety of activities that allow them to engage actively with historical content using Web 2.0 tools.

**Activity.** Negotiation and collaboration (interpersonal mode of communication) and Internet research (interpretive mode of communication) lead to the development of a wiki (presentational mode of communication) based upon an authentic text. Wikis are improved through peer review and revision. Online quizzes are developed based upon information contained in the wikis.

#### ***Instructions.***

1. Students read an authentic text embedded in an historical era.
2. Students divide into theme-based groups related to the historical era to

create a wiki. Each student in the group is responsible for one page of the wiki that corresponds to a different historical event from the era. Each page must contain information about the historical event in at least two different forms (text, photos, graphics, or video).

3. Students peer review another group's wiki and complete a rubric to evaluate certain aspects of the wiki.
4. Based upon the peer reviews, groups discuss how they can improve their wikis and then make the necessary changes.
5. Students present improved wikis to the class.
6. As an extension of the wiki activity, students create an online quiz based on the information in the wiki using Google Docs and embed the quiz into the wiki.
7. Students complete one of the quizzes created by another group.
8. Groups discuss their quiz results.

**Examples.** See Appendix A for an example of a wiki site, Appendix B for an online quiz, and Appendix C for a peer-review form.

#### *Avatars*

**Web 2.0 Technology.** [www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com)

**Description.** Voki (Oddcast Inc, 2011) is a user-friendly website that allows for the creation of avatars, which can be useful outlets for target language practice in the language classroom. Avatars are movable images that represent a person in a virtual environment (Farlex, Inc, 2011).

**Pedagogy.** Students can create customizable images of themselves or others, selecting among a wide variety of physical features. A valuable feature of the website Voki is the ability to add voice using different modalities. Voice can be recorded by phone or computer microphone, or can be typed in. The user has the option to select the language and accent the computer will use when reading the typed text.

In this activity, students work in groups to analyze the characters of a story (interpretive and interpersonal modes of communication). They then pretend they are psychologists creating profiles for an online dating service and create an avatar of their assigned character based upon information in the text (presentational mode of communication). It is important that their avatar not reveal his/her name. When the avatars are presented to the class, the other groups must guess which character is being represented (interpretive mode of communication), thereby focusing students' attention and engaging them in deeper processing.

**Activity.** Students analyze the characters of a story (interpersonal mode of communication), create an avatar (presentational mode of communication), and guess which characters are represented by the avatars created by other students (interpretive mode of communication).

#### **Instructions.**

1. Students are assigned a particular character from an authentic text.
2. In groups, students discuss the characteristics of this character and

identify his/her role in the story. They identify such things as personality, profession, family, friends, hobbies, dreams.

3. Students, acting as psychologists working for an online dating service, create a profile for this character.
4. Using Voki, students create an avatar for the character, including an image and a voice, but do not mention the character's name.
5. Students guess the names of the avatars created by their fellow students.

**Examples.** See Appendix D for an example of a Voki avatar and Appendix E for a rubric to grade this project.

### *Comic Books*

**Web 2.0 Technology.** [www.toondoo.com](http://www.toondoo.com)

**Description.** ToonDoo (ZOHO Corp, Inc, 2011) is a free comic generator where anyone can create visual stories without the need for hand drawing.

**Pedagogy.** Comics allow the creator to illustrate a conversation and dialog representing real-life scenarios, and serve as an excellent exercise to foster creativity. Versaci (2001) points out that comic books develop analytical and critical thinking skills. "A common goal, regardless of the level we teach, is to help students read beyond the page in order to ask and answer deeper questions that the given work suggests about art, life, and the intersection of the two" (p. 64).

In this activity, students working in pairs are provided with a "what if" scenario and must brainstorm an alternative ending to a story read in class (interpersonal mode of communication) based upon a hypothetical situation. They create a five-page comic strip that illustrates their new story ending using the online comic generator ToonDoo. This application allows students to use their imagination to create a visual story by simply dragging and dropping images from a large range of pictures, characters, and scenery stored in its online library. Users can also upload their own pictures and manipulate them into their story. The student-generated comics are shared with the whole class (presentational and interpretive modes of communication), and students discuss the different endings (interpersonal mode of communication).

**Activity.** Using ToonDoo, and working in pairs, students create a comic book that represents an alternative ending to a story read in class, according to the hypothetical "what if" situation that they are assigned.

#### **Instructions.**

1. Students brainstorm an alternative ending to a story read in class based upon a hypothetical "what if" scenario assigned by the teacher. For example, What if the main character in the story would not have come back to his home? What if the main character in the story would have had the opportunity to go to school?
2. Based upon the brainstorming session, students create a ToonDoo that illustrates their alternative ending.
3. Students present their ToonDoos to the class.

4. Class discusses the various endings.

**Examples.** See Appendix F for an example of a ToonDoo and Appendix G for rubric to grade this project.

### *Collaborative Storytelling*

**Web 2.0 Technology.** [storybird.com](http://storybird.com)

**Description.** Storybird (2011) is a free, Web-based tool that allows users to create visual stories that can be written in collaboration with other users and are published online.

**Pedagogy.** Collaborative storytelling in an online environment encourages even reluctant writers to use their imaginations to create unique stories. By using artwork already created by talented artists, Storybird gives students the opportunity to focus on the language itself, using their own words to describe what they see depicted in the illustrations created by others (interpretive and presentational modes of communication). An excellent way for learners to demonstrate comprehension of new vocabulary is to have them use the words correctly in unfamiliar contexts. This activity requires students to recycle vocabulary in a creative context to demonstrate their understanding of the meaning (interpretive mode of communication). The collaborative aspect of this activity encourages students to negotiate meaning, discuss language structures with one another, and take pride in their shared efforts (interpersonal mode of communication).

**Activity.** For this activity, students work with partners to create a story with the words/phrases from a story previously read in class. Partners use two different computers, with each partner responsible for half of the story (either the first or the second half).

**Instructions.**

1. Each student makes a list of ten new vocabulary words they encounter as they are reading a piece of authentic literature assigned in class.
2. Using Storybird software, one student creates the first half of an original story using his/her 10 vocabulary words in context.
3. The student shares the Storybird with a partner, and the second student finishes the story, incorporating his/her own set of vocabulary words into the second half.
4. Students read one another's Storybirds and try to identify the vocabulary words that were chosen from the original story.

**Examples.** See Appendix H for an example of a Storybird. This activity can be graded with the same rubric used to grade the ToonDoo (See Appendix G).

### *Online Poster*

**Web 2.0 Technology.** [www.glogster.com](http://www.glogster.com)

**Description.** Glogster (2011) is an online poster generator that allows for the inclusion of text, images, sound, and video.

**Pedagogy.** This tool promotes expression in a creative way, permits learners to use the foreign language through writing and speaking, and allows them to associate expressions with a visual representation (presentational mode of communication). When reviewing peers' creations, Glogster products function as a basis for reading and listening comprehension activities (interpretive mode of communication). This tool, among many other activities, is ideal for creating community and promoting interaction among learners (interpersonal mode of communication). In the final portion of this activity, students are asked to search for specific information.

**Activity.** Students complete a community building exercise in which peer interviews (interpersonal mode of communication) are transformed into digital posters to be presented to the group (presentational and interpretive modes of communication).

**Instructions.**

1. At the beginning of a new term, the teacher collects ideas from the class about the top five things they want to know about their classmates and lists them on the board.
2. Working in pairs, students interview one another to gather information about their partner in the five chosen categories i.e., hobbies, family, favorite music, etc., (interpersonal mode).
3. Each student creates a digital poster that incorporates text, images, sound, and/or video about his/her partner based upon the information obtained during the interview.
4. Students present their partners to the class using their digital poster (presentational mode).
5. During the presentations, students must take notes so that they are prepared for a follow up Jeopardy style game about their classmates.
6. Alternatively, students display all digital posters together in an online poster gallery (i.e., the class website). Students review all posters and attempt to find classmates with whom they have something in common. The names of these classmates are recorded on a handout (interpretive mode).

**Examples.** See Appendix I for an example of a Glog. This activity can be graded with the same rubric used to grade the ToonDoo (See Appendix G).

## Conclusion

Web 2.0 promotes the acquisition of language and knowledge that is centered on the learners while promoting interactions with content, their fellow students, and the instructor. The instructor's role becomes one of an architect who creates the blueprint for the lesson and ensures a high degree of interactivity and engagement through carefully planned learning tasks. Teachers and learners thus become partners in constructing knowledge as they create and assess authentic products. Such engaging and authentic learning tasks can empower students as

learning is socially constructed through interaction with others and is expressed through a personal interpretation of knowledge. Creativity, critical thinking, and performance are promoted in ways that motivate learners. The standards-based digital learning tasks presented in this article are designed to serve as exemplars that can be replicated and adapted based on the needs of learners in the classroom.

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## Appendix A

After reading the novel *Damals war es Friedrich* [*Friedrich*] (Richter, 1961), which takes place in Nazi Germany before and during World War II, students are divided into small groups to create a wiki based upon the historical events from the book. Each student is assigned one historical event and is responsible for researching that topic and building one of the pages of the wiki. Here is an example of one of the wiki pages from this project. It includes text, charts, photos, and video.

The screenshot shows a wiki page with the following structure:

- Header:** "Damals war es Friedrich - Gruppe 1 - Web 2.0" and a search bar labeled "Search this site".
- Navigation Menu (Left):**
  - Leitseite
  - Das Deutsche Jungvolk
    - Das Deutsche Jungvolk im Buch "Damals war es Friedrich" (highlighted)
    - Quiz
  - Die Nürnberger Gesetze
    - Die Gesetze im Damals war es Friedrich
    - Quellen
    - Quiz
  - Kristallnacht
    - Quiz
  - NSDAP
    - Damals war es
- Main Content:**
  - Section: "Das Deutsche Jungvolk >"
  - Title: "Das Deutsche Jungvolk im Buch 'Damals war es Friedrich'"
  - Image: Book cover of "Damals war es Friedrich" by Hans Peter Richter, featuring a young boy in a dark uniform and cap.
  - Text: "Hans Peter Richter: *Damals war es Friedrich* (1961)"
  - Text: "Im Buch wird es erklärt, was in den Deutschen Jungvolk Treffenen stattfindet. Man kann im Kapitel namens „Die Schlaufe“ lesen, wie Friedrich mit dem Hans in die Gruppe gehen und mitmachen wollte. Obwohl der Vater es nicht erlaubt hat, ist er mal mit Hans gegangen."
 

„Ich freue mich so!“ begann Friedrich wieder. „Ich freue mich so! – Aber meinem Vater darfst du es nicht verraten. Er mag nicht, dass ich dorthin gehe.“  
(S. 43)

## Appendix B

As an extension of the wiki activity, each student creates an online quiz using a form, one of the Google Docs tools (Google, 2011a), about the information on their individual wiki page. This quiz can be embedded into the page, so when the wiki site is ready, the quiz will be part of the page. Other students can take the quiz, and the creators of the wiki and the quiz can check the answers. By including an online quiz on each page, readers can test their understanding of the material presented in the wiki.

[Das Deutsche Jungvolk >](#)

**Quiz**

Fragen über das Deutsche Jungvolk

Wie alt waren die Jungen in dem Deutschen Jungvolk?

Wie viele Teile der Jugend Organisationen gab es für beide Jungen und Mädchen?  
 1 2 3 4 5

Für wen gabe es Jugend Organisationen während Hitlers Reich?  
 Teenager  
 Jungen  
 Mädchen  
 Erwachsene  
 Juden

Was sollten die Jugendlichen in dem Deutschen Jungvolk lernen?

**Appendix C**

*Form for Wiki Peer-Review*

Group name: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluate one of the other groups' wiki and circle the most appropriate option, 1 being the lowest grade and 5 being the highest.

For each historical event, dates, description of event, and effect on characters in the story was described	1	2	3	4	5
The information is accurate.	1	2	3	4	5
The information is clear.	1	2	3	4	5
The information is organized.	1	2	3	4	5
The wiki is visually appealing.	1	2	3	4	5
References to other sources are included.	1	2	3	4	5

What were the strengths of this wiki? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

How would you improve this wiki? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix D

Students read *To Live* (Hua, 1993) in the Chinese language course and create a profile for their assigned character that would appear on an online dating service, and then create and publish an avatar.



### Appendix E

This is a general rubric that can be used to provide feedback for creative products that are mostly written but include visual and oral components. This rubric was designed for the intermediate low to high learner but can be adapted to different language levels and requirements as needed.

Non-Negotiable Items – The following requirements must be met for the assignment to be accepted:

1. Handed in by the deadline.
2. Length requirements (as specified for the assignment).
3. Written in student's own words with dictionaries and translators consulted only occasionally to clarify individual word choices or short idiomatic expressions.
4. Other assignment-specific non-negotiables stipulated by the teacher.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations	Comments
<b>Language Function</b>	Language expands toward narration and description that includes connectedness, cohesiveness, and different time frames. Mostly connected sentences and some paragraph-like discourse. First draft reflects outstanding planning and organization. German use is excellent based upon student's current knowledge with careful attention to grammar and usage.	Able to express own meaning in a basic way. Strings of sentences, mostly simple, but sometimes complex. Draft reflects planning and organization. There is evidence of organization of ideas in the draft. German is basic and requires much editing from instructor.	Mostly memorized language with some attempts to create simple sentences and phrases. Rough drafts reflected little thought or effort, and work required much prodding from instructor. German was poor, and little effort was made to improve.	
<b>Impact</b>	Makes choices of phrases, images, or content to maintain the attention of the audience. Graphics are related to the theme/purpose of the product and enhance reader interest or understanding. The story leaves a strong impression. Listeners are likely to be entertained or better informed as a result of listening. Illustrations greatly enhance the storyline.	Begins to make choices of phrases, images, or content to maintain the attention of the audience. Most graphics are related to the theme/purpose of the product and enhance reader interest or understanding. The story is clear but lacks creativity. The material flows well. Illustrations are adequate.	Focused on successful task completion. Graphics seem randomly chosen or distracting. The message is there, but lacks organization. Story is somewhat hard to follow.	

<b>Vocabulary</b>	<p>Vocabulary provides information and explanation and tells a compelling story. Word choice is interesting and appropriate for student's level of German.</p>	<p>Vocabulary is sufficient to provide information and limited explanation. Word choice contributes to understanding.</p>	<p>Simple sentences and memorized phrases. Word choice interferes with understanding.</p>	
<b>Sound Track/ Verbal Component</b>	<p>German is fluent and easy to understand. The pronunciation is clear with few grammar errors based upon student's current level of German. Very high quality sound. The material is pieced together in a thoughtful and creative way that enhances the story. Sound effects are creatively implemented to strengthen overall effect.</p>	<p>German is almost always easy to understand. A few words mispronounced and/or grammar errors. Meaning is still clear. The recording is good. The editing is logical and supports the message. Audio enhancement tools in the software are implemented.</p>	<p>German is sometimes hard to understand. Many errors in pronunciation and grammar. Recording is adequate, but the editing is sloppy and doesn't take advantage of any enhancements in the software. Poor sound quality. Very little use of sound effects.</p>	
<b>Editing</b>	<p>Teacher edits &amp; feedback are carefully incorporated each time. Understanding of teacher feedback on first drafts is demonstrated in the final edited document.</p>	<p>Most edits were included in the final product.</p>	<p>Mistakes were continually repeated. Instructor edits and feedback were mostly ignored.</p>	
<b>Final Evaluation</b>				

Appendix F

After reading *Damals war es Friedrich* [Friedrich] (Richter, 1961), German students are asked to write an alternative ending based upon the assigned hypothetical situation. In the story, Friedrich, the Jewish main character, was continually harassed by his Nazi landlord, Herr Resch. For this specific example, the hypothetical situation is: What would have happened if Herr Resch were not a member of the Nazi party? Here is a ToonDoo created by a student that depicts the alternate ending.



**FRIEDRICH 3 - BY WHLANGER**



**FRIEDRICH 4 - BY WHLANGER**



**FRIEDRICH 5 - BY WHLANGER**



### Appendix G

This is a general rubric that can be used to provide feedback for creative products that are mostly written but include visual components. This rubric was designed for the intermediate low to high learner (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012), but can be adapted to different language levels and requirements as needed.

Non-Negotiable Items—The following requirements must be met for the assignment to be accepted:

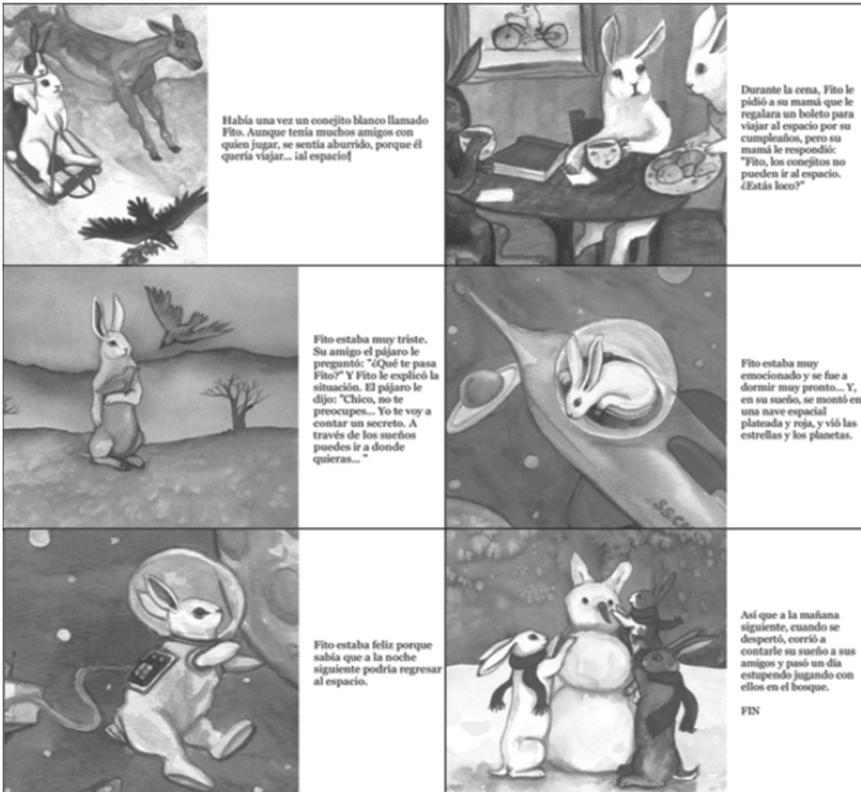
1. Handed in by the deadline.
2. Length requirements (as specified for the assignment).
3. Written in student's own words with dictionaries and translators consulted only occasionally to clarify individual word choices or short idiomatic expressions.
4. Other assignment-specific non-negotiables stipulated by the teacher.

Student Name:				
CATEGORY	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations	Comments
<b>Language Function</b>	Language expands toward narration and description that includes connectedness, cohesiveness, and different time frames. Mostly connected sentences and some paragraph-like discourse.	Able to express own meaning in a basic way. Strings of sentences, mostly simple, but sometimes complex.	Mostly memorized language with some attempts to create. Simple sentences and memorized phrases.	
<b>Impact</b>	Makes choices of a phrase, image, or content to maintain the attention of the audience. Graphics are related to the theme/purpose of the product and enhance reader interest or understanding.	Begins to make choices of a phrase, image, or content to maintain the attention of the audience. Most graphics are related to the theme/purpose of the product and enhance reader interest or understanding.	Focused on successful task completion. Graphics seem randomly chosen or distract the audience.	

<b>Vocabulary</b>	Vocabulary provides information and explanation. Word choice is interesting and appropriate.	Vocabulary is sufficient to provide information and limited explanation. Word choice is adequate and contributes to understanding.	Simple sentences and memorized phrases. Word choice interferes with understanding.	
<b>Comprehensibility/Content</b>	Content clearly reflects assigned topics. It includes several supporting details and/or examples. Stays on topic. Provides accurate information. Organizes the information effectively.	Content clearly reflects assigned topics. No details and/or examples are given. Fulfills the task but lacks focus. Information is accurate. Lacks some aspects of organization.	Content has little or nothing to do with assigned topics. Topic is unclear. Information is largely inaccurate. Unorganized.	
<b>Final Evaluation</b>				

Appendix H

Spanish language students read an excerpt from *El Alquimista* [*The Alchemist*] (Coelho, 1994) and choose 10 unfamiliar vocabulary words from the story. They demonstrate their comprehension of these new words by writing an original story using the words in a different context. Here is an example of a Storybird created by two students in response to this assignment (illustrations by bluedogrose).



### Appendix I

As a community building exercise at the beginning of a term, students interview a partner. They then create an online digital poster using Glogster that represents the information gleaned from the interview. The Glogster can include image, text, video, and audio information. Students use their online digital posters to introduce their partners to the class. Here is an example of a Glog created by a Chinese student in an ESL classroom.



### Appendix J

The following list includes Web 2.0 technologies that can be incorporated into the foreign language classroom for students to create or participate actively in language learning tasks.

Technology	URL	Description
Audacity	<a href="http://www.audacity.com">www.audacity.com</a>	Voice recording software
Blog	<a href="http://www.wordpress.com">www.wordpress.com</a>	Online diary
Chat	<a href="http://www.google.com/talk">www.google.com/talk</a>	Instant messaging
e-Portfolio	<a href="http://sites.google.com">http://sites.google.com</a>	Online portfolio
Glogster	<a href="http://www.glogster.com">www.glogster.com</a>	Online poster generator
Google Docs	<a href="http://docs.google.com">http://docs.google.com</a>	Collaborative presentations, documents, and forms
Jing	<a href="http://www.jing.com">www.jing.com</a>	Screencasts
Mind-mapping tools	<a href="http://freenuts.com/top-10-free-online-mind-mapping-tools/">http://freenuts.com/top-10-free-online-mind-mapping-tools/</a>	Mind-mapping tools
Ning	<a href="http://www.ning.com">www.ning.com</a>	Create a custom social network
Online crossword	<a href="http://www.puzzlemaker.com">www.puzzlemaker.com</a>	Create crosswords and other learning puzzles
Podbean	<a href="http://www.podbean.com">www.podbean.com</a>	Podcast publishing solution
Rhinospike	<a href="http://www.rhinospike.com">www.rhinospike.com</a>	Collect and exchange FL audio files
Storybird	<a href="http://www.storybird.com">www.storybird.com</a>	Collaborative storytelling
ToonDoo	<a href="http://www.toondoo.com">www.toondoo.com</a>	Comic generator
Voice Thread	<a href="http://www.voicethread.com">www.voicethread.com</a>	Collaborative space for conversation surrounding video/image
Voki	<a href="http://www.voki.com">www.voki.com</a>	Avatar creator
Voxopop	<a href="http://www.voxopop.com">www.voxopop.com</a>	e-Learning tool to practice speaking skills
Wiki	<a href="http://sites.google.com">http://sites.google.com</a>	Collaborative web spaces
Wordle	<a href="http://www.wordle.com">www.wordle.com</a>	Word cloud generator



# 8

## Teacher study groups as collaborative professional learning communities

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### Abstract

Teacher study groups are collegial supportive learning communities that provide their members the opportunity to learn new theories or methodologies, engage in meaningful practices, and reflect on their teaching and beliefs. With the combination of reflection and collaboration, teacher study groups often succeed in promoting change in teacher beliefs and practices. This article details an ethnographic case study of a teacher study group for Japanese language teachers. The study group was held in Japan with Japanese native participants. Through the teacher study group activities, participants learned about new practices, reflected on their own teaching, discovered possible solutions for their problems, and transformed their classroom teaching. This case study focuses on one relatively new Japanese teacher and discusses the role of the teacher study group in her professional transformation.

**T**eacher study groups are an example of collaborative action research. Teachers with similar interests meet regularly and explore issues relevant to their classroom practice. Research indicates that teacher study groups connect teachers to their colleagues and support their professional development. However, it is often pointed out that the U.S. school culture and the tradition of individualism have made it difficult for teachers to work collaboratively (Dunlap, Neale, & Carroll, 2000; Thibodeau, 2008). Teacher study groups challenge such traditions and help teachers belong to supportive professional communities. When connected with their colleagues, teachers learn more, perform better, and experience more job satisfaction (Graves, 2001; Mills, Jennings, Donnelly, & Mueller, 2001; Parise & Spillane, 2010).

Teacher change is always a major goal of professional development and teacher education programs. University instructors often become members of teacher study groups. They introduce innovative methodologies, encourage teachers to try them in their classrooms, and reflect on their thinking and behavior. While striving to provide innovative theory and practice, such programs expect teachers to gain new knowledge and adopt it into their classrooms (Gordon & O'Brien, 2007). Historically, teacher education programs focused on supplying theory and dissemination of method implementation information (Masuda, 2010; Thibodeau, 2008). This transmission style of teacher education was based on the belief that distributing information and modifying the teachers' beliefs would evoke changes in their classrooms. However, recent research reports that teacher change usually occurs in the opposite order: a change in classroom practice precedes the change in teacher's beliefs (e.g., Gersten, Dimino, Jayanthi, Kim, & Santoro, 2010; Guskey, 2002; Meiers & Adrian, 2005; Willis, 2002). Guskey (2002) suggests that new practices and subsequent acknowledgment of positive outcomes from implementation brings in more consistent and sustained changes in teachers' practices. In line with these conclusions, current teacher education research tends to involve teaching experiences and emphasizes the importance of reflection (e.g., Danielson, 2009; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Rodgers, 2002; Serafini, 2002).

### **Transmission Model in Teacher Education**

Traditionally, the transmission model has dominated professional teacher training (e.g., Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Schwarz, 2002; Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004), where staff developers tend to view teachers as deliverers of packaged curricula (Masuda, 2010; Schwarz, 2002) and stress technical aspects of teaching, such as class-time allocation and delivery of classroom demonstrations (Hill & Cohen, 2005). Aiming at the mastery of skills and correction of teachers' behavioral mistakes, some teacher education programs provide 'one-shot' workshops of an effective lesson without teacher input or support to implement the new skill or technique (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Guskey, 2000; Thompson, Gregg, & Niska, 2004). With little attention to the sociopolitical context or teachers' individualities, these programs offer 'one-size-fits-all' approaches to training that ignore teachers' potential for professional judgment based on critical reflection (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Masuda, 2010; Schwarz, 2002).

Such prepackaged, short-term teacher education models fail to satisfy pre- and in-service teachers for a number of reasons. First, much of the information provided to teachers is too theoretical or has little connection with in-service teachers' day-to-day practices. For example, in second language and foreign language teacher education curricula in the U.S., pre-service teachers spend large amounts of time learning about literature and the structural characteristics of the target language (e.g., Crookes & Chandler, 2001; Guskey, 2000; Schwarz, 2002; Thibodeau, 2008; Thompson, Bakken, & Clark, 2001). In-service teachers, however, often find that it is pedagogical methods, and not content specifics, that are more applicable to their daily tasks (Crookes & Chandler, 2001; Laursen, 2007).

Second, theoretical information provided in teacher training courses is likely to be driven by university-based, quantitative research that often does not reflect the complex and varied uniqueness of individual classrooms (Laursen, 2007), and mainly focuses on a particular teacher's behavior as a cause, and students' learning is tested as an effect (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Guskey, 2000). However, as many maintain, teaching is a much more intricate, context-situated practice that cannot be standardized, (e.g., Sagor, 2000; Wildman, Hable, Preston, & Magliaro, 2000), and theories driven by numerical data often made little impact on individual teachers or the development of teacher competencies (Campbell & Carson, 2006; Greenwood & Maheady, 2001; Laursen, 2007).

Finally, as Rust (2009) points out, even pre-service teachers come into professional development programs with deep-seated beliefs about teaching and learning, which they acquired from previous classroom experiences. Such beliefs are more experience-based, instead of theory-based (Mansour, 2009) and have significant influence on pre-service teachers' classroom practice and actions (Rust, 2009). Thus, it is critical for teacher training programs to recognize teachers' values and personal beliefs instead of assuming that teachers will accept given information and utilize it without resistance or difficulty. Without such consideration, teacher education may have no or little effect on teachers' professional development (Anderson, 2002; Blanchard, Southerland, & Granger, 2008; Rust, 2009).

It is often suggested that classroom teachers should be the center of, and the active participants in their professional development, reflecting upon and inquiring into issues of their own interest (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2003; Gersten et al., 2010; Justi & van Driel, 2006; Rust, 2009). Schon (1983), who introduced the concept of teachers as reflective practitioners, writes that research problems should be generated from real-world situations. He notes that this natural problem-solving process is often bypassed, and teachers receive artificial problems introduced to them by outsiders. As a result, the provided theoretical information does not reflect the reality of the classroom, and many teachers dismiss it due to its perceived irrelevance to their everyday practice. Teacher ownership in the process of teacher education is critical to the improvement of current teaching practices (Masuda, 2010; Richards, 2002).

### **Teacher Education with Transactional Orientation**

Dissatisfaction with traditional teacher education has changed the direction of teacher professional development (Arnold, 2002; Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002; Guskey, 2000). Teacher educators recognized and began paying more attention to teachers' needs and their day-to-day classroom reality. Teachers are no longer viewed as recipients of information. They become active participants in the construction of knowledge, and individual teacher development is recognized as a life-long endeavor strongly influenced by institutional and personal factors. At the same time, teachers learn to view their own students differently. In the transactional model, students are active participants and owners of their learning (Dewey, 2001) while teachers organize and facilitate students' learning, by "scaffolding" or providing a "helping hand," which is gradually withdrawn as the

students' capabilities grow (Cazden, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). With these changes, teacher research, also known as action research, became popular in teacher training programs (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990; Dana, 2010; Rust, 2009).

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) explain that action research is "systematic and intentional research" (p. 7) with an emphasis on the teacher's active role "as knower and as agent for change" (p. 22). Rust (2009) also notes that action research should focus on investigating specific individuals, events, and practices. Unlike experimental research that seeks to generalize its results, action research involves teachers reflecting on their own teaching, studying matters of their own concerns, and making appropriate decisions to improve their own unique classrooms. Action research is a cyclical process that often includes problem identification, inquiry, action, and reflection (Drummond & Themessl-Huber, 2007; Gregson, 2004; Young, Rapp, & Murphy, 2010). Drummond and Themessl-Huber (2007) explain that problems relate to specific classroom context and give rise to a growing awareness and thought, and inquiry seeks out answers and change through reflection (Yendol-Hoppey & Dana, 2006). Taking action leads to new questions, and teachers repeat the process in a spiral manner (Jay & Johnson, 2002). Serafini (2002) expands this notion and eloquently describes the process of the "reflective cycle" or "reflective practice."

Driven by Dewey's (1933) definition of reflection as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p.6), Serafini (2002) writes that reflective practice begins from a stance that is the willingness to question teaching and take another look at beliefs, theories, and educational practices (p. 2). A reflective stance ignites uncertainties, or a sense of doubt, and leads to the making curricular decisions based on the information gathered from classroom assessment (p. 3). The curricular decision is then practiced, observed, and, ultimately, leads to further reflective stances. Serafini's theory differs from other explanations of action research cycles in its emphasis on the "willingness" that teachers maintain. He states that it is teachers' voluntary and consistent desire to improve their classrooms, and not teacher education classes that should prompt action research (Serafini, 2002).

Action research is often collaborative. Many teacher educators maintain that collaboration is a necessary condition for successful teaching (e.g., Graves, 2001; Parise & Spillane, 2010; Thibodeau, 2008). Through collaboration, teachers engage in "teacher dialogue" that brings "multiple perspectives and hidden points" into their discussions (Zeichner, 1994, cited in Jay & Johnson, 2002). It also propels the reflection process and serves as an impetus for a method of inquiry (Schwarz, 2002; Wildman et al, 2000). Thus, a teacher study group model is a form of collaborative action research in which teachers with similar interests meet regularly and explore issues. In teacher study groups, teachers have a voice in their learning (Huang, 2007). They share theoretical knowledge and experiences and seek improvements that can have a direct impact on their own classrooms (Gersten et al., 2010; Huang, 2007; Thibodeau, 2008).

## Study Design

This article describes a qualitative, ethnographic case study of a teacher study group. The term “ethnographic” refers to a systematic inquiry conducted in a relatively short time span but carried out with the same features and methodology an anthropologist would use in a “full ethnography” (Heath, 1982, p. 36). For eight weeks, the researcher joined the teacher study group activities as a participant-observer. She gathered and reviewed data focusing on the context and its sociocultural implications. Using “grounded theory” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1), the author elaborated and retested her research questions and continued to collect data until new information “confirm[ed] a stable pattern, and the model appear[ed] to be complete” (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010, p.15).

## Data

The data gathered throughout the eight weeks includes written field notes, audio recordings, transcripts, participant journals, participant background questionnaires, and other and teaching-related artifacts. The researcher kept field notes during the teacher study groups, classroom observations, and other school activities. She interviewed the teacher study group participants at the beginning and at the end of the program. All teacher study group meetings and teacher interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The teacher study group participants kept journals of their group activities. The participants also filled out a background questionnaire. All participants, including the author, were native speakers of Japanese and communicated in Japanese for the duration of the project. The researcher translated the collected data into English. Additional artifacts included program handbooks, flyers, syllabi, lesson plans, teachers’ notes and letters, e-mail correspondence, and weekly schedules of extra-curricular activities.

## Setting and Participants

The research setting was an eight-week intensive summer Japanese language program offered by an American university and held in Japan. In this program, the instructors from the U.S. universities teamed up to co-teach with teachers from the local teachers’ association. For this particular year, there were four instructors from U.S. universities (two from the host university, and the rest, including the author, hired just for the summer program), and five teachers from the local Japanese language teachers’ association. The researcher invited all nine educators to participate in the teacher study group. Two U.S. instructors and three local teachers agreed to participate. All of the participants’ names (except the author, Chinatsu) have been changed to protect confidentiality. Most members already knew each other through previous teaching experiences, including the program. The two U.S. instructors were colleagues from the host university. The author had taught with one of the U.S. instructors in the program in the past, and both of them were acquainted with all of the local teachers who joined the teacher study group.

### **Study Focus and Objectives**

The main purpose of this study was to examine how a teacher study group influences its participants' professional development and how the members interact with each other to create collegial, supportive relationships. The research questions were as follows: How will the teacher study group and the transactional model influence the participants' professional development? How will the members of the teacher study group change their beliefs and practices through the teacher study group activities? What factors will promote or inhibit the teacher transformation process?

The author had been incorporating the theory and practice of the transactional model into her classroom for several years. Two local teachers and one U.S. instructor in the teacher study group indicated a strong interest in the transactional model. In the teacher study group, the participants explored the transactional model of teaching and learning and its application to their language classrooms. They learned that the transactional model views learning as a two-way process between the learner and the outside factors, in which both are transformed through a mixture of doing and reflecting (Dewey & Bentley, 1949). The participants also became familiar with Vygotsky's (1978) notion of the zone of proximal development, which asserts that students will actively construct knowledge through social instruction. Throughout the study, three particular areas have emerged as focal points: the teacher study group and teacher change; sociocultural contexts of the teacher study group and community building; and the role of the participant observer in an ethnographic teacher study group research. This article deals with the first aspect, the teacher study group and teacher change.

The researcher selected two participants for the case study for several reasons. First, the two teachers were very new to the transactional model. (The other three participants had worked with the researcher before and had some previous experience with the transactional model of teaching and learning). Second, the two case study teachers' reactions towards the transactional model were directly related to their experiences during the time of the study. Third, the data collected on these two case study teachers was rich and informative and directly related to the research goal of understanding how teachers change through the teacher study group activities. Both teachers were uncertain and showed resistance towards the transactional model of teaching initially, but gradually shifted their thinking about it, and modified their classroom behavior dramatically. This article focuses on one of the teachers, Yuka, and her transformation.

### **Yuka's Story**

When Yuka joined the teacher study group, she was a U.S. instructor teaching at the host university. It was her third year as a Japanese instructor. Yuka decided to join the study group session because she wanted an opportunity to share her teaching experiences and learn from others. At her own university, all of her time was taken by her daily teaching activities. "Unlike more experienced teachers, my time is filled up with just preparing and teaching daily lessons. ... I have so many

things to do. To give assignments to the students, prepare exams, and reply to my students' e-mail, you know, I need to e-mail my students to tell them things." She explained that she felt exhausted at the end of the day and had little time for reflection. When her classes or lesson plans did not go well, she felt down and asked for advice from her colleagues. "But they usually tell me that I worry too much and that I might give myself an ulcer ... it might be my personality, but I would feel better if I could find a solution for my problems." Yuka was initially skeptical about the transactional model. Her attitude changed as she applied the transactional model when dealing with a struggling student, Katie. Katie was a graduate student from a prestigious university. Her Japanese skills were limited and she was far behind the other students. Yuka gave extra tutoring sessions to Katie outside of regular class hours. However, Yuka did not feel Katie was progressing and thought that she did not belong in the program.

Right before the first teacher study group meeting, the researcher and Yuka discussed one of the main principles of the transactional model, the classroom as a learning community. A learning community is "an inherently cooperative, cohesive, and self-reflective group entity whose members work on a regular, face-to-face basis toward common goals while respecting a variety of perspectives, values, and life styles" (Graves, 1992, p. 64). Members of a learning community "focus on problem solving and inquiry ... share responsibility and control ... learn through action, reflection, and demonstration ... establish a learning atmosphere that is predictable and yet full of real choices" (Short, 1990, p. 35). Making a connection between this concept and Katie, the researcher suggested that diversity in a classroom community (in this case, the students' different proficiency levels) could be a great resource for community building, and that it could be an advantage to have Katie in class.

In the first teacher study group meeting, the group briefly went over key concepts of the transactional model: the importance of collaboration and critical thinking, language as a means of communication, problem-solving skills, and the teacher's role as a facilitator of student learning. Like the other participants, Yuka had reservations about the transactional model. She said that students were used to a more traditional style of teaching (ex. teacher-driven lectures), and it would be difficult to change their current learning preferences. She said,

I think it [the transactional model] sounds ideal, but I cannot use it. I know it would be great if you were able to use it. While I was ... reading the material [about the transactional model], I wondered how I could use it in an actual classroom. I think I would encounter a lot of problems if I actually try to apply the transactional model in my class.

Yuka, however, did not completely dismiss the idea of the transactional model, as the quote may imply. When the study group covered other important concepts, such as multiculturalism, thematic cycles, and the classroom as an inclusive learning community, another participant expressed very strong concerns about the application of the transactional theory. She believed that more advanced students would prefer a deductive approach, and that encouraging students to explore and

to co-construct knowledge would consume too much time, frustrate students and not work in real classroom settings. Yuka argued with this criticism, claiming it was worth knowing the concepts of the transactional model, even if the group participants could not actually practice them. She explained that although not all teachers might think of the transactional model as useful for current classrooms, it could potentially make a difference and was “still really worth learning.”

After the meeting, Yuka clarified that it was the concept of the sense of community that she was defending. Yuka said that the meeting was “enlightening,” and that learning about the value of the sense of community in the classroom had affected her thinking about working with Katie. She also appreciated the researcher’s remarks about Katie and asked for more feedback. Yuka had previously shared her frustration and difficulties at her home university, and her colleagues tried to reassure her, saying, “Don’t worry” and “You worry too much.” The colleagues at her host university often mentioned Yuka’s dependability, her work ethic and strong teaching skills, so perhaps, in the author’s opinion, they did not feel Yuka needed further feedback. However Yuka, as a newer Japanese instructor, hoped for more concrete advice and showed enthusiasm during the researcher’s discussion of her current situation with Katie. However, Yuka’s general reluctance about applying the transactional model remained for the rest of the semester. For instance, when the group discussed a transactional grammar teaching method in which the teacher presents target grammar patterns in a meaningful story and guides the students to co-construct the grammar explanation together (Adair-Hauck, Donato, & Cumo-Johanssen, 2000), Yuka maintained that such an approach was not usable in her classroom. She argued that when the textbook provided written explanations anyway, it would take too much class time and thought it would discourage the students from learning grammar rules on their own.

Despite Yuka’s reservations, there appeared to be some noticeable changes in Yuka’s work with Katie. First, Yuka encouraged Katie’s classmates to help her. Also, Yuka began recognizing how bright Katie was, despite her limited Japanese skills. About a week after the first teacher study group, Yuka told the researcher that the other teachers also had told her that Katie was “smart” and “quick to learn things.” Soon thereafter, Yuka began reporting Katie’s areas of improvement: using complete sentences, preparing and performing well during her presentations and following class explanations. According to Yuka, Katie was still very far behind, but she was able to participate more in class activities, especially when they involved the newly introduced material.

In a study group meeting toward the end of the semester, Yuka stated that her class was now able to do the peer correction; the students helped each other to complete sentences and corrected each other’s errors much more often than at the beginning of the semester. Yuka attributed this improvement to her awareness of the ‘sense of community’ concept she had learned in the first teacher study group session. She said, “Chinatsu [the researcher] emphasized the importance of establishing a learning community within the classroom in the first teacher study meeting. I still remember this... I made it a point to create a sense of community in my classroom.”

When asked to elaborate more on the student learning and the sense of community, Yuka explained that she felt that the sense of community had affected the students' learning.

Peer error correction is a good example [of how the sense of community helped the students]. Initially there was no such atmosphere at all in my classroom. You know, I assume it [lack of community] was because most of the students were from the same college [the host university]. So, students like Mandy [a student from a different university] seemed isolated, you know. Katie was one of them. But I really think that a sense of community was created in my class. So those students, especially Katie, you know, when we were having debates in the Japanese class, despite the huge gap between her and the other students, she became able to say, "please give me the ball" [in the class debate, turns were taken by passing a ball.] When Katie volunteered to share her opinion, by asking for her turn in correct Japanese, "please give me the ball," before I said anything, all classmates encouraged and supported her, saying "hang in there, hang in there." I believe that our sense of community was the reason why Katie progressed that much, and you know, I really think that the students were really helping each other. They are really positive...

Yuka also described how her perception of the less proficient students had changed.

Before, I didn't know what to do with a student with a very low Japanese proficiency level. When I had such students in my class, I just wondered "What am I going to do?" But you know, hearing that, I should take advantage of the situation. The advanced students will learn by helping others, and that was always on my mind. I always hoped that less proficient students could motivate other students and help other students improve. I'm really glad that I heard that in the first study group.

When the researcher talked to Yuka a few months later after the semester ended, Yuka still talked about the community and how the teacher study group had completely changed her view towards the diversity in her classrooms.

## **Discussion**

The collected data suggest five major factors that may have contributed to Yuka's change in attitude towards Katie: willingness, reflection, discomfort, inquiry, and collaboration. First, Yuka demonstrated willingness to receive feedback and to reflect and improve her practice throughout the research. She repeatedly mentioned her concern for not getting enough feedback at her home institution. In her first interview, she also expressed frustration about her hectic daily teaching duties that left little time to reflect. While many other teachers in the program hesitated to have observers in their classrooms, Yuka always welcomed them. "I really want you and other teachers to come to my class and tell me what I can improve. Having observers and getting feedback really helps me to see what I

wouldn't see otherwise." Both within and outside of the teacher study group, Yuka shared her reflections on her current and previous teaching experiences and asked for advice. As Serafini (2002) maintains, willingness to reflect is a first step towards the reflective cycle and is a critical component of one's professional improvement.

Yuka also experienced discomfort and a sense of doubt about her teaching. Her uncertainty with struggling students was clear from the beginning of the study. Yuka initially viewed Katie as a burden. In her interviews, she stated that differences among the students' proficiency levels were the "most difficult thing" in teaching Japanese, and that she did not know how to deal with it in her classroom. Former research suggests that discomfort, or uncertainty, is a critical factor for teacher change (e.g., Schon, 1983; Serafini, 2002; Stivers & Cramer, 2009). Teachers tend to practice what works well for them, and to resist new ideas or methodologies unless they acknowledge a need for improvement (Cherniss, 2005; Guskey, 2002).

Yuka's beliefs about critical thinking were consistent with her reluctance toward some tenets of the transactional model. For example, Yuka maintained her stance on adult-child differences in learning and the cultivation of critical thinking throughout the research. She stated that her adult students had already developed their own learning habits and skills. In her mind, her Japanese courses were not the place to teach how to learn or how to look at things critically. It is very likely that Yuka was comfortable with the students' high motivation and academic competence at her home institution and did not see a strong need to teach critical-thinking skills.

Yuka's dissatisfaction led her to inquiry. She questioned and reflected on her practice with a specific focus in mind, in other words, she saw the issue as crucial. As she sought an answer to her problem of addressing diverse proficiency levels, Yuka began thinking of the major premise of the transactional model. The idea of creating a community in her classroom caught her attention as a possible solution for her real problem. Yuka's own reflective cycle involved a decision to change, a change in practice, observation, and further reflection (Serafini, 2002).

The teacher study group played a significant role in Yuka's transformation by providing the time and space to discuss pedagogical theories and practices. Before the teacher study group, Yuka expressed frustration about not having enough time to learn from other teachers or to reflect on her own teaching. As teacher educators often point out, teachers are busy with their daily routines, and it is difficult for them to take the time necessary to participate in substantive professional development activities (e.g., Dunlap et al., 2000; Gersten et al., 2010; Kitchen, Parker, & Gallagher, 2008). Finding time was an issue for the teacher study group participants as well; in fact, the group had to cancel two meetings due to hectic daily duties. However, the teacher study group, despite limited hours, still provided opportunities for Yuka to learn about the premises underlying the transactional model and reflect on her teaching. Without the time budgeted for the teacher study group, it is highly unlikely that Yuka would have found the time necessary for such reflection. In addition, the teacher study group offered Yuka opportunities to engage in teacher dialogue to uncover ideas, viewpoints,

and teaching methods (Jay & Johnson, 2002). The study group enabled Yuka to discover a concept new to her: the classroom as an inclusive learning community, and Katie's potential role within it. Yuka claimed that encountering these new concepts through group conversations was "eye-opening" and changed her outlook toward other struggling students.

The teacher study group facilitated sharing experiences and reflections among Yuka and the other participants. The group was regularly involved in a process of receiving feedback and sharing advice. Having a safe place to exchange thoughts and suggestions in a collaborative manner was significant, especially for this specific group of Japanese natives of different ages and with differing levels of experiences. Nakane (1970) notes that age difference is critical for forming vertical relationships, essential to the internal organization of any Japanese group. Nakane also comments that long-time members of a group (who are usually older) tend to be more easily accepted as the leaders in Japanese groups. Anthropologists often describe this Japanese hierarchy as the "*sempai-kohai*" [senior-junior] relationship (e.g., Condon & Masumoto, 2011; Nakane 1970). The *sempai* are usually older than *kohai*, and have belonged to the group or institution longer. *Sempai* are in a position of power that enables them to support the *kohai* in one or more ways.

Due to this hierarchy system, it is often difficult for less-experienced Japanese language teachers to comment on senior colleagues' teaching or to share their expertise with their *sempai*. Therefore, great opportunities to learn from each other might be missed. However, the context of the teacher study group and its shared sense of purpose provided some freedom for the members to give and receive feedback. For instance, the teacher study group made it much easier for the author, who was the youngest and the second-least-experienced in the group to present her knowledge and share experiences of classroom diversity with Yuka.

### **Implications for Future Research**

One limitation of this study was the intensity of the research schedule. The research project lasted eight weeks, during which all members taught intensive Japanese courses. The group met only once a week for eight weeks, but had to cancel two meetings due to emergency departmental meetings and other administrative tasks. The hectic schedule reduced the time to build a sense of community among the study group participants and limited the author's time to reflect on the activities while on site. A longer-term study could allow researchers to observe and analyze the issues of teacher change and teacher study groups to a greater extent.

The teacher study group impacted Yuka and assisted her in teaching a diverse group of students. Yuka initially felt that Katie should not have been accepted into the program. Gradually, through the teacher study group, Yuka's views of Katie changed, and Yuka then successfully provided scaffolding for Katie through a demanding and intensive Japanese language program. The transformation of Yuka's perspective was so dramatic and quick, that it prompted the author's thinking about how significant or deep the change really was and how it might affect Yuka's beliefs and future actions towards struggling students. Is it possible that Yuka just desperately needed a quick solution and therefore embraced the

idea of a learning community to deal with this specific problem? Could she be as accepting of another student with limited proficiency in a different situation in the future? A longer-term study of Yuka's teaching and study group activities to investigate the long-term effects of the teacher study group, and the potential for permanent teacher change would be necessary to answer these questions.

This study also indicated that Yuka's reflective stance and constant attempts to improve her teaching influenced Yuka's transformation. Studies involving teacher study groups often report that willingness to reflect and improve is a critical factor for professional growth. Hence, another question to consider is: How can professional development be successful when the teachers are unwilling to reflect and change? Serafini (2002) explains that being reflective is not something teachers can be "taught to do," but is something they can be "helped to become" (p. 4). It is hoped that future research will explore how teacher study groups and teacher education programs can support teachers in becoming independent and reflective action researchers.

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# 9

## **Backward design: Enduring learning for 21<sup>st</sup> century world language instruction**

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### **Abstract**

In this article the authors present the concept of backward design as it pertains to world language performance-based proficiency lesson planning and assessment. More specifically, the article discusses the backward design process and the importance of developing questions leading to enduring learning as the point of departure in lesson planning. The authors suggest that the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) is a useful mechanism for assessing culturally authentic student communication. Finally, the authors discuss the use of a wiki and in-service training in backward design and the appropriate use of authentic materials in lesson development.

**T**he question reverberates in teachers' lounges and department faculty meetings from elementary schools through universities: "What can world language (WL) educators do better or differently to assure that their students become culturally aware, linguistically competent completers of their courses and graduates of their programs?" Echoing the sentiments of their predecessors, the competent and conscientious WL educators who for decades have researched, promoted, and embraced the best practices known, in order to improve the quality and quantity of WL students in the American education system, today's teachers persevere toward the elusive goal of a fluent multilingual citizenry.

While the concern about student achievement is familiar, there are added pressures on teachers in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Persistent demands for external validation of teachers' efforts by educational administrators and legislators are coupled with challenges posed by today's students who, compared with the previous generations, often bring fewer traditional educational tools and

less motivation for learning into the classroom. Clearly, world language educators are not the only ones facing this reality. However, it is of critical importance to this profession, especially when it continues to find itself marginalized, while efforts to remediate the American students' failing ability to compete on the world stage in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs take precedence in many school districts.

The most recent survey of world language enrollments in colleges and universities by the Modern Language Association does show an increase in overall enrollment in languages other than English of 6.6% over the previous data reported from 2006, although the current growth is a bit less than half of the 12.9% increase in enrollments reported between 2002 and 2006 (Furman, Goldberg, & Lusin, 2010). However, at the same time that there is an increase in the total number of students enrolled in WL classes, the report indicates that still only 8.6 of every 100 students are enrolled in a WL course, and that students are nearly five times more likely to be enrolled in a first- or second-year course than in advanced language study. Moreover, the percentage of students currently enrolled in any WL course is only half as great as the percentage of those enrolled in 1965 (16.5%). Similarly, a survey on foreign language enrollments K-12 conducted by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2010) documents a slight increase in overall enrollment in foreign languages from 2004-05 to 2007-08. Yet even with this increase, only 18.5% of all students were enrolled in a foreign language, and enrollment declined in 17 states. Neither study of enrollment trends reflects a major increase in the desire to study world languages in extended sequences, despite all the improvements in methodology over the last four decades. While the vast majority of K-12 students in other nations study a second or third language, these surveys show no evidence of a pervasive commitment in the United States to developing a multilingual citizenry.

How can it be, that American students are still not committed to extended sequences of WL study to attain ability to communicate in a second language in a globally interconnected world, where communication with people in other parts of the world is free and instantaneous? While there may be some cause for optimism occasioned by the increased numbers in lower level courses evident in the MLA report, the lack of persistence in world language study into advanced courses indicates that the decades-long challenges faced by WL teachers to develop functional proficiency remain.

In fact, in an age where global awareness has become an accepted educational mantra, the expertise of a fluent, culturally able second language speaker has not garnered the respect or recognition WL educators may have anticipated. The reality is fast becoming the opposite. Technology tools encourage students to believe that they don't "need" to know a second language, as long as their personal electronic devices can provide for their immediate linguistic challenges with an acceptably accurate translation, allowing them to communicate with a speaker of a different language.

Almost two decades after the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* were introduced in 1996, WL students at all levels still miss the

opportunity to embrace the vision of the project task force, which articulated the importance of learning to know a language and to do culturally-appropriate activities. Perhaps, then, it is worthwhile to consider approaches to curriculum design that raise knowledge and awareness beyond the perfunctory survival language skills, characteristic of the learner at the intermediate level of proficiency, so that real world expectations and bigger issues become more important. To that end, the authors here propose that backward design or understanding by design (UbD) modeled on the concept originated by Wiggins and McTighe (1998, 2005) is one approach to curriculum planning that offers promise and may serve as an organizing principle for standards-based lesson planning.

### **Backward Design and World Language Learning**

In order to understand the potential for this promising curricular design model to be applied to WL instruction, a discussion of UbD is important. In this section, UbD's backward design model is introduced and is connected to WL initiatives, specifically the Communication, Cultures, Connections, Communities, and Comparisons standards (5Cs) of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 2006) and the more recent assessment tool designed primarily to measure the modes of the Communication standard, the Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA) (Glisan, Adair-Hauck, Koda, Sandrock, & Swender, 2003). What the reader should discern is that backward design lesson planning is a complementary design process for creating instruction and assessment for WL learners when performance is the goal of learning. One of the most significant issues the teacher finds is that in backward design, the textbook is not the driver of instruction; it is a tool by which the more important enduring learning takes place. This may be uncomfortable in faculty lounges, where the discussion has traditionally centered around how many chapters to cover by the end of one course or year of study and by conversations such as "I taught the students X in the first chapter of the book; they should 'know' it now." Wiggins and McTighe (2005) write:

But many teachers begin with and remain focused on textbooks, favored lessons, and time-honored activities - the inputs - rather than deriving those means from what is implied in the desired results - the output. To put it in an odd way, too many teachers focus on the teaching and not on the learning. They spend most of their time thinking, first, about what they will do, what materials they will use, and what they will ask students to do rather than first considering what the learner will need in order to accomplish the learning goals. (p. 15)

Much of this operational description should resonate with 21st century world language teachers. The profession has had over 15 years of conversations about outcomes-based, standards-driven language learning and teaching. The idea of input and output fits perfectly within a discussion of language use and performance that leads to life-long skills in a WL. The term backward design has been used in many venues, and many educators have heard it and possibly

attended professional development sessions or presentations at local, regional, or national WL conferences, yet published accounts are limited in the literature (Childre, Sands, & Pope, 2009; Eddy, 2010; Reeve, 2002; Sample, 2011).

### **What is Backward Design?**

Backward design is a method of curriculum and/or lesson planning whose main goal is to address what students should know and be able to do when a course, lesson, or unit has been completed. Unlike the linear approach to instruction found in textbooks where students work their way through the chapter and then answer discrete point questions for evaluation, the backward design approach demands deeper learning and application of knowledge. In traditional grammar-driven WL classrooms, rote memorization and discrete point testing do not address the “know and able to do” portion of the equation.

There are several important overarching principles when looking at backward design. Wiggins (2011) provides a minimalist version of UbD below.

- A primary goal of education should be the development and deepening of student understanding.
- Students reveal their understanding most effectively when they are provided with complex, authentic opportunities to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess. When applied to complex tasks, these “six facets” provide a conceptual lens through which teachers can better assess student understanding.
- Effective curriculum development reflects a three-stage design process called “backward design” that delays the planning of classroom activities until goals have been clarified and assessments designed. This process helps to avoid the twin problems of “textbook coverage” and “activity-oriented” teaching, in which no clear priorities and purposes are apparent.
- Student and school performance gains are achieved through regular reviews of results (achievement data and student work) followed by targeted adjustments to curriculum and instruction. Teachers become most effective when they seek feedback from students and their peers and use that feedback to adjust approaches to design and teaching.
- Teachers, schools, and districts benefit by “working smarter” through the collaborative design, sharing, and peer review of units of study (para. 3).

In order to prepare and deliver instruction using UbD, one must be familiar with the three phases in backward design that are critical for successful teaching and learning. The plan begins with identification of desired learning outcomes, followed by gathering evidence that learning is taking place, and finally deciding what classroom instruction should look like and what materials should be used (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

#### *Making the Connection to the 5Cs*

Since UbD starts with “desired results” that may be either goals or standards, WL educators are well positioned to incorporate a UbD plan in instruction.

The original version of the standards document (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 1996) was written prior to the release of *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins and McTighe (2005). The authors of the initial version are cognizant of the differences between outcomes and course content, stating:

The standards are not a curriculum guide. While this document suggests the types of content and curricular experiences needed to enable students to achieve the standards, and supports the ideal of extended sequences of study, it does not describe specific course content, nor a recommended scope and sequence. (National Foreign Language Standards Project, 2006, p. 28)

It is clear that the last 15 years of focus on the 5Cs since the inception of the WL standards is a rallying point, around which desired learning outcomes can be discerned (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 2006). However, Eddy (2010) notes that although many educators may claim familiarization with the 5Cs, actual systematic use of standards in WL instruction is more dubious. She adds that while the standards may be found in methods courses, lesson plans, and even in newer textbooks, there is little training in how to design from the standards (Eddy, 2010). The model proposed here utilizes backward design as the organizing principle for standards-based planning. It embraces the concept suggested by Wiggins and McTighe (2005) that planning begins with a focus on the “big ideas” that are guided by “essential questions.” This premise is particularly germane when considering the development of proficiency by a WL student, what lingering knowledge and abilities the student should retain and what larger societal issues the student may take away after WL instruction is over. Moreover, in a time of increased accountability, the need to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills looms large. Backward design essential questions target evaluation and creation, as described in the revised Bloom’s taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

This focus on big ideas flips instruction on its end, so that instead of asking what is covered in the chapter, the teacher asks what these desired learning results will be within the topical content of the unit to be taught. What unit-specific essential questions are culturally authentic and level-appropriate? In this first stage of planning, a thoughtful consideration of what real listeners, speakers, readers and writers do in the target culture should be integral to the design. This supports the need for authentic language input. Essential questions for WL learning could easily include larger societal and cultural issues in language learning, such as “Do elders matter in a culture?” This might be an essential question framing the specifics of using honorifics based on understanding the age and hierarchical relationship of two interlocutors in Japanese society. By addressing deep, thought-provoking and lingering questions with no exact answers, WL learners grapple with world issues as they learn how language and culture are inseparably bound. Eddy (2010) concurs, finding that stage one of the backward design process aligns itself with the Culture standard of the 5Cs, as essential questions are closely aligned with the perspectives component of the 3Ps (products, practices, and perspectives) (National Standards in Foreign Language Project, 1996, 2006).

Once the end has been determined in stage one, the second stage is to identify what evidence will support and demonstrate that the outcome(s) have been achieved and what evidence they should expect from the students. Performance tasks form a key part of demonstrating the “big ideas” of the content taught. What this says to WL educators, is that once an outcome or a standard has been chosen, there must be some form of authentic performance-based productivity on the part of the student to meet this level of the design. This means that a discrete point quiz might be one of the methods used to provide evidence, but it can no longer be the sole method of evaluation. In various examples given by the UbD authors, heavily contextualized, authentic instructions are provided to learners to help them extend their learning beyond the rote. One example given for an elementary social studies lesson on pioneers requires learners to:

Write one letter a day (each representing a month of travel) to a friend “back east” describing your life on the wagon train and the prairie. Tell about your hopes and dreams then explain what life on the frontier was really like. (Students may also draw pictures and explain orally.) (Wiggins, 2005, p. 4)

Providing a contextualized, authentic task to demonstrate language skills is a tool that many have been using; however, in many instances the end goal has not been the starting point. For example, in the WL setting, a performance goal would be to help students recognize daily activities that may be similar in two cultures and reflect on how the behaviors associated with the activities might be different. A comparable piece of evidence in the WL classroom would be to ask a student to write a daily email during a seven day trip to the target culture telling a family member what it was like to eat lunch in a restaurant, go to the movies and purchase tickets, shop for souvenirs, etc. Students would explain what was similar and different in their hometown and acknowledge that menu items in a fast food restaurant might be different, or that when purchasing tickets, a person must choose a particular seat, or that when shopping in the target culture, bargaining might be required. By writing emails home about these routines in the new culture, students will learn to see behaviors beyond their first culture and to connect to the world.

The second component of backward design requires evidence of learning through performance. While the 5Cs indicate the outcomes expected from instruction, they neither define curriculum, nor mandate assessment methodology. However, in the years since the release of the standards, a performance-based assessment tool, the IPA, has been developed (Glisan, Adair-Hauck, Koda, Sandrock, & Swender, 2003). It incorporates multiple opportunities for the teacher to measure student learning, including project-based activities, and was developed to capture what students know and are able to do. When designing an IPA, the three modes of communication take center stage in the assessment design, and rubrics delineate varying levels of performance within each of the three phases of the IPA. In this iterative assessment model, students demonstrate language proficiency around a central theme with authentic tasks they must perform, beginning with

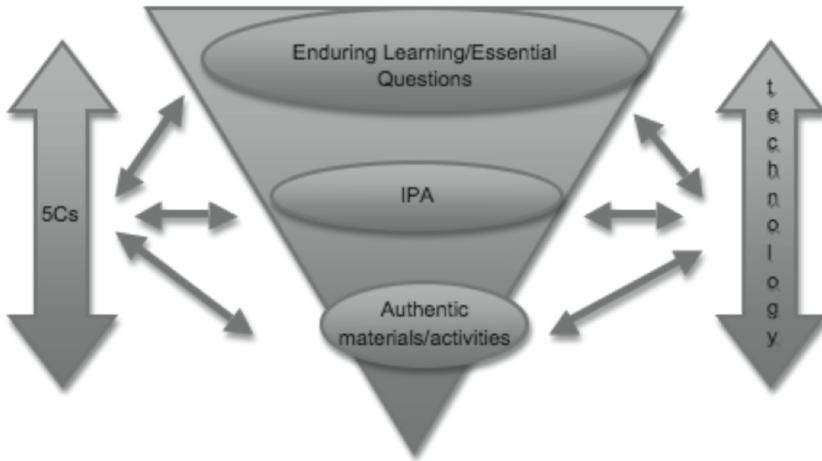
interpretive communication, moving to interpersonal communication, and finally providing polished presentational language tasks (Glisan et al., 2003).

At each stage of the IPA, formative assessment provides a focal point, so that both the student and the teacher can adjust teaching and learning to meet the acceptable level of performance at a minimum of two assessment points, first after the interpretive task, and then after the interpersonal task (Glisan et al., 2003). The learner has an interpretive task first (listening and/or reading), followed by an interpersonal task (speaking and/or writing), and finally drawing on instruction and assessment along the way, a presentational task (speaking and/or writing) is required. The iterative process is very important to authentic assessment, as real-life communication is often interrupted with requests for repetition of information or clarification questions. Often a native speaker finds information (interpretive) through reading and then decides to share that information by writing a text message or calling someone (interpersonal).

When exploring this second component of backward design, evidence of performance, the IPA model requires students to perform tasks based on authentic experiences well beyond the classroom walls and the textbook chapters. Designing the IPA before instructional planning commences is critical to the success of backward design, so that the teacher and students know what the goals are and what successful performance will look like (Eddy, 2010). Students are not left during the instructional stage wondering what is important and what will be expected of them. In this way, the IPA provides a road map for learning. As is required from the UbD stage two, the expectations for successful completion of the IPA drive daily instruction, including using the text and its exercises, and authentic or other culturally relevant materials and activities, such as an interpretive task using a YouTube video to demonstrate a cultural concept in the target culture.

For the third part of the backward design model, educators should choose instruction based on the original desired outcomes and the evidence they need to determine if big ideas are being learned and understood. In stage three, the educator finally plans appropriate instruction and finds appropriate resources for learning. In this design model, the lesson is last, while the assessment vehicle comes first. This is a great departure from what many have experienced in their years of teacher training. In the case for WL instruction, authentic materials are the desired type of material for learning to produce language in authentic situations and uncovering the enduring ideas and essential questions within the cultural context. The textbook may still be a part of the design; however, finding authentic resources, both throughout the community and in the online environment, is a key factor in relating classroom activity to the essential questions that learners should take away from instruction.

Thus, the interconnectedness of the 5Cs, the IPA, and the stages of backward design form the foundation for this performance-based instructional and assessment model for WL educators. The following figure demonstrates how the 5Cs represent stage one (desired learning outcomes), how the IPA provides evidence in stage two (evidence of performance), and finally, the backward design model itself serves as a catalyst for “end in mind” curriculum and lesson planning.



**Figure 1.** Interconnectedness of the 5Cs, the IPA, Technology, and Backward Design

In this rendering of the relationship between backward design, the 5Cs and the IPA, a WL teacher should recognize that all three stages of backward design can and should draw essential questions from the 5Cs, which may be uncovered through authentic materials from the target culture. Technology is a mediating tool that may allow the WL educator to establish the enduring learning desired, to provide authentic language use and promote proficiency, as the learner acquires more skills. The IPA is one mechanism that provides evidence that learning is taking place, and that the learning is based on the 5Cs. Finally, the activities designed for and performed in the classroom, involve authentic language events in the target culture that now may be accessed via technology.

### **From Theory to Practice: Backward Design Professional Development**

The authors recognize the value of backward design planning for enhancing student performance at all levels of instruction and potentially extending student enrollment into advanced courses, as they embrace big ideas and essential questions. Along with two other colleagues, they created a series of professional development workshops for K-12 teachers from the university's feeder schools. These workshops were designed to help participants revise the expectations for their classes and to find ways to engage their students, in order to encourage a broader engagement with the target culture by establishing outcomes expectations for students leading toward the goal of enduring learning.

The faculty project team chose to follow a model they had used previously to organize a series of eight six-hour workshops, held once a month throughout the academic year. On-going professional development for WL teachers is valued by participants and school district administrators alike, since there are few opportunities for extended content professional development (PD) in the field.

As Steele, Peterson, Silva, and Padilla (2009) note, “The success of professional development programs rests on what educators learn and are able to do in the classroom that benefits student learning” (p. 206). The project team finds the yearlong structure to be beneficial because it allows teachers the opportunity to learn new concepts and to develop ways to implement these concepts in their classes during the workshop day. The participants then utilize their newly created activities in their classrooms, and report the level of success to other participants the following month. The teachers recognize this immediate feedback loop as one of the most beneficial aspects of the project.

In this project, all participants were in-service teachers, many of whom had more than 10 years of classroom experience. Some had attended previous yearlong professional development workshops on the classroom implementation of the 5Cs and another series on how to create IPAs to assure more authentic assessment. While UbD is understood as the beginning, overarching guide for curriculum planning, the participants’ classroom experience and foundational knowledge of standards and relevant assessment strategies were a significant advantage as they worked to implement UbD principles.

For ease of organization of the workshops, the project team focused on one mode of the communication standard for an entire day. In the morning, the project team presented the essential elements of the mode including sample authentic materials and guidelines for creating a revised lesson plan. Then, they asked participants to redesign a performance goal for that mode for the content they would be teaching prior to the following month’s workshop. In this way, teachers were challenged to apply the new strategies to the specific content they were teaching and to find ways to embrace UbD for each mode. In contemplating how to develop essential questions for the various text units, participants teaching the same language and level worked cooperatively on the appropriate outcomes for the unit. They recognized the benefits of collaborating in determining outcomes and the desired enduring learning, but at the same time, often found it difficult to develop authentic activities.

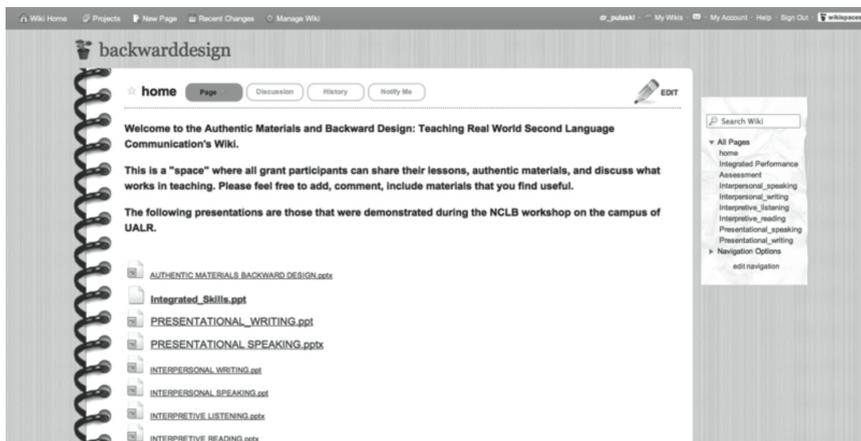
This challenge is understandable, since teachers have traditionally been expected to quantify student achievement using common exams and testing instruments developed by text authors. Moreover, required standardized assessments do not encourage students to demonstrate development of real-world language. Creating and using an essential question when teaching about family, “What is the value of family?” to develop an IPA that embeds authentic materials, then, is a significant departure from custom even for experienced teachers.

If, for example, it has been customary for students in a particular class to demonstrate their ability to use the vocabulary of family by describing their family or that of a famous person either in an oral or a written format, there is no guarantee that the value of family in the target culture is ever considered. On the other hand, if an IPA is developed (a) to assure that the student is assessed in the interpretive mode using a rubric that includes a focus on understanding the role of family in the target culture that a student might discern from a selected writing, then; (b) to assess in the interpersonal mode on an ability to interact in

a culturally-appropriate manner with a hypothetical host parent while studying abroad, and finally; (c) to make a presentation to classmates reflecting cultural awareness of the value of family observed while living in the target culture, the UbD process has provided a valuable opportunity for enduring learning by all students.

### *Sharing the Design through Technology*

As mentioned by Wiggins and McTighe (2005) earlier in this article, collaboration and sharing of curriculum design is integral in successful implementation of the backward design process. Finding a community of learners to provide support and feedback helps to hone the various stages of backward design planning. With this end in mind, the authors created a participant wiki to store, share, and disseminate PD lessons designed around the three modes of the Communications standard along with one completed IPA. The goal was neither to achieve perfection, nor to use the backward design template in toto, but rather to focus teacher energy on designing with the “end in mind” through the use of authentic materials and appropriate assessment tools and rubrics. The authors chose the wiki as an appropriate Web 2.0 tool to allow for editing, collaborating, and sharing of ideas. Figure 2 demonstrates the collection of instructional materials on modified backward design, authentic materials, and the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication, as well as IPAs developed to represent performance assessments of stage two.



**Figure 2.** Backward Design Collaborative Wiki Homepage

The setup of the wiki is a simple, free process. Educators use some common wiki sites such as Wikispaces (Tangent, LLC, 2011) or PBworks (2011). One person, serving as wiki administrator, needs to initiate membership in the wiki by establishing a wiki name and allowing for membership. The administrator can limit member participation depending on what settings the administrator

would like to control. In the case of the PD workshops, it was more important for members to be able to view their completed work than to edit, so at the time of the workshops, the administrator did most of the uploading of materials. After the workshop, participants were granted “editing” status to make changes as they saw fit and as their comfort level with the technology increased. The workshop leaders did not want to lose sight of the purpose of gaining deeper understanding of backward design processes by requiring additional technology sessions. Just as enduring learning and life-long connections are desired in the backward design model, the wiki’s main purpose was to provide that extension of learning during and after the workshop.

One example from the wiki of how a WL teacher extended learning from the workshops follows. The participant was to create an IPA that included the essential question for the unit, as well as the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational tasks to complete in an IPA. When working on the topic of house/home, the participant posed the essential question “What constitutes sufficient shelter?” Turning to the 5Cs, the educator decided that the Communications standard, as well as the Connections and Comparison standards could be met by addressing this essential question. To provide evidence for student performance, an IPA was created that began with an interpretive activity requiring the students to read several internet real estate websites in the target culture to get a feel for typical accommodations and to choose an appropriate accommodation based on a set of parameters. Students received contextualized instructions stating, “You are looking for housing in X city/town for you and two other family members, as well as a pet. You have a very limited budget of 500 euro. Look at the available properties at the website listed below to determine which property you think will fit your needs best. Circle the best choice for your situation.”

After the interpretive task, the students demonstrate following the essential question by communicating with a partner about how each person will decorate his/her room or space in the new housing chosen in the interpretive task. What the learner will discover, is that expectations in what constitutes an acceptable house or home may be different in the target culture. The interpersonal task presented to the learners includes the contextualized instructions to discuss the new dwelling by stating, “You and a friend get together after school to hang out because you are excited about the new home your family has chosen in country X. You want to talk about how to decorate your new space, and how it might be different from your home here. Talk with your friend about what you will need to bring, what you will have to leave behind, and the things you might have to purchase (furniture, bed linens, decorations, etc.)”

In the final part of the IPA, the presentational task takes place after the students have made the hypothetical move to the target culture; they have been asked to share with the new class what a typical home is like in the U.S. and to present it to the class via technology. The students receive the following instructions: “You have been asked by your new teacher in country X to create a slideshow that explains what typical homes are like in the US to share with the students in your new school. Using technology (e.g. PowerPoint, Prezi (2011), Slideshare (2011)),

create a slideshow of your home, and tell your new classmates about what housing in your hometown is like.”

### **New Steps and Challenges**

Even with the years of teaching experience and the familiarity previously gained on real-world activities and authentic assessments, many workshop participants found the UbD emphasis to be challenging, perhaps because the organization of classroom instruction remains constrained by textbooks and frameworks. Assuring enduring learning, while at the same time covering required course content and assessing with required instruments, is an attainable goal for classroom teachers who embrace UbD, but universal acceptance of this pedagogical strategy is not yet a reality. As the profession’s new engagement with ACTFL 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Map (P21) (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2011) continues to take root where the study of world languages is included among the core disciplines, the opportunities offered by UbD will be reinforced. The P21 project focuses on critical thinking, creativity and innovation, and collaboration among other issues identified as critical for 21st century students, and the UbD model complements these expectations (2011). Perhaps then, with the focus on enduring learning and a recognition of the importance of world languages and cultural understanding in educating for global, environmental, civic, financial, and health awareness as envisioned by P21, the elusive goal of a multilingual citizenry may yet be attainable.

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