

Special  
Issue

Strengthening World Language Education: Standards for Success

# NECTFL *REVIEW*

A Journal for K – 16+  
Foreign Language Educators



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on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

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## *From the 2017 Co-Editor*

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### **Strengthening World Language Education: Standards for Success**

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The 2017 presentations and research roundtables of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL), *Strengthening World Language Education: Standards for Success*, provide an important snapshot of some of the work that is currently being done in research and language classrooms as a result of the creation and implementation of standards that were created over two decades ago. These standards—the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (W-RSFL) (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) and the ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 2013)—reflect the strong focus for 21st-century teaching and learning. The most recently “refreshed” standards are the result of several years of research, implementation, and experience seeking to improve language teaching and learning.

The two sets of standards have served both as an anchor for our instructional practice and as a compass leading the growth of the profession. They have also set high expectations for moving our profession forward to guide language teaching in the 21st century, a time that calls for 21st century skills, international mindedness, intercultural competence, and language proficiency levels that are targeted toward the Advanced level for educators and toward increased communicative competence for students. The standards now apply to language learning across the PK-16 vertical instructional spectrum and have informed the language-specific standards for 14 languages—and the educators who teach those languages. Based on the most recent versions of the standards, the 2017 NECTFL sessions clearly show that educators and researchers are actively using them in their curricula, in their teacher preparation programs, as well as in their research.

During the two decades since the appearance of standards, our field of world language education has seen incremental changes and important updates to our teaching practice as revised standards for language learners called for performance evidence of

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what students should know and be able to do. In addition, teacher education standards have also challenged teachers in their own programs to provide robust evidence of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for future language educators. These standards have led the charge to make significant changes in how teachers are prepared and how languages are taught. In addition to pedagogical changes that have focused on the learner and learner outcomes with regard to language proficiency and communicative capacity, there is now also a focus on the growth of students' understanding of the cultures in which a language is spoken.

Many researchers and world language professionals have written about the role, growth, and importance of the standards that guide our profession (e.g., Glisan, 2006; Shrum & Fox, 2010; Shrum & Glisan, 2016). These authors and educators provide overviews of several documents that have been developed by our profession to guide us in our work as WL teachers and teacher educators. While the profession has regularly added new updates to the standards, the basic tenets of standards-based instruction and the incorporation of standards into instructional practices at all levels are now solidly at the core of our work.

As world language educators, we are charged to prepare K-16 learners, and now this charge is to prepare them to meet the demands of an increasingly complex world—one that calls on us to communicate easily and readily. Indeed, “To study another language and culture is to gain an especially rich preparation for the future.... Possessing the linguistic and cultural insights that come with the study of one or more world languages will be a requisite for life as an informed, productive, and globally literate citizen in the worldwide community” (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015, p. 13). To that end, students must develop a high level of ability for effective communication; understand cultures—others and their own—and be able to interact with competence and understanding of the practices, products, and perspectives of those cultures; be able to make important connections within and across academic disciplines and written documents in those languages; be capable of drawing comparisons with competence, sensitivity, and insight, without rendering judgement; and, be culturally competent members of our world communities. To achieve these five goal areas of the standards, we need to ensure that language continues to hold an essential place in curriculum, in schools, and in our students' lives so that they can be positive world citizens who can solve problems creatively and effectively.

### **Conference Themes and Strands**

In 2017 NECTFL explored the implementation of the standards through the lenses and perspectives of world language teachers, teacher educators, advocates, and researchers through its conference theme, Strengthening World Language Education: Standards for Success. This 63rd annual gathering held in New York City, brought together, once again, a national and international representation of world language educators and stakeholders engaged in the teaching of and advocacy for world languages and world language education.

It is in the context of recently refreshed W-RSLL (2015) and the ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards (2013) that the 2017 conference met. Over two days, over 1500 conference participants had the opportunity to explore the standards with the goal of

developing a deeper understanding about them and their integration into classroom instructional approaches and practices. Over 90 sessions and workshops, technology-related interactive opportunities, and research roundtable discussions served to advance our understanding. The sessions were organized into six strands:

- A. Exploring the Role and Scope of Standards in World Language Education
- B. Building Deeper Understandings of Standards through Research
- C. Integrating Standards in Teaching and Curriculum
- D. Understanding Standards and Their Impact on Learning and Assessment
- E. Strengthening Teacher Education & Professional Development for Implementation of Standards
- F. Exploring the Role of Digital Literacies in Standards-based Instruction

Throughout the two days, strand leaders attended sessions and gathered information from those sessions associated with their strands to develop an understanding of how the standards were represented, incorporated, and examined. Research roundtables and interactive technology labs shared recent research and the latest in multi-literacies provided additional insight. Notes were shared across the strands.

At the conclusion of the two days, strand leaders met to share their notes, summarize the various presentation contents, and discuss findings from their individual strand. Rebecca Fox worked with the strand leaders to identify and analyze themes that emerged across the strands and to interpret the results, with the goal of arriving at a point of across-strand synthesis. Results were shared with attendees at the closing plenary session. This cross-section of themes represented approximately 3250 minutes of sessions devoted to these six strand topics that address the standards. In addition to the W-RSFL (2015) and the ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards (2013), other standards were also mentioned, such as the technology standards articulated by the International Society for Technology Education (ISTE) (<https://www.iste.org/standards>).

### **Four Principle Themes and Synthesis**

Four principle themes emerged from across the strands: Authentic Application, Interactive Learning, Research of Learning, was the first pillar, a strong theme across strands, that addressed the standards as supporting opportunities for all learners with the goal of creating standards-based lessons that called all students to engage in learning that is student accessible, includes differentiation for all learners, and encompasses the five goal areas: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities.

The standards call teachers and students to infuse their classes with Interactive Learning, learning that is action oriented and that promotes active student engagement purposefully geared toward attaining increasing levels of language proficiency. Purposeful communication that is culturally relevant is activated across contexts and content areas.

Research and Reflection are (and should be) used by both teachers and students not just for the sake of reflection but as a lens focused on learning to assist students in examining their own learning. Reflection is also at the core of teachers' practice to help guide them to take positive action toward any needed change as they seek to improve their work. What is t and Reflection, and Creativity and Connections. These four broad themes formed the pillars that support the building and actualization (of

the standards). The image of a Greek Temple was used to depict the solid nature of the standards, with the four pillars supporting the structure. Individual sessions wove together elements that drew out the details and extended our understanding of each of these themes.

The theme, Authentic Application the impact of learning on their students' progress toward proficiency, or greater cultural competence, or their ability to draw comparisons and make connections? Reflection is also at the heart of inquiry and action research.

The fourth pillar, Creativity and Connections, emerged across the strands as a strong theme that was calling both teachers and students to apply the standards in creative ways in their lessons. This was particularly true via the avenues of technology and digital literacies. Technology provides a vehicle for both students and teachers to engage creatively and apply their knowledge and skills in new ways, and digital tools provide enhanced curriculum and creative application of new ideas.

The four themes that emerged from the strands were shared at the conclusion of the conference for our consideration as we move forward. Research should continue to emerge in multiple areas. For example, research can support our growing understanding of the most effective approaches and practices that promote language learning itself, particularly in providing evidence of the degree to which learners are able to approach and meet the five goal areas. Other research might include curriculum development that is aligned with the standards or support the development of language proficiency through the concerted application of the OPI at strategic points in a teacher education program.

Our work as world language educators has been strengthened by the standards. Through discussion and analysis of the themes, the image of a Greek temple with its solid foundation and strong pillars of support appeared. The image prompted them to think of how our standards have become a solid structure over time and our conference strands provided 2017 details. The sets of standards that continue to lead our profession are both an anchor for our work and a dynamic force pulling and guiding us to greater goals. Teaching grammatical structures or literature or history are no longer of static facts or merely an end goal. Rather, authentic communicative skills and global competence have become the authentic reach.

### **Themed Issue of the *NECTFL Review***

This special issue of the *NECTFL Review* expands upon the conference content to disseminate the work aligned with the conference theme to our broader world language community. The four articles included in this issue are divided into two sections: I. Research in Standards Implementation to Inform Practice; and II. Application of Standards to Instructional Practice.

In the first section, two articles provide research on the application of standards, first with college-age language students and the second with pre-service teachers. In "Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers of Spanish and French," Conboy, Ugalde, and Reuber present findings from three separate college-level language classes' learning experiences through interactive exchanges with native speakers using video-conferencing tools to promote student engagement and address its benefits and challenges. The Katradis, Fox, and Tian study, entitled "Learning to Implement the Five Cs by Living the Five Cs: Portfolios and Reflection in an



International Teacher Professional Development Program,” examines the outcomes of a US-based six-week summer professional development program for 19 Taiwanese teachers of Mandarin Chinese as a Foreign Language. While any teacher candidate might benefit from an active learning approach to better understand the standards and be able to apply them in their teaching practice, it was in the “lived” experiences of interacting with the sets of standards as both learners and future teachers that enabled the international candidates to ultimately grasp their meaning and be able to apply them in their foreign/world language lesson planning. Reflection proved to play a core role in their growth as future educators.

The second section focuses on the standards as applied to curriculum and instruction in the language classroom. The Kashuba article, “Literary Connections through Interdisciplinary Topics,” presents a rationale and examples for connections between literature and other disciplines, such as history, science, art, political science, philosophy, and psychology. The article addresses the goal of the Connections standard, as defined by the W-RSFL (NSFLEP, 2015), to provide avenues for students to expand their knowledge, engage in critical thinking, and attempt to solve problems creatively using literature, both in the original language and in translation. In his article, “France 2 Television News for Cultural Learning, Critical Thinking, and Language Practice: Steps Toward Intercultural Capability,” Daniel provides a modular set of activities and instructional strategies based on television news and current affairs for teaching French language, cultural knowledge, and intercultural capability.

It is clear from these articles that the integration of the standards into curriculum can be consciously aligned and visible to students. Through the study of a target language’s literature using the Connections standard, the teacher can be drawn to think of the linkages across disciplines and thus make language study visible and applicable to the student. As Kashuba wrote in her conclusion, this then “expands the power of language learning beyond conversation.” Daniel suggests that a news-based approach through current television broadcasting, used jointly with a model of intercultural learning has the potential to offer to teachers and students a productive approach for promoting the intercultural capability in the language classroom, as well as promote a habit of lifelong learning.

As co-editors of this issue, we hope that you find this 2017 special issue of *The NECTFL Review* to deepen your understanding of the Standards and their active application in our work as world language educators. They also underscore the importance of research and publication to pass forward the application of knowledge to inform research and practice. Through the dissemination of ideas and research, particularly in this case as they are connected to the standards that inform our profession, publications can capture a representative picture of aspects of the major thinking of our time.

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Our sincere gratitude to the following individuals who served as reviewers of the manuscripts submitted for publication in this special issue of the *NECTFL Review*. We could not have fulfilled our mission without them!

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**Research in Standards Implementation  
to  
Inform Practice**

## Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers of Spanish and French<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Student interactive exchanges with native speakers of a target language may increase learners' self-confidence, production, and oral comprehension in the target language, as well as students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC). One approach to interactive exchanges is video-conferencing (VC). This article discusses three experiences with the use of interactive exchanges with native speakers using video-conferencing tools in target language acquisition in higher education. It outlines how to include VC into the world language curriculum and assesses its benefits and challenges. Additionally, it argues that innovative use of technology

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adheres to the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (W-RSLL, National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 2015), in that it seeks to improve students' communicative and interpersonal skills, intercultural awareness, and linguistic competence. Video-conferencing tools accomplish this by mimicking the immersion experience. Interactive exchanges can expose students to the cultural values associated with the countries or regions of the target language and therefore help them negotiate meaning and process material discussed in class. Using these tools as a supplement to the communicative classroom reinforces the notion that language and culture are not mutually exclusive, but interdependent. The multiple benefits of using VC tools for interactive exchanges with native speakers outweigh the challenges—they are effective pedagogical tools, provided that specific goals and concrete tasks are assigned.

## **Introduction**

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) outlines the interconnectedness of language and culture in the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (W-RSLL) and addresses the need to incorporate them in the language learning classroom and beyond (Phillips & Abbott, 2011; National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (NSFLEP), 2015). These recommendations are grouped in five goal areas known as “the five Cs”: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Communities, and Comparisons, and make use of the three modes of communication (interpretive, interpersonal and presentational). In the context of language learning pedagogy, the five Cs weave language and culture together to transcend the classroom setting, to foster critical reflection, and to develop the 21<sup>st</sup> century skill set. In addition to these standards, pedagogical theories and teaching practices demonstrate that learning a second language is inextricably linked to the study of its culture (Kramsch, 1993, 1997, 1998; Byrnes, 2002; Lange & Paige, 2003; Risager, 2006, 2007). Brown (2007) states 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” (pp. 189-190).

The W-RSLL also refer to the link between language and culture. They specify that students can “use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own” (NSFLEP, 2015). The W-RSLL also postulate that multimedia approaches may be especially useful in building community relations:

School and Global Communities: Learners use the language both within and beyond the classroom to interact and collaborate in their community....

Presentational Communication: Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers. (NSFLEP, 2015)

Recent research and language-learning literature has demonstrated that the use of technology in the classroom creates an interactive and realistic environment

### Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers

for learning and provides multiple advantages, both for teachers and for students (Mullen, Appel & Shanklin, 2009; Wu, Marek, & Chen, 2013; Terhune, 2016). Technology-rich learning present students with the opportunity for flexible, personalized, and meaningful practice as well as authentic use of the target language (TL).

One such appropriate media technique is video-conferencing (O'Rourke & Stickler, 2017), in which regularly scheduled conversations between language learners and native speakers of another language adhere to the 5Cs as well as to a communicative approach to language instruction and learning. This article describes preliminary results of three pilot studies conducted in Spanish and French language classes at three institutions of higher education in the United States. These studies were independent and loosely coordinated. Their objective was to examine the intrinsic link between language and culture and to assess the benefits and challenges of the use of video-conferencing in target language acquisition.

Recent research and language-learning literature has demonstrated that the use of technology in the classroom creates an interactive and realistic environment for learning and provides multiple advantages, both for teachers and for students

#### Video-conferencing

Video-conferencing (VC) falls under the rubric of what O'Rourke and Stickler (2017) referred to as synchronous communication: "dialogic communication that proceeds under conditions of simultaneous presence (co-presence) in a shared communicative space, which may be physical or virtual" (p. 2). It may allow students to practice the four language skills and modes of communication indicated in the W-RSLL. VC has the potential to enhance learning and use of the language beyond the classroom; to shift the focus from the teacher onto the student; to promote intercultural awareness all the while developing linguistic skills; to help students practice evaluation of information and negotiation of meaning while discussing, comparing, and reflecting on cultural customs, practices, and perspectives associated with the learned language; and finally, to foster cross-cultural relationships. The inclusion of VC in language learning offers an authentic real-world experience in an often textbook-driven learning environment, and allows for a contextualized processing of material discussed in class (Norton & McKinnley 2011).

Moreover, in the absence of direct contact with native speakers, virtual contact through VC can require students to make creative use of the target language and move from the basics of understanding language units — be they words, sentences or short paragraphs— to a more personal understanding, in which they negotiate meaning, and become progressively able to produce longer narration on a variety of topics (Clementi & Terrill, 2013). As Adair-Hauck and Donato (2002) have suggested, the native interlocutor "challenges, supports, and finally empowers the learner to

The inclusion of [video-conferencing] in language learning offers an authentic real-world experience in an often textbook-driven learning environment, and allows for a contextualized processing of material discussed in class



construct and solve problems on his/her own” (p. 268) while guiding the online conversation.

The applicability and efficacy of VC tools is the topic of current research and literature (O’Dowd & Lewis, 2016; Jager, Kurek & O’Rourke, 2016). Jauregi (2016) has noted the connection between these approaches and social constructivist theories of education, which indicate that encouraging students to step out of their comfort zone promotes effective and long-term learning (Silver, 2011). Though it is generally accepted that these techniques will positively impact the student’s language skills, some research also shows the difficulty and resistance in introducing such methods in traditional educational settings (Howard, 2013).

In order to function best, some structure may be required in the implementation of VC tools. Terhune (2016) reported a study with students of English as a second language (ESL), in which learners used Skype-based conversation in a relatively uncontrolled setting. While high motivation is often assumed in following this type of pedagogical intervention, data in Terhune’s study showed that not all students adapted well to VC and led to the author’s recommendation that future interventions of this type should be more controlled and methodized to include specific goals and assigned tasks.

## **Methods and Results**

This article emerges from the collaboration of three institutions of higher education: X College, College of Y, and Z University. It is the result of three pilot projects that were carried out from 2014 through 2017 in French and Spanish language acquisition classes with students at varied skill levels. All three institutions assessed the use of VC in the language classroom, in its ability to address W-RSL. The two approaches to VC were virtual dual immersion (VDI), and TalkAbroad, a pedagogy-specific proprietary software.

At X College students of Spanish at the advanced low level used VDI twice during the semester. Both at College of Y and at Z University, French students conducted multiple interactive exchanges with native speakers using the TalkAbroad platform. At College of Y, TalkAbroad was used at the intermediate-low level, while at Z University, it was used in grammar and composition courses at the advanced level. Data pertaining to the use, the benefits, and challenges of using VC in the foreign language classroom was gathered through questionnaires which included open-ended and six-point scale questions.

## **Instruments: Two approaches to VC**

Two general VC tools are treated in this article: virtual dual immersion sessions with partner universities, and a pedagogy-specific proprietary software, TalkAbroad. Virtual dual immersion (VDI) is a partner video-conferencing program that takes place in the context of a consortium of US and fourteen different Latin American universities. VDI allows students from two different countries (the US and a Spanish-speaking Latin American country) to conduct linguistic (Spanish/English) and cultural exchanges during regular class time, at no cost. Conversations are not recorded. The main goal of this partnership is

### Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers

to help university students practice their linguistic skills in the foreign language (Spanish for the American students and English for the Latin American students) while gaining intercultural awareness.

TalkAbroad is a proprietary online tool providing online exchanges with native speakers of several foreign languages (including French, Spanish, Arabic, German, and Mandarin). Each conversation lasts 30 minutes and is recorded for formative and summative assessment purposes. Conversation partners are screened, hired, and trained. Each partner has an online profile in the TL, allowing students to browse and choose their interlocutor according to country of origin, interests, or availability. Teachers can create assignments for the conversation, post them on the TalkAbroad platform, and make them visible to both students and conversation partners. Additionally, teachers can provide special instructions to the partners that are not visible to students. Through an engaging and encouraging experience with the interlocutor outside of the classroom, “TalkAbroad conversation partners provide a glimpse into the rhythm of everyday life in the target culture” (TalkAbroad, 2017).

### Research and Evaluation Questions

While some questions deal with evaluation of the pilot projects in their local settings, the overarching question of the study is to what extent the use of VC tools in diverse settings is efficacious and consistent with the W-RSLL standards. For instance, can we find evidence through the pilot projects of an intrinsic link between language and culture?

Specifically, we ask

1. Do students who participate in language-learning video-conferencing
  - (a) perceive punctuality in VC sessions?
  - (b) report technical problems with the technique?
  - (c) report being nervous during the VC experience?
  - (d) believe that they comprehend the conversation partner?
  - (e) believe that the conversation partner understands them?
2. Following a video-conferencing experience, do student perceptions change with regards to their
  - (a) ability to answer questions in the target language?
  - (b) ability to ask questions in the target language?
  - (c) knowledge about non-European French- and Spanish-speaking countries?
  - (d) knowledge about French/Francophone cultures or the cultures of the Spanish-speaking partner countries?
  - (e) ability to converse in a target language for approximately 20-30 minutes?
3. How do students rate the video-conferencing experience in terms of its capacity to
  - (a) provide practice and consolidation of grammatical skills?
  - (b) develop communicative competence?
  - (c) develop intercultural awareness?

**Study 1. Participants.** Students from eight different sections of advanced low Spanish (SPAN 2215) participated in the fall of 2016. Participants were first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year students, with varying majors. The majority of the students had taken Spanish in high school. First-year students were placed into this course based on their linguistic competence (e.g., summer advising), AP Exam Score (3), SAT Test Score (between 660-710), or IB Language Exam in Spanish (6/7 higher level). In the first session 107 students participated; 100 in the second.

**Measures.** Data gathered for this study were extracted from questionnaires distributed to students after each of the two sessions (Appendices A and B). In addition, all 5 course instructors participating in this project were asked, via e-mail, to respond to one open-end question: “Please comment on the added pedagogical value of the VDI sessions and make suggestions for improvement.”

The first section of the questionnaire gathered basic information about the student’s previous experience with VC and the organization and logistics of the VDI session. Questions included: Did the exchange begin on time? Did you experience any technical or connection problems? Was this your second VDI experience? Did you spend an equal amount of time speaking Spanish and English?

The following section gathered specific data about the exchange session conversation in Spanish. This section contained survey questions rated on a six-point scale anchored at “Strongly Disagree” (1) and “Strongly Agree” (6). These questions covered comprehension skills, conversational strategies, general perceptions, and motivation for a second VDI conversation. Items included:

- I understood most of what my exchange partner said in Spanish.
- My conversation partner understood most of what I said in Spanish.
- I had to ask my exchange partner to speak more slowly/repeat what he/she said in Spanish.
- I was able to respond to my partner’s questions and comments.
- The conversation flowed naturally.

The last section contained several open-ended questions with the end goal of evaluating the general experience gained from the language exchange:

- (a) How would you rate the experience overall?
- (b) Did you learn interesting cultural information (e.g. food, traditions, education system, politics) about the country of your exchange partner or new linguistic aspects of Spanish (e.g. new vocabulary, expressions)?
- (c) Did you and your exchange partner compare the culture, politics, or history of the U.S. with that of his/her country?

Additionally, this section offered students the possibility to share comments and constructive criticism for the organization and logistics of future exchange sessions. This section also included two general questions to determine whether the two VDI sessions changed the students’ perceptions about life in their conversation partners’ country (or countries) and, if so, how. Lastly, one question asked about the most valuable aspects of the VDI exchange.

**Procedures.** Over the course of the semester (fall of 2016), two 50-minute VDI immersion sessions were scheduled during regular class time. Since they involved

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language learners of both languages, Spanish and English, conversation was split into two similar time segments. Spanish learners from X College conversed with their English learner counterparts from the partner universities for 20-25 minutes in Spanish, and then in English for 20-25 minutes.

Prior to the sessions, partner universities were identified and sessions were organized according to respective schedules, number of students, and time-zones. Instructors informed students in advance of the country of origin of their interlocutor. Since VDI sessions took place in the language laboratory during regular class times, students were asked to arrive five minutes prior to their regular class time. This allowed students to prepare for the sessions and to mitigate any technical difficulties.

The conversations were not recorded nor did they cover specific topics. The only instructions given were to converse about common interests and make connections between the cultures of the two participating countries. The preferred mode of conversation was one-on-one conversations, i.e., conversations conducted individually with one student from a partner university. After 20-25 minutes of conversation in Spanish, the instructor indicated the time to switch from Spanish to English. The transition from one language to the other was left up to the students so that it did not abruptly interrupt the flow of conversation. After the two sessions, students were asked to complete a short (approximately 200 words) post-conversation writing assignment.

Though the activity was not graded, participation in the VDI sessions and the completion of the post-conversation writing assignment was mandatory and was considered part of the participation component of the final course grade.

Students completed post-conversation questionnaires, and quantitative data were organized in percent categories. A systematic content analysis was not conducted on the open-end format, or on qualitative data. Therefore, responses can be considered illustrative examples of student perceptions on items such as cultural information.

**Results.** Table 1 shows the first- and second-session percentage responses to selected questions from the student questionnaire. In accordance with the VDI project goals, the majority of the students conducted both virtual exchanges with a single interlocutor (as opposed to varying interlocutors): 84.1% in the first session and 89.5% in the second.

**Table 1.** Study 1: Percentage Response to Selected Items in First and Second Sessions

Item	% First Session	% Second Session
Same Student Partner?	84.10	89.50
Did the exchange begin on time?	66.80	68.80
Did you experience any technical or connection problems?	39.40	50.00
Equal amount of time Spanish/English?	64.50	65.60
Nervous throughout (Strongly Agree)	8.40	5.00
Nervous throughout (Strongly Disagree)	9.30	16.00

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I understood most of what my exchange partner said in Spanish (Agree + Strongly Agree)	99.00	98,00
My conversation partner understood most of what I said in Spanish (Agree + Strongly Agree)	97.00	98.00
How would you rate the experience overall?	92.10	99.00

About two thirds of the students indicated that the exchanges occurred punctually both in the first and second sessions. (Anecdotal evidence indicates that the majority of the delays were only a few minutes; the principal causes of delays were differences in class duration of the participating institutions —50 minutes vs. 60 minutes at partner universities— and connection problems). In the second VDI session, half the students confirmed having some sort of technical or connection problem, in comparison with a 39.4% in the first session. Both in sessions 1 and 2 about two thirds of the students reported that equal time was spent speaking the two languages.

In response to the statement “I was nervous throughout the conversation in Spanish” 9.3% responded “Strongly Disagree” in the first session in comparison with the 16% in the second. Conversely, in the first session, 8.4% responded “Strongly Agree” to the statement, in comparison with the 5% in the second session.

Table 1 also shows that the students were nearly unanimous in their perception of their own comprehension and that of the Spanish-speaking interlocutor. The sum of “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” responses accounted for 97% to 99% of all responses in both the first and second sessions.

As for the general experience with VDI, the results of both sessions show that SPAN 2215 students were more satisfied (“Agree”) or much more satisfied (“Strongly Agree”) with the exchange than the students anticipated to be. In the first session, 65% answered “Agree” and 27.1% “Strongly Agree,” whereas in the second session 70% responded “Agree” and 29% “Strongly Agree.” One student indicated being very unsatisfied (“Strongly Disagree”) by the experience of session 2.

Some comments provide qualitative evidence for the exchange of cultural information and the application of language skills:

Student #1: We compared the culture and education systems between our countries [*US and Mexico*], and we talked about the upcoming election here in the US.

Student #2: We talked about the upcoming US election and also about the current political atmosphere of his country [*Mexico*].

Student #3: Skyping with students from Mexico has been a unique opportunity to take the Spanish skills we have learned in the classroom and apply them through conversation. Speaking with students from contrasting cultures was a fun, new experience that has reinforced my interest in Spanish and its culture.

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One of the course instructors specifically emphasized the importance of creating authentic and meaningful conversation, addressing stereotypes and intercultural awareness, and providing opportunity to create new relationships beyond the classroom:

Instructor #1: A fifty-minute session of fun and meaningful conversation is but one of the many valuable aspects of the Virtual Dual Immersion experience. Spanish language oral communication skills are definitely sharpened and reinforced, but also stereotypes are broken, bridges are built and, in many cases, long-lasting relationships are born.

**Study 2. *Participants.*** Twenty-six students from two different sections of intermediate French participated in the study in the spring of 2017; 24 provided complete data. FREN 211 is the third semester of a French language and grammar class at College of Y. Participants were predominantly first- and second-year students, with varying majors. Most students had taken French in high school (anywhere between 1 and 4 years) and were either in their first or second semester of French language at the university level.

***Measures.*** A pre-conversation questionnaire provided baseline information about the students' perceived confidence in using linguistic skills and knowledge of Francophone culture (Appendix C). Identical items were presented to the students following their final conversation (Appendix D). Items included:

- (a) I am capable of answering questions in French;
- (b) I am capable of asking questions in French;
- (c) I am aware of French-speaking countries outside of Europe and Canada;
- (d) I believe I know and understand French and Francophone culture;
- (e) I believe I am capable of spending 30 minutes conversing with a native speaker of French.

Items were answered on a six-point scale anchored at the extremes with "Strongly Agree" and "Strongly Disagree." The post-conversations questionnaire also included broad open-end questions.

***Procedures.*** Students were informed in advance of the nature of the upcoming pilot project. In-class preparations began two weeks prior to the first conversation, and consisted of a detailed overview of the program in order to familiarize students with the technology and functioning of the TalkAbroad platform. Students were asked to express their own learning expectations in a short writing assignment prior to the first conversation and the completed a pre-conversations questionnaire.

Approximately a week before each conversation, students received a TalkAbroad assignment with prompts for topics addressed concomitantly in class. Students were encouraged to meet with a teaching assistant in order to prepare initial questions and topics for discussion, following the prompts assigned. Though not required, most students took advantage of this opportunity (especially for the first two conversations).

Class time was allotted to conduct mock TalkAbroad conversations before students experienced the real conversations. The student pairs mimicked the

conversation they would be having with their TalkAbroad partner, and addressed the questions in the assignments, allowing for a more relaxed setting to converse and practice. After each TalkAbroad conversation students completed a post-conversation questionnaire.

Four individual conversations of 30 minutes took place during the semester, and outside of class period. Students conducted the first three conversations with a classmate (maintaining the same pairs throughout the semester). The final conversation, which counted as the oral final, was conducted individually.

Following each conversation, students participated in a short oral debriefing in class. After all four conversations had been completed, the students responded to a final post-conversation questionnaire, which revisited items from the pre-conversations questionnaire.

Data were organized using SPSS 24. Measures of effect size were hand calculated using summary data provided by SPSS.

**Results.** Table 2 provides measures of effect size for the observed differences between pre- and post-conversation means. Pre- and post-conversation values of each item were first submitted to the Wilcoxon signed rank test. All differences were in the expected direction, and five of the six analyses were statistically significant. No statistical differences were noted between pre- and post-conversation values of the item concerning perceived ability to ask questions in French.

**Table 2.** Study 2: Observed Pre- and Post-conversation Effect Sizes (N=24)

Item	<u>Cohen's <i>d</i></u>
I am capable of answering questions in French	0.48*..
I am capable of asking questions in French	0.16...
I am aware of French-speaking countries outside of Europe and Canada	0.76**
I believe I know and understand French and Francophone culture	0.66**
I believe I am capable of spending 30 minutes conversing with a native speaker of French	0.75**

*Note:* Cohen's *d* is the standardized difference between the pre-conversation and post-conversation mean values. As such it can be interpreted as the future expected change, as a proportion of the standard deviation, between an untreated control group and a treated experimental group. Reported significance levels are based on the Wilcoxon signed rank test which tests the hypothesis that two dependent samples derive from the same population. Significant results indicate that it is unlikely (expressed as a low probability) that the two dependent samples derive from the same population.

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Examples of student comments made in the context of post-conversation questionnaires and volunteered student testimonials include:

Student #1: It gave me a lot more confidence in my French speaking ... prompted me to work harder in the classroom ... it mimicked a real-life scenario.

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Student #2: ...it was beneficial for me to step out of my comfort zone and try to converse with native speakers to improve!

Student #3: I was able to take what I had learned in class and apply it to a real conversation with a native speaker of the language.

Student #4: ... a challenging, but beneficial part of my French education ... These conversations were nerve-racking, but they gave me much more confidence in my French abilities. It was also fun to learn about different Francophone cultures along the way.

**Study 3. *Participants.*** Students of an advanced grammar and composition course offered at Z University (FREN 3150) participated in the study: 75 students used TalkAbroad; 54 provided usable data. The course is mandatory for all students pursuing a minor or major in French, as well as for all students who desire to take courses at the advanced level. The course pursues two goals: first, the understanding and application of grammatical structures, and second, the practice of oral and written communication.

***Measures.*** Students followed a dialogic approach that focuses on a communicative and contextualized study of grammatical structures concurrent with the PACE model (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002): Presentation of the structure, Attention to grammatical features, Co-construction of meaning and cognitivization of linguistic features, Extension of the grammatical structure through a variety of exercises that are diversified, differentiated, and personalized. Measures included students' written reflections and oral presentations as well as end-of-semester numeric evaluation of the video-conferencing experience (Appendix E). In the quantitative component, students rated items on a ten-point scale on which 1 represented that the use of video-conferencing neither helped them practice nor consolidate grammatical structures, and a 10 indicated a very strong effect on the practice and retention of the individual grammatical structures used during the online conversation. The items included:

- (a) Practice and consolidation of grammatical structures while using TalkAbroad;
- (b) Development of communicative competence;
- (c) Development of intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence (ICC);
- (d) Overall rating of the program.

***Procedures.*** During the semester, students scheduled four 30-minute individual conversations with Francophone conversation partners using the TalkAbroad platform. All exchanges with native speakers were conducted outside of the regular class time. Students were free to choose their conversation partners without any restrictions. However, grammatical structures, lexical fields and topics were specified for each conversation:

- (a) American vs. the French school system;
- (b) French heritage in the US and abroad;
- (c) American vs. French literary traditions;
- (d) Social problems in the US and in the French-speaking world.



Students were informed in advance of the nature of the conversation. They prepared by completing homework assignments such as simple fill-in-the blank activities, guided questions, and open-ended writing assignments. All assignments focused on the use of lexical fields and grammatical structures related to the topic of discussion and were based on the use of authentic material taken from a broad variety of sources, namely literature, music, recipes, menus.

By way of example, the second topic, French heritage in the US and abroad focused on the study of grammatical structures related to location, measurements, and attributes (Appendix F). Grammatical features were practiced in culturally rich conversations, in which students discovered, discussed, and evaluated possible French heritage of their locale to the one of the hometown of the Francophone speaker (Appendix G). Upon completion of this conversation, students prepared a free writing assignment in which they assessed and reflected upon the French heritage of their hometown, of the university's location, and of the city of their Francophone interlocutor. Additionally, students were asked to work with two classmates to create a PowerPoint presentation that illustrated, explained, and critically assessed the French heritage in all three places. Both assignments encouraged students to practice and develop their interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication, their critical thinking skills, as well as their ICC.

**Results.** Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of the principal questions of the study.

**Table 3.** Study 3: Student Ratings of Video-conferencing in the Context of the Dialogic Approach (N=54)

Item	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Practice and consolidation of grammatical structures	6.59	1.9
Development of communicative competence	8.30	1.2
Development of intercultural awareness and ICC	8.03	1.4
Overall rating of using TalkAbroad	7.70	1.6

*Note:* Mean based on ten-point rating scale.

All mean ratings exceed 6 on the scale of 10. The first item, *Practice and consolidation of grammatical structures*, presented the lowest mean rating as well as the greatest variability. In comparison, *Development of communicative competence* revealed the highest mean rating and the lowest variability. The mean rating for *Development of intercultural awareness and ICC* was also in the top half of means observed while the *Overall rating of using TalkAbroad* figured in the bottom half.

Examples of student comments made in the context of the post-conversation questionnaire and volunteered student testimonials include:

Student #1: A great way to practice speaking French and you leave as a more cultured and worldly person.

Student #2: Our discussions taught me about French culture, like foods that are popular in different countries.

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Student #3: It was an interesting and unique way to expand my French knowledge and cultural knowledge of different countries.

Student #4: It was fun thinking on my toes. Some of the topics were interesting to see evolve... It is an amazing tool. All students learning a foreign language should be exposed to first and face-to-face communication.

### Discussion

The three pilot projects in higher education employed diverse forms of VC in varying contexts with intermediate to advanced students. The first institution described two VDI sessions in a flexible format (“converse about common interests...”) with a post-conversation writing assignment. The second employed four 30-minute conversations with TalkAbroad in a higher-structure context with substantial preparation, assigned topics, specific tasks, and graded evaluation of each conversation. The third used the dialogic approach with TalkAbroad, very specific assigned topics and also included evaluation. Regardless of formats and structure level, student reactions to their use were generally positive.

The results of the VDI pilot project at X College (Study 1) support the use of VC in language learning and the overall value of this project in regard to increased perceived student confidence. At the level of course administration, classes were not greatly delayed by the use of VDI, and time spent on the two languages was perceived to be equal by most students. Most students were able to converse with a single partner. Some technical problems did occur and, as the data show, a bad Internet connection can still foil all careful preparations and practice. Students perceived that their level of nervousness declined over the sessions and that good comprehension in the conversations was mutual.

College of Y (Study 2) students acknowledged learning specific items of language and having an enhanced sense of the culture of their interlocutors. They also reported increased ability in answering questions (though not in asking them), greater awareness of non-European Francophone countries and cultures, and higher self-efficacy for conversing in the target language. The observed effect sizes imply that, in future projects of a similar nature, one might expect improvements ranging from one-half to three-quarters of a standard deviation on the student perceptions observed.

At Z University (Study 3), collected data show highest student ratings in the areas of communicative competence ( $M=8.30$ ,  $SD=1.2$ ) and development of intercultural awareness ( $M=8.03$ ,  $SD=1.4$ ). Open-ended questions from this study provide some additional evidence for student perceptions of (a) confidence in speaking; (b) motivation (“work harder in class”); (c) VC as an effective technique (“beneficial,” “applied to real conversation”); and (d) learning about culture. The high mean value and low standard deviation in regard to both students’ development toward target language competence and intercultural competence supports the argument supported by this article that engaged, interactive, and contextualized learning is conducive to communicative competence and intercultural awareness.

While these pilot projects cannot establish the importance of the study of culture to the study of language, the data suggest that the use of VC in these diverse

settings was associated with students' perceptions of their attainment of greater intercultural understanding of the target language speakers. Both the Common European Framework of Reference and ACTFL (2011) emphasize the importance of intercultural awareness, intercultural skills, or global competence in language teaching in an ever more interconnected and globalized world.

Video-conferencing used in language learning has the potential to enhance the development of ICC in authentic ways. Instructors need to prepare 21<sup>st</sup>-century students for interaction with people of other cultures and enable them to understand and accept people from different parts of the world as individuals with distinctive perspectives, values, and behaviors. While the results do not suggest that the sole use of VC can render students interculturally competent, the VC sessions in all projects helped students communicate with and understand individuals from other cultures. The implementation of VC in foreign language curriculum allowed for students to engage with native speakers from different countries and provided the opportunity to develop intercultural awareness (by learning more about cultural products, practices and perspectives from the interlocutor's homeland, and fostering a better understanding of their own culture). It also allowed for students to practice their communication skills, i.e., ameliorate their ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Consistent with O'Rourke and Stickler (2017), the use of VC in these studies demonstrated pedagogical utility in target language learning. In the absence of native speakers, technological substitutes helped students and teachers reach the goal of improving global language skills by way of "communicatively purposeful [conversation], building towards proficiency" (Clementi & Terrill, 2013, p. 25), a goal that is consistent with W-RSLL.

A possible three-pronged mechanism for this utility has been suggested by Adair-Hauck and Donato (2002). The partner in the exchange, the native interlocutor, may (a) challenge, (b) support, and (c) empower the VC learner. In response, the learner constructs linguistic solutions. These solutions, as with much learning, require effort ("nerve-wracking" as one student said). This kind of analysis, as pointed out by Jauregi (2016), is consistent with social constructivist theories (Silver, 2011). The student is forced into a zone of proximal linguistic development (I had to "step out of my comfort zone", as another student said). That which can be learned—with a little help—is experienced and solidified.

As Howard (2013) stated, the introduction of new methods and technologies in the classroom is not without some resistance on the part of students. While the mean student ratings of the VC experience are very positive, there are some students for whom the experience was negative. Overall, the main challenge students indicated was of a technical nature, including difficulties with the platform (audiovisual problems and Internet connection). Students also pointed out the difficulty in the

While these pilot projects cannot establish the importance of the study of culture to the study of language, the data suggest that the use of VC in these diverse settings was associated with students' perceptions of their attainment of greater intercultural understanding of the target language speakers.

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time-zone difference with many of the TL countries (for the students of French, only Québécois natives were close in time zone, while students of Spanish were close in time zone with Ecuadorian and Mexican partners), which limited the opportunities to conduct conversations. Neither of these challenges, however, greatly hindered the conversations and students were able to have productive and worthwhile experiences with their different partners. While regional accents were of concern to some instructors, students did not complain extensively about the different varieties they heard. Some regional varieties proved harder to understand (e.g., Québécois), but during the in-class debriefings some students even referred to the regional expressions as being beneficial.

In all three projects the nature and extent of the VC class structure (preparation, assignment of topics, recording, and evaluation of conversations) varied greatly. The increase observed in students' perceived confidence is consistent with Terhune's (2016) findings that creating a structured environment is a factor in determining levels of motivation and engagement (as exemplified by student testimonials). However, it remains unclear if there might exist a critical structure level that determines or conditions VC benefits.

While maintaining the focus on students' development of grammatical understanding, vocabulary, and the correct use of the learned language in oral and written discourse, integration of VC tools in the language curriculum gave all three language courses a new format—one that is characterized by a diversified, contextualized, and communicatively-orientated approach. This approach is based on and incorporates W-RSLL, as it fosters the development of all four language skills and three modes of communication. Students practice their listening and speaking skills during their exchanges. They also develop their reading and writing skills through pre- and post-conversation assignments. When preparing for the conversations or for post-conversation assignments, students employ the interpretive mode of communication. Any exchange with a native speaker of the learned language will inherently represent the use of the interpersonal mode of communication. Finally, post-exchange assignments involving an exposition of gathered elements from the conversations illustrates the use of the presentational mode of communication.

Student testimonials illustrate that language exchanges, such as VDI or TalkAbroad, have the potential to increase student motivation and engagement, as well as a sense of responsibility and accountability. This is especially true when they are asked to collaborate with a classmate to prepare for their conversations, thus fulfilling the interpersonal mode of communication, a part of the Communication standard. Exchanges also have the potential of improving student autonomy, as they require students to utilize their time management skills when scheduling conversations outside of class for TalkAbroad, or having to negotiate the class period split in the VDI sessions. Moreover, the implementation of VC creates a classroom community and an atmosphere that is alive and in which students experience academic and personal growth through personal initiative, self-direction, and collaboration inside and outside of the traditional classroom. When resources are available and a pool of native speakers of the learned language is lacking, it is worth experimenting with VC tools in the TL curriculum.

The findings of the three pilot studies suggest that the use of VC in language learning is a pedagogical approach that can foster students' communicative skills and broaden their intercultural awareness, while following the W-RSLL. VC has the potential to accomplish multiple pedagogical goals. Its use:

- a. can increase students' self-confidence and motivation. Students reported a decreased level of anxiety in latter VC exchanges;
- b. may support the development of intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence. Students from the three projects reported perceived progress in both dimensions;
- c. may serve to help consolidate functions and vocabulary learned concomitantly in the classroom. Students expressed a correlation between grammatical functions and lexical fields practiced in the classroom and their use in video-conferencing exchanges with native speakers of the TL;
- d. may improve students' sense of responsibility and accountability. Students reported being engaged throughout the conversations and having to actively participate in directing the conversation.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

This study suggests that the use of interactive exchanges with native speakers is desirable and advantageous for target language learning. Nevertheless, the three pilot programs described in this article might be seen through a lens of action research in the institutions involved. As such, the results are not rules generalizable to all contexts and situations but rather may serve as guidelines for other institutions considering the use of VC tools.

In this study, the use of VC was effective in terms of students' perceived ability to answer questions in the target language. However, it did not seem to be as effective in relation to their perceived ability to *ask* questions in the target language (Table 2). Results suggest that the language students' experience could be augmented by careful scaffolding with regard to the nature of the questions or topics to be addressed during the exchanges and by attentively working with them on generating questions clearly. Language instructors should continue to emphasize question-asking skills in the classroom, and they might develop more concrete tasks involving creating questions for the VC exchanges.

Additionally, in future studies,

- a. it would be helpful to gather data on the origin, nature, and duration of technical problems;
- b. it would be valuable to record all conversations, in order to assess their impact on the overall VC experience. Only two of the institutions in this study recorded conversations for further analysis and evaluation;
- c. it would be interesting to yoke the quality of such conversations to student attitudes about the VC experience. Are the better speakers the students who give the higher ratings? Or could it be that

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- weaker students overestimate their reporting of competence and comprehension?
- d. in the context of VDI, it would be useful to develop a future mechanism that would automatically indicate when the language should switch, ensuring that the session times are divided in the most equitable way possible;
  - e. following Terhune's recommendations, it would be beneficial to provide more structured assignments.

In conclusion, incorporation of interactive exchanges in world language curricula, whether in the classroom or as a complement to communicative teaching, has the potential to provide a diversified and contextualized environment to second language instruction, which in turn might help consolidate functions and vocabulary studied in class. Despite some challenges in planning and implementation, the integration of VDI and TalkAbroad can increase students' self-confidence and motivation, as well as decrease students' level of anxiety. Benefits of using platforms such as VDI or TalkAbroad, accrue both in terms of linguistic and intercultural competence. To ensure the "inter"-cultural element in these exchanges, the experiences should be thoughtfully scaffolded by programs. Moreover, results should be monitored in order to ensure that both the experiences and the learning align with the *World Readiness Standards* and adequately measure student growth.

### Note

1. **Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans.** This research is exempt from review by category 1 of 45 CFR 46.101(b):" Categories of Exempt Human Subjects Research. 1. Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (a) research on regular and special education instructional strategies or (b) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula or classroom management methods."

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### Appendix A (X College)

STUDENT ID: \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Questionnaire: Post-Skype VDI Session #1

I.a. For the following questions, please answer **Yes** or **No** by checking (  ) the appropriate box. If necessary, please explain your response.

1. Did the exchange begin on time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
2. Did you experience any technical or connection problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
3. Did you have only one exchange partner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
4. Was this your first virtual dual immersion (VDI) experience?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
5. Did you spend an equal amount of time speaking Spanish and English?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:



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<p><b>I.b.</b> Now that you have completed the first Skype virtual dual immersion (VDI) exchange, we would appreciate concrete feedback about your experience. Please rate the statements below using the following scale:  <b>6 = Strongly Agree</b>  <b>4/5 = Agree</b>  <b>2/3 = Disagree</b>  <b>1 = Strongly Disagree</b></p>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1. I understood most of what my exchange partner said in Spanish.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. My conversation partner understood most of what I said in Spanish.	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. I had to ask my exchange partner to speak more slowly/repeat what he/she said in Spanish.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. I was able to respond to my partner's questions and comments; the conversation flowed naturally.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. While conversing in Spanish, I often needed to pause to think about how to say something.	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. I was nervous throughout the conversation in Spanish.	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. Overall, the Spanish part of the conversation was harder than I anticipated.	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. Overall, the Spanish part of the conversation was more fun than I had anticipated.	6	5	4	3	2	1
9. I am looking forward to the upcoming Skype VDI session.	6	5	4	3	2	1

**II.** Please answer the following questions regarding your VDI experience.

1. How would you rate the experience overall? Please comment.

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2. Did you learn interesting cultural information (e.g. food, traditions, education system, politics) about the country of your exchange partner or new linguistic aspects of Spanish (e.g. new vocabulary, expressions)? Please comment.

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### Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers

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3. Did you and your exchange partner compare the culture, politics, or history of the U.S. with that of his/her country? Please comment.

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4. If your answer to questions 2 and 3 was NO, what did you discuss?

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5. Please share any constructive criticism/comments you have about this first VDI experience so that we may better organize/plan for the next exchange.

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### Appendix B (X College)

STUDENT ID: \_\_\_\_\_

SECTION: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Questionnaire: Post-Skype VDI Session #2

Please answer with pen (not pencil)!

I.a. For the following questions, please answer **Yes** or **No** by checking (  ) the appropriate box. If necessary, please explain your response.

1. Did the exchange begin on time?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:
2. Did you experience any technical or connection problems?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Comments:

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3. Did you have only one exchange partner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Comments:</b>
4. Was this your second virtual dual immersion (VDI) experience?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Comments:</b>
5. Did you spend an equal amount of time speaking Spanish and English?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<b>Comments:</b>

<p><b>I.b.</b> Now that you have completed the second Skype virtual dual immersion (VDI) exchange, we would appreciate concrete feedback about your experience. Please rate the statements below using the following scale:          6 = <b>Strongly Agree</b>          4/5 = <b>Agree</b>          2/3 = <b>Disagree</b>          1 = <b>Strongly Disagree</b></p>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>  <b>Agree</b>  <b>Disagree</b>  <b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. I understood most of what my exchange partner said in Spanish.	6 5 4 3 2 1
2. My conversation partner understood most of what I said in Spanish.	6 5 4 3 2 1
3. I had to ask my exchange partner to speak more slowly/repeat what he/she said in Spanish.	6 5 4 3 2 1
4. I was able to respond to my partner's questions and comments; the conversation flowed naturally.	6 5 4 3 2 1
5. While conversing in Spanish, I often needed to pause to think about how to say something.	6 5 4 3 2 1
6. I was nervous throughout the conversation in Spanish.	6 5 4 3 2 1
7. Overall, the Spanish part of the conversation was harder than I anticipated.	6 5 4 3 2 1
8. Overall, the Spanish part of the conversation was more fun than I had anticipated.	6 5 4 3 2 1

### Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers

<p><b>I.c.</b> Now that you have completed two VDI exchanges, we would appreciate if you could give us feedback for the future. Please rate the statements below using the following scale:          6 = <b>Strongly Agree</b>          4/5 = <b>Agree</b>          2/3 = <b>Disagree</b>          1 = <b>Strongly Disagree</b></p>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1. I would like to participate in exchange sessions in future language classes.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. I would be interested in participating in voluntary exchange sessions outside of class.	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. I would commit to participating in exchanges outside of class only as an assignment or as an opportunity for extra credit.	6	5	4	3	2	1

**II.** Please answer the following questions regarding your second VDI experience.

1. How would you rate the experience overall? Please comment.

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2. Did you learn interesting cultural information (e.g. food, traditions, education system, politics) about the country of your exchange partner or new linguistic aspects of Spanish (e.g. new vocabulary, expressions)? Please comment.

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3. Did you and your exchange partner compare the culture, politics, or history of the U.S. with that of his/her country? Please comment.

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4. If your answer to questions 2 and 3 was NO, what did you discuss?

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5. Please share any constructive criticism/comments you have about this second VDI experience so that we may better organize/plan for the next exchange.

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6. Has the VDI experience (sessions 1 and 2) changed your perception of life in your conversation partners' country (or countries)? If so, how?

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7. What were the most valuable aspects of the VDI exchange for you? Please explain.

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Appendix C (College of Y)

STUDENT ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Questionnaire: Interactive Language Learning Exchange

<p><b>I.a.</b> During this semester, you will participate in an interactive exchange involving conversation with native speakers. We would like to know your expectations about the program.          6 = I <b>Strongly Agree</b> with the affirmation          4/5 = I <b>Agree</b> with the affirmation          2/3 = I <b>Disagree</b> with the affirmation          1 = I <b>Strongly Disagree</b> with the affirmation</p>	-Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
<p>1. The exchange will help me practice my oral skills</p>	6	5	4	3	2	1

### Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers

2. The exchange will help me consolidate my oral skills	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. I will have the opportunity to exchange cultural values and increase my understanding of French/Francophone culture	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. I will learn about another culture and its heritage of another culture	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. I am eager to converse with a native speaker of French	6	5	4	3	2	1

I.b. For the following questions, please answer **Yes** or **No** by checking (  ) the appropriate box.

1. Do you consider yourself a heritage speaker* of French?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Have you ever studied in a language immersion school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
3. Have you ever conversed with a native speaker for more than 10 minutes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Have you ever visited a country/region in which French is spoken?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Will you be engaging with the native speaker with another classmate for the first conversations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

\* A *heritage speaker* is someone who learns (as a child, at home) a language that is a minority language in society.

I.c. Please circle the number that estimates how many semesters you studied

1. Please circle the number that estimates how many semesters, altogether, you studied French <b>before higher education</b> (college/university)	0	1	2	3	4	>4
	semesters					
2. Please circle the number that estimates how many semesters, altogether, you studied French <b>in higher education</b> (college/university)	1	2	3	4	>4	
	semesters					

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<p><b>II.</b> In this section, we would like to know your opinions about the following affirmations related to your experience in second language learning and your perception of your language level.                      6 = I <b>Strongly Agree</b> with the affirmation                      4/5 = I <b>Agree</b> with the affirmation                      2/3 = I <b>Disagree</b> with the affirmation                      1 = I <b>Strongly Disagree</b> with the affirmation</p>	-Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. My experience with the French language is mostly written.	6	5	4	3 2 1
2. My experience with the French language is mostly spoken/oral.	6	5	4	3 2 1
3. I understand most of what the teacher says in French.	6	5	4	3 2 1
4. I am capable of answering questions in French.	6	5	4	3 2 1
5. I am capable of asking questions in French.	6	5	4	3 2 1
6. I am aware of French -speaking countries outside of Europe and Canada.	6	5	4	3 2 1
7. I believe I know and understand French and Francophone culture.	6	5	4	3 2 1
8. I believe I am capable of spending 30 minutes conversing with a native speaker of French.	6	5	4	3 2 1

**III.** In this section, you will answer one open-ended question regarding the interactive exchange experience.

What do you expect to learn from these sessions?

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### Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers

#### Appendix D (College of Y)

STUDENT ID: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Questionnaire: Post-TalkAbroad #4 (oral final)

<p><b>I.a.</b> Now that you have completed the <u>fourth</u> TalkAbroad exchange, we would like some more concrete feedback about your experience. We would like to know your opinions about the following affirmations related to your experience.</p> <p>6 = I <b>Strongly Agree</b> with the affirmation                      4/5 = I <b>Agree</b> with the affirmation                      2/3 = I <b>Disagree</b> with the affirmation                      1 = I <b>Strongly Disagree</b> with the affirmation</p>						
	-Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1. I understood most of what my conversation partner said.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. My conversation partner understood most of what I said.	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. I had to ask my conversation partner to speak more slowly/repeat.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. I found that there was a lot of time left after completing the assignment.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. I listened to my partner and reacted to what he/she said with natural conversation.	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. Overall, the conversation was harder than I anticipated (given the free-flowing nature of it).	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. I think the free-flowing conversation was <u>easier</u> than the assigned topics.	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. I think the free-flowing conversation was <u>more natural</u> than the assigned topics.	6	5	4	3	2	1
9. I wish I had prepared more questions.	6	5	4	3	2	1
10. I was nervous throughout the conversation.	6	5	4	3	2	1
11. There were a lot of moments of silence.	6	5	4	3	2	1
12. I initiated most of the conversation.	6	5	4	3	2	1
13. I learned at least one new thing (new word/new expression, etc) in the <u>French language</u> .	6	5	4	3	2	1



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14. I learned at least one new thing about a <u>Francophone</u> culture.	6	5	4	3	2	1
15. I learned more through the free-flowing conversation than through the previous guided conversations.	6	5	4	3	2	1

<p><b>I.b.</b> The following questions <b>COMPARE</b> this <u>fourth</u> conversation to the previous conversations. We would like to know your opinions about the following affirmations related to your experience.</p> <p>6 = I <b>Strongly Agree</b> with the affirmation            4/5 = I <b>Agree</b> with the affirmation            2/3 = I <b>Disagree</b> with the affirmation            1 = I <b>Strongly Disagree</b> with the affirmation</p>	-Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
1. I was less nervous going into the third conversation than going into the previous conversations.	6	5	4	3	2	1
2. I felt more confident about my French proficiency level during the third conversation than during the first two conversations.	6	5	4	3	2	1
3. I had an easier time understanding my partner in the third conversation than in the first two conversations.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. My partner understood me better.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. The conversation flowed better.	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. I did not rely so much on my notes.	6	5	4	3	2	1

**I.c.** For the following questions, please answer **Yes** or **No** by checking (  ) the appropriate box.

1. Did you meet with the TA before your <u>fourth</u> TalkAbroad conversation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Individually <input type="checkbox"/> In group
2. Did you bring written notes to the <u>fourth</u> conversation?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	I depended on my notes: <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> At the beginning <input type="checkbox"/> Throughout

### Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers

3. Did you read your notes rather than converse with your partner?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
4. Did you use one of the available spaces on campus for the TalkAbroad conversations?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
5. Did you talk to the same partner as in conversation #3?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p><b>I.d.</b> During this semester, you participated in an interactive exchange involving conversation with native speakers. We would like to know your reactions to the program.</p> <p>6 = I <b>Strongly Agree</b> with the affirmation            4/5 = I <b>Agree</b> with the affirmation            2/3 = I <b>Disagree</b> with the affirmation            1 = I <b>Strongly Disagree</b> with the affirmation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">-Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree</p>	
1. The exchange helped me practice my oral skills	6 5 4 3 2 1	
2. The exchange helped me consolidate my oral skills	6 5 4 3 2 1	
3. I had the opportunity to exchange cultural values and increase my understanding of French/Francophone culture	6 5 4 3 2 1	
4. I learned about another culture and its heritage of another culture	6 5 4 3 2 1	
5. I was eager throughout to converse with a native speaker of French	6 5 4 3 2 1	
<p><b>II.</b> In this section, we would like to know your opinions about the following affirmations related to your experience in second language learning and your perception of your language level.</p> <p>6 = I <b>Strongly Agree</b> with the affirmation            4/5 = I <b>Agree</b> with the affirmation            2/3 = I <b>Disagree</b> with the affirmation            1 = I <b>Strongly Disagree</b> with the affirmation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">-Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree</p>	
1. My experience with the French language is mostly written.	6 5 4 3 2 1	
2. My experience with the French language is mostly spoken/oral.	6 5 4 3 2 1	

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3. I understand most of what the teacher says in French.	6	5	4	3	2	1
4. I am capable of answering questions in French.	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. I am capable of asking questions in French.	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. I am aware of French-speaking countries outside of Europe and Canada.	6	5	4	3	2	1
7. I believe I know and understand French and Francophone culture.	6	5	4	3	2	1
8. I believe I am capable of spending 30 minutes conversing with a native speaker of French.	6	5	4	3	2	1

**III.** In this section, you will answer three open-ended questions regarding the interactive exchange experience you've had.

1. How would you rate this conversation overall? Please comment.

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2. How would you rate the TalkAbroad experience overall this semester? Please comment.

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3. Please share any constructive criticism/comments you have about this conversation  
so we may better organize/plan for upcoming semesters.

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**Appendix E (Z University)**

**Student evaluation of TalkAbroad, Z University**

1. In how far did the conversations with the native speaker on TalkAbroad help you practice and consolidate the grammatical features and structures learned in class? Please provide a rating on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 represents the lowest and 10 the highest rating.

### Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. In how far did the use of TalkAbroad help you develop your communicative skills and your overall knowledge of the French language? Please provide a rating on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 represents the lowest and 10 the highest rating.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. On a scale from 1 to 10, please rate how the individual conversations with the native speaker have increased your intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. How is your overall rating of the use of TalkAbroad in this grammar class? 1 represents the lowest and 10 the highest rating.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

#### Appendix F (Z University)

#### FRENCH 3150 - SYLLABUS – Printemps 2016

#### La Nouvelle-Orléans et son patrimoine français

FÉV M 03 Ch 22 pp. 242-265; Les Prépositions

*Le Vieux Carré: Attractions touristiques et musées*

V 05 Ch 13 pp. 129-143; Les noms et les articles + idioms 'à table'

*La cuisine française et louisianaise*

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- L 08 *LES VACANCES DE MARDI GRAS*
- M 10 Ch 22 pp. 242-265; Les Prépositions  
Ch 13 pp. 129-143; Les noms et les articles + expressions  
idomatique : 'à table'

*Les restaurants de la ville: français, louisianais et américains*

- V 12 Ch 22 pp. 242-265; Les Prépositions  
Ch 17 pp. 170-188; Les Adjectifs + Comparaison et  
superlatif

*Comparaison des restaurants en ville*

- 
- L 15 Ch 15 pp.150-159 ; Les Adjectifs possessifs et démonstratifs  
Ch 17 pp. 170-188; Les Adjectifs + Comparaison et  
superlatif

*Comparaison des cuisines ; mes repas préférés*

- M 17 Ch 15 pp.150-159 ; Les Adjectifs possessifs et démonstratif

*Les meilleures recettes, repas et restaurants*

- V 19 Ch 23 pp. 269-281; Les Pronoms relatifs

*Quelques chefs français*

- 
- L 22 Ch 23 pp. 269-281; Les Pronoms relatifs

- M 24 Révision pour l'examen

- V 26 **Exam II**

\*\*\* **Entre le lundi 22 et le vendredi 26 février** : Participez à une deuxième conversation avec votre interlocuteur francophone sur **TalkAbroad**. **Puis, écrivez votre deuxième rédaction.**

**Appendix G (Z University)**

**« La Nouvelle-Orléans et son patrimoine français »**

**Theme:** « Nouvelle-Orléans: Its cuisine, restaurants, and French heritage »

**Second conversation with your TalkAbroad conversation partner.**

In order to prepare for this second conversation, please prepare your set of questions in order to being able to discuss the following points:

1. Geographical characteristics of both cities: Where are New Orleans and the city of your interlocutor located? In which country is the city of your

### Three Experiences in Video-Conferencing with Native Speakers

interlocutor located? What are the characteristics of country, region, and city of your interlocutor?

2. French heritage of both cities: What constitutes the French heritage of our city and region as well as the city, region, and country of your interlocutor? How does the French heritage manifest itself in architecture, monuments, and cultural activities?

Cuisine: What are the characteristics of Louisiana cuisine? What are its typical and cultural dishes? Which ingredients do you use in order to prepare them? Which traditional and culturally representative dishes do we find in your interlocutor's country? How are they prepared? What are its ingredients? What is the most important meal of the day? Which dishes are prepared for festive occasions, for example Christmas, Easter, holidays, weddings, etc.? In how far does the cuisine in his/her country and in our city show French influences. How does the cuisine of your own city compare to the cuisine here in Louisiana and the one of your interlocutor?

3. **Grammatical structures to be practiced:** Conjugation of verbs in the present tense; idiomatic expressions « *avoir* », « *être* », « *prendre* » et « *faire* »; interrogative sentences; use of definite, indefinite, and partitive articles in affirmative and negative sentences; expressions of quantity; prepositions; use of adjectives; formulation of comparative and superlative statements.



## Learning to Implement the Five Cs by Living the Five Cs: Portfolios and Reflection in an International Teacher Professional Development Program

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Maria Katradis, *George Mason University*

Rebecca K. Fox, *George Mason University*

Jie Tian, *Donghua University, Shanghai, China*

### Abstract

This study examines the outcomes of a US-based six-week summer professional development program for 19 Taiwanese teachers of Mandarin Chinese as a Foreign Language. The goal of this funded program was to facilitate

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**Rebecca Fox** (Ph.D. George Mason University), is a Professor of Education at George Mason University in the College of Education and Human Development. She serves as the Director of the Advanced Studies in Teaching and Learning Program and Professor-in-Charge of the Teaching and Teacher Education Ph.D. Specialization. Her research focuses on teacher professional development, second language acquisition research, and critical reflective practice. She was the 2016 NECTFL Chair, directed the Madrid Bilingual Coordinators and Taiwan Teacher Professional Development Programs, and continues as Principal Investigator of a US Department of State, Islamabad, University Partnerships Grant with the University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan, *Collaboration for Faculty Excellence in Teaching and Research*.

**Maria Katradis** (Ph.D. George Mason University) has worked in teacher education, and has taught foreign/world language methods and action research courses for pre- and in-service teachers. Her areas of research focus on foreign/world language teachers' and students' beliefs and classroom interactions, with a special interest in international teacher education. She has done extensive research and professional development work with teachers of Modern Greek in the US, served as program faculty of the Taiwan Professional Development Program and program director of the Madrid Bilingual Coordinators Program, and most recently served as ACTFL's Modern Greek SIG Chair (2016-2017).

**Jie Tian** (Ph.D., George Mason University) is currently on the faculty at Donghua University, Shanghai, China. She was a member of the program faculty during the Taiwan Teacher Professional Development Program. Her research focuses on world language teachers' development of international mindedness and intercultural competence.

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international teachers' understanding and application of the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) and implementation of interactive pedagogical practices into their teaching practice; it also sought to promote learner-directed, proficiency-oriented classrooms with interactive and engaged learning and authentic language development for their learners. The current study examines the learning that occurred for participants during the professional development program. Data showed that at the outset of the program, while participants may have heard of student-centered instruction and the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) and of the *ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 2013), they were not aware of the standards' actual implementation in classrooms or how these applied to themselves as educators. Analysis of participants' pre- and post-program surveys and professional electronic portfolios provided evidence of the ways in which participants "lived" the standards to increase their knowledge of them. These data also provided evidence of how important it was for participants to experience the standards as learners to support their growing understanding of new teaching practices, learner-directed instruction, and international mindedness. The researchers utilized a critical stance to explore the Taiwanese teachers' professional and cultural learning, as well as their own learning as facilitators and instructors in the program. Results suggest that international teacher candidates may benefit from, and even require, more in-depth work to help them deeply understand and be able to apply the standards that lead our profession. While all teacher candidates might benefit from an active learning approach to better understand the standards and be able to apply them actively in their teaching practice, it was in the "lived" experiences of interacting with the sets of standards as both learners and future teachers that enabled the international candidates to ultimately grasp their meaning and be able to apply them in their foreign/world language lesson planning. Reflection proved to play a core role in their growth as future educators.

### **Introduction**

Reflecting the increasing importance of educating PK-16 students for a globalized world, the development and actualization of learner-directed, proficiency-oriented classrooms by teachers and teacher education faculty should be an essential practice for all teachers, and most certainly for world language teachers and teacher candidates. Moreover, the implementation of standards-based instruction should be at the core of the work of both teachers and teacher educators. The sets of standards that lead our profession in World Languages (WL) provide a foundation for the pedagogical practices in our classrooms and set the stage

Reflecting the increasing importance of educating PK-16 students for a globalized world, the development and actualization of learner-directed, proficiency-oriented classrooms by teachers and teacher education faculty should be an essential practice for all teachers, and most certainly for world language teachers and teacher candidates.

## Learning to Implement the Five Cs

for the achievement of effective communication as one of the goals of language learning.

In addition to teaching multiple strategies and approaches to achieve learner-centered classroom instruction, teacher educators are also charged with preparing pre-service teachers with the experience, knowledge, and tools to engage in culturally responsive teaching (Sobel, Gutierrez, Zion, & Blanchett, 2011). Two current sets of standards lead the WL profession in the United States (US): (1) the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (W-RSLL)* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), referred to in this article as the *W-RSLL* and by the international participants as the *Five Cs*; and, (2) the *ACTFL/ CAEP Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project [NSFLEP], 2013). We believe that an understanding of standards-based instruction should extend beyond US contexts and serve as a foundation for the work we do in preparing WL teachers broadly.

Previous experience has shown that, in order to support pre-and in-service teachers from other countries in their understanding of the standards and develop new approaches that foster student-centered, interactive classroom instruction, we as teacher educators must implement additional strategies and pay close attention to cultural and linguistic differences (Fox, Katradis, & Webb, 2016; Fox & Tian, 2010). Furthermore, international teacher development and exchange programs can not only provide pre- and in-service teachers with the opportunity to identify, practice, and promote the standards that lead our profession, but they can also advance the knowledge of the host institution. By encompassing such goals as standards-based instruction, intercultural competence, and reflective practice, all parties stand to gain. One such program, entitled “Dynamic Learning in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Chinese Language Classrooms: Achieving Standards-based, Proficiency-oriented, Learner-centered Instruction,” provided a group of international pre-service WL teachers with the opportunity to travel, study, and engage in another culture while developing and preparing their own visions of classrooms that promote interactive, engaged, and authentic language learning and development.

This study focused on the last of three cohorts of pre-service teachers from Taiwan who participated in a summer professional development program at a large Mid-Atlantic university; it was sponsored by the local Taiwan Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO). Additional support to provide hands-on, interactive learning opportunities for the participants was provided by a STARTALK program at a local community college. These funded projects and this research are grounded in our belief in the importance of understanding teaching and learning from multiple perspectives; in the context of the current study, the overarching context encompasses both educators of Eastern and Western language classrooms. Thus, in addition to our commitment to provide a meaningful summer professional development program, we consciously included a research component that called on learners and implementers to engage jointly in their development of two-way intercultural understanding (Wang & Byram, 2011). The final cohort is the focus of this study.

## **Programmatic Focus**

The purpose of this program was to prepare WL teachers of Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan to implement the most authentic, student-centered, proficiency-oriented classrooms possible for their future teaching contexts—Chinese as a Foreign Language in Taiwan. Several measures allowed the faculty to understand the participants' background and preparation prior to the program, as well as their learning during the program. By eliciting responses to pre- and post- online surveys, analyzing participants' reflections and online WL teaching portfolios, and maintaining in-class observations, we were able to examine their expectations and perceptions of teaching before attending the program, any in-program effects during this professional development program, as well as the program's outcomes, emergent applications, and implications for the participants' teaching practices upon completion of the professional development series. In this study, we primarily investigate the ways in which participants achieved the goals of the program through evidence included in their portfolios; we also include pre-and post-program surveys and class reflections for triangulation. As faculty and researchers, we have utilized a critical stance to investigate Chinese language teachers' professional and cultural learning as a result of this professional development experience. We have thus examined our own learning as facilitators and instructors in the program to inform similar future projects.

As a secondary component of the program, the funding agency wanted participants to increase their proficiency in English as they interacted in an English speaking environment during the program. While measuring language proficiency was not a component of the program evaluation, improving participants' general capacity in English was a desired aspect of this program as an element of developing participants' intercultural understanding and global skills. Thus, it was used as a goal for ongoing development. For example, as student-participants in an English-language university, they were fully immersed in English and received feedback as English language learners in the program; their in-group conversations and sense-making took place in both languages to allow for translation of processes and to ensure deeper understanding and transference of terminology. Overall, however, participants were encouraged to practice and improve their English through constant interaction with native English speakers both on and off campus.

The results reported in this study focus on the third year of the three-year program implementation sequence. Updates informed by the two previous years' program results included using a co-teaching approach among university faculty, using a pre-program survey to assess the background and needs of the particular cohort participants, adding increased opportunities to create standards-based lesson plans followed by micro-teaching opportunities, and adding a post-program follow-up survey.

The six-week program consisted of (1) daily academic seminars with an emphasis on WL standards and interactive teaching methods, technology integration, and learner-directed classrooms focused on authentic language acquisition; (2) a week-long experience at a STARTALK program whose focus was

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technology integration for interactive learning; (3) local cultural and historical site visits in the greater metropolitan area; (4) opportunities to practice new teaching approaches in local Chinese language camps; and, (5) exchanges with the local Taiwanese community and the university community at large to enhance deeper cultural understanding and cross-cultural opportunities. Critical reflection was taught and then woven explicitly throughout the experiences. Over the six weeks, participants engaged in varied opportunities to process, reflect upon, and demonstrate their growing understandings as they constructed their individual electronic program portfolios, which were formally presented at the conclusion of the program.

## Standards-Based Teaching and Learning

The W-RSLL (2015) and the ACTFL/CAEP Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (NSFLEP, 2013) are the sets of standards that guide the teaching of foreign languages in the US and many other countries abroad. These standards also form the conceptual framework of this program. At the outset of the program, many participants were able to recite the W-RSLL (calling them the Five Cs), although they did not appear able to fully identify the purpose or role of the standards for their classrooms. The ACTFL/CAEP standards were relatively unknown to them, as was the concept of how the sets of standards articulate a continuum of learning and implementation from learner to teacher to teacher educator.

The Five Cs and the ACTFL/CAEP standards became a dual medium for their learning. The ACTFL/CAEP standards guided the teacher education component, as program faculty helped the pre-service teachers understand their own growing teacher preparation expertise while applying the W-RSLL into their planning and instruction. The ACTFL/CAEP standards describe what teacher candidates should know, be able to do in their teaching, and be disposed to do in their roles as teachers.

Many researchers and WL professionals have written about the role and importance of sets of standards to guide our profession. Shrum and Fox (2010) provide a brief overview of several documents that have been developed by our profession to guide us in our work as WL teachers and teacher educators. The profession has since added new updates to these standards in the interim. However, the basic tenets of standards-based instruction and the incorporation of standards into instructional practices at all levels remain at the core of our work. Whether teaching in classrooms in the US or other countries, our sets of standards<sup>1</sup> serve to identify and define our work toward the achievement of agreed upon outcomes.

What is important is the understanding that the sets of standards guiding WLs do not operate as separate entities; rather, they have been expressly designed to complement one another. With expanding global learning contexts, we believe that it is increasingly important that we help teachers understand how their work aligns with and actualizes these sets of standards in

Whether teaching in classrooms in the US or other countries, our sets of standards<sup>1</sup> serve to identify and define our work toward the achievement of agreed upon outcomes.

their classrooms. We need to develop in them a sense of purposeful teaching and assessment practices that enable them to use these standards to create proficiency-oriented, interactive classrooms. These standards set benchmarks for and improve the quality of instruction in PK-16 WL classrooms while also defining expectations for teacher preparation. These standards should also guide professional development programs, such as the one described in this study, if we are to achieve our goal of globally competent teachers (Zhao, 2010).

The growing international context calls for WL teachers who both understand twenty-first century skills and can prepare learners for the world's future. This requires WL teachers who not only understand the sets of standards that lead our profession but who also have the ability to incorporate interactive approaches in authentic student-directed and proficiency-oriented classroom pedagogy. Several areas, thus, form the foundation of the current professional development program and are at the center of this study: the first is the sets of WL standards that frame our work as WL faculty; the second is the role of critical reflection in teacher education.

The growing international context calls for WL teachers who both understand twenty-first century skills and can prepare learners for the world's future.

### **Interactive, Experiential, and Intercultural Approaches in WL Teacher Education**

The six-week program was designed to combine academic content through university-based seminars, teacher research, community engagement, field experiences, and cultural activities steeped in the standards. This experience was made possible through US partnerships of the host university with TECRO, ACTFL, and local STARTALK Summer Camps. Faculty at the university designed the interactive program focusing on academic components, organized hands-on learning at summer language camps, led local cultural activities, and designed oral and written reflection-focused sessions. TECRO funded the program and hosted weekends and events with participants while they were in the university. ACTFL provided Skype meetings and presentations on standards-based, proficiency-oriented language instruction, and made it possible for participants to attend a STARTALK teacher program for a week of technology integration. Additionally, participants attended STARTALK Summer Camps for elementary and secondary students where they observed, and eventually implemented, interactive Chinese lessons. The program provided opportunities for the participating pre-service teachers to deepen their knowledge of pedagogical practices actively. (See Appendix A for a Week 4's excerpt sample schedule.)

The program was designed to encourage both participants and faculty to further their own understandings of culture and intercultural competence. Through this intercultural teaching setting and a co-teaching planning/teaching model, program faculty were able to consider their teaching of the same topics they were covering in their coursework settings for domestic pre- and in-service teachers. The summer program thus created a space for modeling the perspectives of learner as teacher and teacher as learner (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009), as both the faculty and program participants were simultaneously engaged in reflection and cross-cultural dialogue to support the standards-based instruction (Rodgers & LaBoskey, 2016) we were seeking.

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### **Portfolios and Reflections as Formative and Summative Program Assessments**

In addition to the standards that guide the work we do in WL teacher education, helping teachers develop critical reflective capacity is also essential in an educator's professional learning (Fox, White, & Kidd, 2011; Rodgers & LaBoskey, 2016). We believe that the development of reflective practice in teachers should be an essential element of teacher preparation and professional learning because reflection has been identified as one of the key ways to help teachers broaden and strengthen their professional learning experiences (Korthagen, 2011) and increase their effectiveness as educators. Reflection helps teachers be better able to learn from experience, construct avenues for thoughtful change, and be aware of their understandings, assumptions, biases, and dispositions (Shulman and Shulman, 2004). In short, by helping teachers engage in a process of reflection that deconstructs and examines their teaching practice creates a positive context to help teachers ground their decisions and consider the results of those decisions, thus deepening pedagogical understanding (Korthagen, 2001, 2011; Marcos, Sanchez, & Tillema, 2011).

By building newly-acquired knowledge into existing knowledge and bringing different experiences together, teachers can then begin to restructure their learning and refine their teaching practice in individual ways. This is especially the case when teachers are exposed to several different teaching approaches, particularly those that may be vastly different from the ways in which they were taught. Focused reflection can assist in this process of discernment and change as teachers work toward affirming or questioning ideas about theories they are applying, or learning to apply, in their classrooms. In the instance of the professional development program highlighted in this study, developing the teachers' reflective capacity helped them put thoughts to paper and then compare their interpretation of new practices with colleagues through discussion and co-reading of reflections. This latter process, critical processing, can play a role in helping teachers develop a discerning lens toward their new pedagogical decisions which can, in turn, deepen their critical capacity (Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006). This change process is particularly effective when previous classroom experiences as both learner and teacher have been very different from the ones being introduced and implemented (e.g., moving from teacher-centered to learner-centered instructional practices, and from memorization of text to facilitating authentic language).

Developing portfolios was a required component of this program. Portfolios have been identified as a "third space" (Lam, 2006) in which teachers can present their understandings of the materials as students and share how they believe they will implement their understandings as teachers. One goal of the portfolios was to serve as a tool to illustrate the link between theory and practice through reflection and connection-making (Fox, 1999; Fox, 2010). For WL teachers, portfolios can provide teachers with the necessary scaffolding for productive learning experiences (Bataineh, Al-Karasneh, Al-Barakat, & Bataineh, 2007; Fox, 2010; Mansvelder-Longayrou, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2007; Sorin, 2005; Tanner, Longayroux, Beijaard, & Verloop, 2000).

In their study investigating the dimensions of interculturality and teacher development through the portfolios of pre-service teachers from China enrolled in a licensure program in the US, Fox and Tian (2010) indicate that, in order to maximize the experience, learning should be bi-directional for faculty and students. Through teachers' portfolio reflections, the instructors in the study were able to understand more specifically *how* teachers were internalizing new material through the connections they were making (or not making) as revealed in their reflections. The program portfolios themselves provided cognitive spaces in which the students could express through their reflective writings what they had learned. In turn, faculty gained insight into important dimensions of the Chinese teacher candidates' understandings. In the current study, program portfolios also provided a space for the participants to examine their growing understandings about the standards while the instructors could also understand the pre-service teachers' learning process and determine areas of puzzlement or disconnect between instruction in Taiwan and the US. The portfolios were a performance-based tool, and the pre-service teachers created their portfolios incrementally along the weekly program modules. In this way, participants were able to demonstrate their understandings, as well as the evolution of their thinking and learning, without having to write extensively in English.

Learning from experience is important in learning how to teach (Fox & Tian, 2010). In the context of the current study, this statement applies to both the participants and the instructors. The instructors' previous experiences with other groups greatly influenced the way they approached this particular group of teachers. Furthermore, as the participants' most recent experiences in the classroom had been as students and not as teachers, they were regularly asked to reflect on their own experiences as students, and then they were asked to articulate how the student and teacher standards could help improve or make their experiences richer. In providing participants with various opportunities, such as attending the technology seminars and micro-teaching on and off campus, participants were called on to practice what they learned and then reflect critically on their experiences. Through community-based teaching experiences at Chinese language camps, the participants were also exposed to student audiences. Evidence of participants' development and experiential learning during the language camps was captured in their electronic professional portfolios (and reflections) which demonstrated their growing understandings of new material and internalization of their experiences through the dual lenses as students and pre-service teachers (Fox, 2010).

Learning from experience is important in learning how to teach.

According to Fox and Tian (2010), adopting an understanding of international contexts in the work we do with pre-service international teachers provides them with the cultural, linguistic, and pedagogical practices that can help them develop international mindedness and cross cultural awareness in their own educational practice. Consciously incorporating cross-cultural comparisons of educational practice is important for international participants. Fundamental to scaffolding growth is the incorporation of ongoing reflection on how can we (as teacher

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educators) use international teachers' previous knowledge and cultures to help them walk the bridge between cultures and teaching styles. Faculty must draw on two sources of knowledge to continuously improve our understanding: (1) what the candidates are learning about implementing the standards, and how; and, (2) what have we are learning by engaging in this type of teacher education program. By engaging in the exchange of cultural ideas with our pre-service, or international, teachers, we as teacher educators also benefit from expanded learning through the perspectives of our pre-service teachers.

### Method

In the context of the program described above and the supporting literature on portfolios and reflection in WL teacher education, the purpose of our study explores the ways in which pre-service teachers from Taiwan came to understand the W-RSLL (2015) and the ACTFL/CAEP educator standards (2013) that serve as the foundation of our profession. Participants' understandings of new pedagogical dimensions of teaching, including student-centered, proficiency-oriented, standards-based language instruction through an experiential international professional development program, were of particular focus in our investigation. As faculty in the program, we wished to also understand more about how Eastern and Western teaching philosophies might come together to be integrated.

### Participants

The participants (n=19) were all Taiwanese pre-service teachers of Chinese as a Foreign Language. The participants were 18 females and 1 male, ranging in age from 20 to 28 ( $M_{age} = 22.95$  years). All of the participants indicated Chinese as their primary and native language and had, at least, Taiwanese citizenship. Participants were selected by TECRO using its own criteria for academic excellence and promise. Participants tended to be selected in small clusters from various national universities; therefore, different areas across Taiwan were represented among the participant pool. Of the 19 participants, eight were enrolled in master's degree programs in Taiwan, two had completed their undergraduate degrees immediately before attending the program, and nine were enrolled in degree programs, soon to graduate.

Twelve participants indicated travel and/or study abroad before attending this program, including travel to mainland China. For seven participants, this program was their first international travel. All participants spoke English, with varying degrees of proficiency, but all well enough to engage in class discussion. Most benefited from discussions in Chinese to debrief the information when clarification was needed. Six participants indicated that they had visited an English-speaking country at some point in their lives.

The study followed all procedures required by the university's Human Subject Review Board. All 19 participants agreed to participate and signed the study's consent form. While 19 successfully completed the pre-program survey, a limited number responded to the post-program survey due to participants' travels and continued studies immediately following the program. However, the portfolios



provided a robust source of data for analysis, as all 19 participants completed their portfolios at the end of the program.

### **Instruments and Data Sources**

The instruments for this study included a pre- and post-program survey; in-program statements, reflections, and discussion exit slips; and participant online portfolios (see Appendix B for portfolio guidelines). With the exception of the two surveys, the other data were part of the program's content and course requirements. The pre- and post-program surveys consisted of an open-ended questionnaire, which contained demographic information about the participants and questions relating to teaching and learning, i.e., "Please describe an effective language teacher." This questionnaire was developed by the researchers to reflect the intended outcomes of this program. The pre-program survey was repeated in its entirety in the post-program survey, with a modification to the final question (changed from "learning expectations of the program" to "learning outcomes of the program") and seven additional questions regarding their future teaching and professional development plans. (See Appendix C for the pre-and post-program survey.)

In-class reflections, in-program class discussions, and seminar exit slips were components built into the daily seminars. During discussions, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences and understandings either in groups or individually. They were also asked to write about connections to a particular standard as they created their portfolio entries. Participants' statements and reflections were collected, recorded, and returned so that feedback could inform participants of their own progress. None of the statements, reflections, or exit slips used in this program were formally graded, and the participants' English was not corrected; to comply with HSRB guidelines on data representation, any of the examples provided appear in the original form as provided by the participants.

Participants' online portfolios, with accompanying reflections written to prompts, provide a comprehensive illustration of participants' journeys through this program and document the evolution in their thinking about teaching and learning. As a required component of the program, participants were introduced to an online platform for portfolios that would receive their selected evidence to represent their learning, including language methods and teaching modules with their alignment with the W-RSLL. After the basic requirements, the selection of exemplar materials for the portfolio were left up to individual participants, giving participants ownership over the representation of their learning and experiences.

### **Data Analysis**

The qualitative data were collected and coded, first separately, for analysis; a cross-data analysis was then conducted to synthesize the themes across data sources. Using open coding first, the data were organized into themes (Maxwell, 2005). As the themes emerged, they were discussed systematically by the researchers to determine reliability of interpretation. The research team found that the teacher standards and the Five Cs emerged naturally as themes, not merely as the focused

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intent and our teaching; they also appeared in the participants' reflections on their experiential learning, in classroom discussions, and throughout course products. Reflective practice, a completely new concept to the participants, also emerged from the data as a key theme serving as part of their professional development. However, it was specifically the W-RSLL (the Five Cs) (2015) that emerged to serve as a framework for the presentation of our findings. The ACTFL/CAEP standards (NSFLEP, 2013) also emerged in the findings, particularly through the element of reflection and reflective practice.

## Findings, Discussion, and Results

Although participants engaged in a discussion about the W-RSLL beginning with the first class session, pre-program survey data indicated that the majority ( $n = 14$ ) were not familiar with the W-RSLL before entering this program. Although improving participants' English was an important component of this program, only one participant indicated expecting to improve English skills as a result of participation. Nine participants explicitly indicated wanting to learn about how to use American teaching methods for foreign languages or the "American/Western style" of teaching. The *ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards* (NSFLEP), or teacher education standards, were not referred to in any way among the pre-program responses.

During the opening class, the participants were able to provide textbook-like descriptions and definitions of such practices as student-centered/directed instruction, but also stated that they did not really know or understand how to move theory into practice. They did not appear cognizant of how planning instruction would be aligned with the W-RSLL (referred to mostly by them as the Five Cs or the "student standards" to delineate these standards from the ACTFL/CAEP standards, which they called the "teacher standards"). Thus, from the pre-program survey data and observations during the opening set of classes, findings indicate that at the program's outset, the participants showed familiarity with some US terminology, but had had limited to no exposure to the sets of standards that would be used as the foundation of the work we would be doing with them, or the specific application of those standards in their future classrooms or to their own professional learning as WL teachers.

Post-program survey data indicated an increased knowledge of specific teaching techniques and strategies, such as TPR, integrating authentic materials from countries that speak the TL, instructional technologies, and co-teaching. One participant commented: "The 5Cs impressed me a lot, since we can only learn it from our textbooks in Taiwan. When I was in the program, I learned how to put 5C into the teaching and how to design a class." Developing standards-based lesson plans, micro-teaching, and understanding educational theories and standards in the U.S. were also mentioned as outcomes of the program in the post-program surveys.

Although in-service teachers may sometimes be overwhelmed and skeptical about their abilities to teach according to standards (Klieger & Jakobovitch, 2012), at the conclusion of the program, the pre-service teachers in this study appeared

increasingly comfortable in evaluating their own language learning experiences according to the sets of standards. Lesson plans that the participants included in their portfolios indicated that they became able, as a result of their participation in the program modules and experiences, to apply the W-RSLL as a foundation for their lesson plans. The lesson plan excerpt in Appendix D provides a representative example of the new thinking emerging from among the participants. Using a lesson plan template approach, the participants provided an interactive lesson aimed at addressing the W-RSLL that incorporated ideas for interactive, student-centered engagement in learning. This called for creative activation of new knowledge and thinking on the part of the participant. Lesson plans by other participants showed similar incorporation of topics of cultural or historical nature to provide a basis for comparisons or communicative activities. Participants shared how different this approach to planning was as compared to the language learning approaches they had experienced themselves previously.

Reflections revealed that they were thinking carefully about their growing understanding of standards for teachers and the role of reflection in their development and practice. As emerging WL teachers, the *ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* were new to them, but they began to see how these standards called them to understand and incorporate the “student standards” into their planning and assessment practices. They appeared to increasingly use the ACTFL/CAEP standards as a framework to gauge their ability to plan instruction and to then informally evaluate their changing teaching practice in small group instruction during the program. They used their reflections as a point of departure and even talked about how they would like to introduce reflection to their own students as they were finding it to be an important part of their own learning.

By reflecting on their own learning, participants came to see the importance of a standards-based, learner-directed approach to their language teaching. This appeared to be a large learning leap for them. Seeing themselves as learners, participants reported in their reflections an understanding of how much more they themselves could have gained from their own language learning when they were younger and shared how they now viewed the importance of the standards to inform their ability to adopt a new approach, instead of teaching the way they were taught.

The participants were not resistant to the standards and approaches used and taught in the program; rather, their growing confidence appeared to also be supported by lived experiences on and off campus. As will be shared in the following sections, the themes that emerged from the data indicated that the participants had “a lived experience” of the Five Cs. It is through the lens of reflection, and their growing critical reflective capacity, that the power of the implementation of these Standards emerged for the participants. Research in reflection has indicated that it is an integral part of transformative teaching practice (Korthagen, 2001, 2011), and this study provides an example of this new way of thinking come to life for these international participants.

The discussion that follows is organized using the Five Cs as a framework to describe the participants’ learning. Through this lens, we also see the participants as learners of the Five Cs and future implementers of the W-RSLL in their own practice.

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Examples from individual portfolios are used to illustrate both formative and summative moments in their learning and deepening understanding of each of the standards and to further elaborate upon the summary statements from this overview.

*Communication.* From the first day, the participants were asked to communicate orally in English, which came easily for some and was more difficult for others. As mentioned in the participant demographics, prior to participating in this program, 13 participants had never traveled to an English-speaking country, and six had never traveled outside of Taiwan. It was clear from the outset that participants preferred to communicate in Taiwanese among themselves, and we supported this as we knew that it would help their deeper understanding of this new concept of standards-based instruction. In our quest to help them understand the W-RSLL in preparation for teaching Mandarin as a WL, we used the concept of the Five Cs so that they might see the overall picture first and then drill down into detail as we continued forward. We later introduced the *ACTFL/CAEP Standards for Teacher Preparation* (NSFLEP, 2013) so that the teachers might come to understand the linkage and alignment of these two sets of standards for WL classroom instruction and their own teacher preparation.

In our introduction of the W-RSLL, we began with Communication and the three modes of communication: interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational. It was quite clear from the beginning that this was the “C” everyone was the most familiar with, although knowledge of its various modes did not appear as clear. For example, in the interpersonal mode, the participants were pushed to use English as much as possible during the program in conversing with each other, with instructors, and with other individuals on campus. This pushed their own learning through interpersonal communication. Often, they used pocket translators to find the right word and apologized for their English, including during the presentations of their portfolios. As part of the program and in line with foreign language teaching methods, we continued using the target language (in this case, English) as much as possible to help scaffold participants’ active use of the language through readings, discussions, presentations, reflections, and written responses. Nonetheless, we did allow discussion for clarification to occur in Mandarin through one of the instructors who was Chinese; she could provide background and served as a cultural bridge when necessary. In the interpretive and presentational modes, reflections, such as writing poems after visiting an art museum, served as a form of internalization and interpretation of visual and linguistic cues in creating a new linguistic experience. We continually called on them to think of themselves both as learner and teacher.

In preparing for their teaching experiences, we built in two micro-teaching opportunities over the course of the six-week program. In the first micro-teaching opportunity, groups of four or five created age- and level-appropriate lesson plans to practice with one of the instructors who acted as the Chinese language student as she had no previous knowledge of Mandarin. The instructor also gave feedback about cultural body language cues that could be confusing or clarifying as well as the flow and content of the lessons.

The groups learned to interact among themselves by using peer feedback and discussion—largely new practices for them—to further their understanding

of interactive learning and to support the development of a lesson plan to use in the second micro-teaching opportunity at local Chinese language camps. Three of nine responses to the post-program survey indicated that they viewed collaboration and communication among themselves as important to their active learning. In their portfolio reflections, participants indicated what they learned through collaborating with their peers and instructors, and through their teaching application with US elementary and high school students at the summer camp. One participant reflected on her micro-teaching and summer camp experiences in similar ways: combining group members' ideas in an effort to generate better ideas was necessary in preparing and improving their lessons. Communication was key.

Furthermore, a number of participants indicated differences in communication. The Chinese language camps used Simplified Chinese characters while Taiwan uses Traditional characters. To accommodate this change, Pinyin (a form of writing Chinese words using Latin characters that places emphasis on pronunciation) was added to slides to help students understand both the spoken and written language.

Preparing and practicing their lesson plans also provided participants the opportunity to reflect on their own language and its dialects both within China and abroad. This specific group of participants had the background knowledge and experience of diverse populations as they are the recipients of both the dominant Chinese and local Taiwanese cultures and dialects in schools. Community-based teaching experiences, such as the Chinese language camp, exposed the participants to diversity of levels, proficiency, and cultures. The interactive approach taken by the program appeared to provide this group of pre-service teachers an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences as learners as they simultaneously were "living the Five Cs" while developing their future teaching of language and culture.

*Cultures.* This was the first international travel experience for seven of the 19 participants. For others, it was their first experience in a Western or English-speaking country. The participants seemed to understand the importance of culture in their language instruction from a personal perspective and then appeared to transfer this concept to their own lesson planning and instructional practice. They first focused on what it meant to engage in culture and cross-cultural exchanges, and then applied this understanding. Two vignettes provide insight into their growing cultural understanding, the first from a cultural trip and the second from a participant's observation.

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July occurred shortly after the start of the program. Participants met the instructors for the local 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade through town and then regrouped in the evening for the fireworks. Pictures from the 4<sup>th</sup> of July found themselves in all of the digital stories generated by the collaborative working groups. During one of the portfolio presentations, one of the participants emphatically declared that it was one of the group's favorite experiences. In a portfolio reflection of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, one participant indicated how interesting it was that there were so many different cultures represented in the parade, from Native Americans to Peruvians to Koreans. This diverse demographic was a surprise for them, as at home there was less diversity that they experienced on a regular basis. They had no idea that

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there was so much diversity in the US. Another participant wrote (the reflection remains in her own words):

The parade is great and colorful. It includes different groups and clubs that symbolizes the diversity of this country. The audiences around me are all different races. The diverse culture in United State is interesting and being open-minded is one of the important traits for Americans. Like what the <Declaration of Independence> talks about: 'all Men are created equal'. I like the atmosphere that everyone celebrates about the liberty, that's the most precious thing for every person, no matter you are an American or not. [sic]

Participants reflected both in class and in their reflections about the diversity present in the parade and how they saw it tying into what they were coming to understand as American culture and the fundamental beliefs of liberty and equality present in the Declaration of Independence. They discussed how they might incorporate culture into their teaching practice of Mandarin Chinese.

The second example of an encounter with culture was one upon which most of them chose to reflect in their journals. During their stay in the US, there was an extraordinary heat wave. The following excerpt from one participant's reflections captured a general sense of what we were reading from many in the group:

In the afternoon, my roommates and I saw a scene out of window, a girl wore bikini and 3 boys naked upper bodies playing beach Volleyball, while they were playing, passed by a Muslims Woman whose cloth cover her face and arms. It was a very hot day and we Asia girls don't like bask in the sun. American, Muslims and Asia females, 3 culture differences! [sic]



Figure 1.

The participant included a picture of this in her portfolio (Figure 1) and described her wonderment with the fortuitous nature of this observation. At once, three cultures were represented and were given the space to be represented in close

proximity to one another. This extent of diversity was new to the Taiwan teachers, and they talked about how they could not have merely read about it—they had to experience it themselves to take it all in. This provided an excellent doorway into a discussion of diversity, in general, which was a new area of consideration for most of them. By navigating through the products, perspectives, and practices present in their reflections on multiple cultures in the US, the participants began to talk about ways that they might also actively apply a similar approach in their own classroom practice when incorporating culture into their teaching practice. They began to understand the concept of weaving culture into teaching in an experiential way.

*Connections.* The participants made numerous connections during the program. In their reflections on teaching and learning, participants were asked to use a “K-W-L” to explore what they *Know*, what they *Want* to know, and what they have *Learned*. Initially, this was used as a reflection on teaching, but some participants also decided to put this to use as a tool for their overarching reflection of what they knew, wanted to know, and have learned as a result of their participation in this program. They talked about how they were making connections as an interactive learner. They expanded their comparison and reflected on what they would do to create more learner-centered approaches in their classrooms upon return to Taiwan.

While called upon to make connections to other disciplines, one participant and her group prepared a language lesson integrating science through Egyptian mummies. This example shows how their own knowledge was now being applied to their emergent teaching practice. Their lesson plan included an exploration of life and death in Egyptian culture, a recognition and discussion of life and death concepts in Chinese culture, and a comparison of the two. This could address both the Cultures and Connections standards, in which the Cultures standard involves “using the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied.” The lesson plan could also include discussing personal experiences with death, such as the death of a pet, and cultural experiences, such as honoring ancestors, which is common to many cultures. (See Appendix D for an excerpt of the lesson plan.) Through this example lesson plan, the W-RSSL were accommodated while connecting the language lesson to the much broader topic of culture.

The participants also referred to the teaching of other languages and methods used in different language classrooms in their responses. In the case of this group of program participants, their learning was augmented by living the examples of methods used in English language learning, and reflection appeared to make the learning process more visible for them. Furthermore, through reflection they were able to connect their current learning experiences to the experiences of others learning other languages and cultures (Thailand, The Philippines, Vietnam, to name a few). Their reflection on these connections also provided insight into how they were “living” the Comparisons standard.

*Comparisons.* As previously mentioned, the participants regularly observed and noted cultural similarities and differences regarding both educational settings

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and public life. They often discussed these comparisons in class and wrote about these comparisons frequently in their reflections. One of the comparisons they addressed often was about differences they were observing and experiencing between the American (or Western) style of teaching and the traditional Chinese style of teaching. These comparisons appeared to also serve as a “sense making” process for them as they continued to ask questions about the W-RSLL and drill down into cultural and instructional practices. The comparisons also seemed to help them identify and discuss new practices explicitly as they worked to incorporate them into their micro-teaching and lesson planning. Participants were also asked to reflect upon specific language learning experiences and how those experiences may have been similar or different when the W-RSLL had been used during the lesson.

The instructors drew from their broad range of experiences with different teaching styles and cultures to lead discussions and draw out ideas from the group. Participants were called upon to consider experiences in traditional teaching across cultures and compare methods. Student-centered instruction was a frequent topic of conversation. One participant reflected on teaching in Taiwan:

From my point of view, I can't deny that the traditional way of education has value due to the large number of students in one classroom. To efficiently manage a classroom with 40 students, managing the classroom with absolute power sometimes is a necessary method to fully control the classroom. Teachers with high efficiency who can manage a classroom well were considered as good teachers. However, the condition now in Taiwan is a lot different from what it used to be. With modern technology, the students nowadays have more resources to obtain knowledge more easily than before. The positions of teachers and students now are getting more and more equal. To efficiently manage a classroom with a new method is to stand in their shoes, give away the thought of being a teacher who is also an authority in the classroom. To understand and communicate with students is one of the good ways to be a good teacher.

Through this type of comparative reflection, the participant illustrates the culture of teaching in Taiwan, provides a justification for it, and alternatively also provides a justification for modern, student-centered instruction due to changing times and access to information. Reflection helped them make sense of the two cultures and consider the two contexts critically and openly. They talked about ways they wanted to gradually implement the new approaches. As program faculty, we continually worked to draw out these insights to help participants augment their own understanding of comparisons, and then consider how they might incorporate similar strategies into their own lessons.

*Communities.* The participants developed a sense of community while in the US. They supported one another and helped to navigate areas of understanding for one another. They saw the importance of this type of community in their own learning and shared that they wanted to create learning communities in their classrooms upon return to Taiwan.



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They also saw themselves as a member of a cultural community here in the US and compared these to communities closer to their culture. For example, a number of participants noted how welcoming and open the Taiwanese community in the local metropolitan area had been for them culturally. Another commented about the Chinese supermarkets and the availability of Asian foods. Finally, one compared her family life in Taiwan to her family here in the US, which produced the most striking comparison, and also unveiled expectations of culture and language maintenance. The following quote is from her reflection of meeting her relatives for dinner.

During dinner time, I couldn't help observing my cousin. We're the same age, but she can't speak Chinese. She speaks English, she has an American boyfriend, she's TOTALLY AMERICAN. My aunt, who moved to Maryland from Taiwan when she was 29, looks like everyone's mother in Taiwan. She cooks Taiwanese food, Chinese food, Speaks Chinese and Taiwanese. She looks no different from the women in Taiwan. But both of her daughters never speak Chinese when my aunt talks to [t]hem in Chinese or Taiwanese. It's a very odd but interesting scene to see.

I came up with a question for my cousins, "Who are you?," but I didn't ask. I think they already have the answer now, but I'm sure when they were young and their parents sent them to Chinese Heritage School, ... [they must] have asked themselves this question over [and] over again. (Emphasis in the original.)

This participant and others also asked the instructors about their cultural experiences and ethnic backgrounds. They engaged with us about the similarities and differences between our ethnic groups and their own. In a personal case, one of the instructors was able to provide an exact comparison of a Greek-American family and different levels of assimilation and integration that may occur within the same household. The participants were interested in how communities might serve to support cultural understanding across countries, such as teaching Chinese in Taiwan.

While seeing Taiwanese or other Asian "cultural communities" in the US, we also felt that this reflection also provides an example of how the participants were living the Comparisons standard. There is an acknowledgement of the identity negotiation that occurs in ethnic communities in the US, especially when children are exposed to different forms of schooling and cultures simultaneously. Ultimately, for a number of participants, this would not be their last encounter with Chinese or Taiwanese-American families if they intend to teach in the US.

Understanding one's cultural expectations is necessary in preparing lessons for students who may or may not share the same culture. Below is an entry from another participant about what it means to be a good teacher.

A good teacher:

1. A good teacher should be a facilitator to help students become active thinkers and guide them in learning, in other words, focusing

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on student-centered and standard-oriented learning, constantly motivate students by a variety of teaching strategies and methods. The responsibility of a teacher is not only to guide students during their studies but also to act as a bridge connecting previous learning experiences or knowledge with next new experience as well. For example, teacher should set warm-up as a review activity, to see how much students have learned and reflect themselves from the previous session. It can be also seen as a bridge to prior experiences, to help teacher assist students to go into a new session.

2. To be a good teacher we have to recognize what's our role in the class, we're not just a teller who instructs students in the contents of the textbook. It is important to be a listener and to communicate with your students, because we have to understand students' levels, their prior knowledge and language goals to realize the best way to assist students in learning. No matter what kinds of theories about teaching, those can be student-centered or I + 1 theory, but we have to choose appropriately depending on any situation. Then the goals of learning and teaching will be achieved. I believe that all teachers have to stand in students' role to think about everything. That is a correct way to find something useful for students. I hope I can try my best to let our whole students get better and better.

## Conclusions and Implications

Multiple data sources reveal that the participants' learning and understandings evolved incrementally and through a learner-centered approach to the W-RSLL (2013) and the ACTFL CAEP standards (2013) accompanied by a carefully scaffolded experiential learning approach. The participants were called upon to engage as learners while simultaneously augmenting their knowledge and skills about teaching Mandarin Chinese in Taiwan. The participants, exposed to the W-RSLL only intellectually as pre-service teachers, were now called upon to internalize and understand the standards first as a learner and then apply the standards through: reflecting, completing lesson plans as coursework assignments, micro-teaching, teaching at the Chinese Camp, exploring the local cultures and vistas, and experiencing diversity at a US university. Through their participation in this program, they were called upon to live the Five Cs themselves as they simultaneously applied them.

When implementing new ways of teaching across cultures, it became important for us as faculty to see the importance of providing the participants ample opportunity to experience these standards as learners first, and then as implementers of the W-RSLL through their lesson plans and teaching. This evolution in their understanding became increasingly evident through the reflections and the portfolio evidence. Participants also came to understand how the *ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards*, including how the areas of greater content knowledge, enhanced pedagogical knowledge, and professionalism came together to promote greater proficiency-oriented, student-centered instruction than approaches to which they had previously been exposed.

This summer program provided a unique opportunity in that its primary focus during the six weeks was to enhance participants' understanding of instructional practices and teacher professional learning for Taiwanese Chinese as a Foreign Language teachers. Because of the target audience, the interaction between and among language, culture, and education was explicitly targeted at every point in the program. The six weeks provided multiple hands-on experiences that allowed participants to learn about, internalize, and implement what they had learned through the coursework in a natural setting. However, we would have liked to have had the opportunity, had funding permitted, to visit classrooms to understand more about the actual impact of this program on their sustained teaching practice.

Although this particular program was not continued beyond the third year, the researchers learned a great deal from its implementation that connected to our work as teacher educators. We have been able to apply this knowledge to the implementation and planning of subsequent programs. Change takes time. Most participants were not yet teaching during the time of the summer program, but anecdotal communication has shown us that many of the experienced teachers reported implementing new practices in their classrooms. The evidence-based portfolios that included critical reflection and lesson planning anchored to the W-RSLL and aligned with the ACTFL/CAEP standards served as an evidence-based tool to help participants see their own growth and development during the program. The portfolios and reflective writings also provided program faculty a means to gauge the influence of the program content, goals, and objectives against the two sets of standards. Although similar programs had been previously offered and some tools, such as surveys could be partially incorporated, this study underscored the importance of creating a program that is aligned with professional standards. Though this program was not taken for university credit, the preservice teachers were serious about their work and expressed often the importance of returning home with concrete evidence of their learning that they could share with their peers in their home universities.

The implications of this study range from deepening our understandings of the way international educators learn, to exploring their cross-cultural educational and life experiences, to examining how these experiences influence the teacher education classroom and classroom environments they plan to co-construct with their students. In order to design and implement a quality program, faculty need to consider the end goals in order to develop learning experiences that meet the needs of the learners (drawing on their prior knowledge) while helping them reach for new knowledge and skills. The W-RSLL and the *ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* led the charge. Without these as a compass for both the faculty and the participants, the program would not have tied together so clearly for them.

It was clear that introducing and scaffolding reflection, incorporating it in their daily routine, and then embedding it in each section of their portfolios served as an anchor point for their learning. Their reflections also deepened our understanding of their learning as we were provided a daily snapshot of what participants learned during class and what areas called for more discussion on the following day. It is

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through the participants' reflective writings and portfolios that the faculty were able to understand more about the participants' incremental learning—more about how living the “Five Cs” helped them incorporate the sets of standards into their thinking and into their lesson plans.

The participants discussed the need to incorporate all perspectives and understandings in their classrooms and do what is right for the students, not for themselves. They demonstrated the desire to create new and innovative teaching materials using technology. They illustrated differences in conceptions of authority and how they influence the classroom environment. They collaborated in groups to prepare lessons and enrich the learning of their students and their colleagues by implementing the standards. And finally, the participants' portfolios revealed that the standards might in fact help them create the “best practices” they were searching for at the beginning of the program.

As faculty and program designers, we were able to see the incremental learning that took place during participants' program engagement. We also were able to understand more deeply how aspiring teachers from another culture came to understand and then began to incorporate two sets of professional standards into their knowledge and emergent teaching practice. We saw both their excitement and their struggles to learn about, internalize, and finally implement this new way of thinking that was led by standards. We benefited from using participants' reflections as windows into their thinking as we worked with them on their journey toward understanding and actualizing standards-based instruction. Their reflections capture their incremental steps toward understanding, but they also helped us see where our instruction was effective and where we needed to return for more discussion, practice, and connection-making.

The portfolio guidelines were framed by these two sets of standards, providing both summative and formative information about the Taiwan teachers' program experiences. Through the portfolios, all of the participants provided evidence of their grasp of the concepts of standards and were beginning to incorporate them into their thinking and planning by program's end, however, to varying levels of understanding.

Several areas present themselves for ongoing research. Both the participants and faculty would have benefited from a program that was contracted to continue forward for a longer period of time so that we might follow the actual implementation of the standards into these teachers' practice. Thus, three questions for future research emerge from the conclusion of this phase of our work: (1) To what degree are the program goals and objectives being lived out in teachers' practice in Taiwanese classrooms? (2) Have the teachers continued to utilize critical reflection to support decision-making and to help them continue to “live” the Five Cs in their instructional planning and teaching? and, (3) Have their new practices influenced their students and *other* WL teachers in Taiwan, and if so, in what ways?

Finally, we offer these results as a potential way to help faculty of similar professional development programs and international teachers who participate in them move beyond learning about the standards to a deeper level of application through a multiple pathway approach that calls them to “live out” the “Five Cs”

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through their own lenses as learners of language and culture. Second, they should see the connections between the W-RSLL and the *ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* and use critical reflective practices to help them see beyond the surface level as they develop their capacity for change. Third, there should be a means for collecting evidence of their incremental and iterative journey toward understanding, such as the developmental portfolio that is aligned with sets of standards. Finally, teacher educators should incorporate a research model into all programs in order to model outcomes-based education and make learning outcomes visible to program participants. These findings suggest that providing opportunities for international teachers to interact with the standards as learners can help them, in turn, implement the standards at a deeper level.

### Note

1. For additional reference to the development of our sets of standards, please refer to Glisan (2006) and Shrum and Glisan (2016).

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### APPENDIX A

#### Sample Weekly Schedule

Example from Week 4

**Theme:** The WL Teacher as Facilitator of Standards-based Instruction in the Communicative Classroom

Monday July 9	Tuesday July 10	Wednesday July 11	Thursday July 12	Friday July 13
9AM—12PM Seminar in World Languages: Connecting technology to lesson planning in communicative WL Classrooms	9AM—10PM Constructivism & critical thinking  Implementing Reflective Practice in my life as a teacher and learner	9:00— 12:00AM Micro- teaching	9AM—12PM Seminar in Methods of Teaching World Languages: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy	9AM—12PM Standards- based Textbook Evaluations
12—1PM Lunch	11AM—3:30PM Visiting Gallery Place	12—1PM Lunch	12—1PM Lunch	12—1PM Lunch
1:30—3:30PM Seminar in Methods of Teaching World Languages: The Learner- centered WL Classroom— planning and instruction		1:30—3:30PM Working session and debriefing on teaching methods	1:30—3:30PM Review MI; Practice Fishbowl reflection; e-revising and editing with students	1:00—3:30PM Complete and present Textbook Evaluations

### APPENDIX B

#### *Taiwan Foreign/World Language Teacher Professional Portfolio*

##### Introduction

Teacher educators, both in the United States and internationally, recognize that *effective and meaningful practices* in teaching involve lifelong learning and continuous professional development. We believe that all teachers need opportunities to work with colleagues and faculty as they seek to continuously grow professionally and embrace the notion that learning is a process for students



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and teachers alike. To that end, participants of [this program] will compile a Professional Portfolio during professional development coursework in the US that will provide evidence of their learning experiences and support the application of knowledge upon return to their schools in Taiwan.

The Taiwan Foreign/World Language Teacher Professional Portfolio is a performance-based document that provides concrete evidence of teachers' formative and summative professional learning during the program. This portfolio links the [program] experiences with sets of national professional standards. The following two sets of standards lead our profession in articulating learning outcomes for K-12 students and their teachers: *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) and the *ACTFL/ CAEP Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* (NSFLEP, 2013). The Portfolio provides program participants an important opportunity to synthesize and reflect upon their own growing learning and teaching practices as they make important connections between program experiences, the sets of standards, new practices, and daily encounters with student learning in the context of learner-based experiences. It also serves as evidence of the growth of their critical reflective practice and its application in their emerging teaching and research.

The purpose of the [program] Professional Portfolio is twofold. First, it encourages participants to develop their teaching practice to the highest level. This is accomplished through evidence of targeted reflection, presentation of pedagogical and content-based knowledge, emerging action research knowledge as it will serve to inform their teaching practice, and a synthesis of professional knowledge and skills. Secondly, it provides performance-based evidence of the degree to which the goals of this program have been met. As both a formative and summative document, the TTPDP Portfolio aligns with the principles of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the sets of Standards of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, and the core values of the College of Education and Human Development at this University.

A presentation/sharing at the end of the US component of the program will provide participants an opportunity to synthesize knowledge and share the contents with peers and program faculty. Upon return to Taiwan, it is hoped that the foreign/world language teachers will continue to add new pieces to their dossier.

### **Contents and Organization of the *Foreign/World Language Teacher Portfolio***

#### ***Part I: Introduction & Home Page***

Short Intro about the participant and his/her area(s) of content area expertise

Suggested Documentation

- Resume, or Curriculum Vitae
- Philosophy of Teaching
- Content area Knowledge in Chinese as a Foreign/World Language (language, cultures, literatures)

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### ***Part II: Culture and Teaching Knowledge***

#### Suggested Documentation

- *Reflections* and work from the Reflective practice and Teacher Leadership Seminar
- Selected examples of some Cultural and literary coursework taken in your home university
- Other documentation, as determined by individual

### ***Part III: Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Practices: Standards-based Lesson Plans, Differentiation of Instruction***

#### Suggested Documentation

- *Reflections* and work from the methodology, pedagogy, assessment and differentiation seminars
- Representation of Lesson Plans created using the Five Cs (activating the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*)
- Reflections on lesson planning and micro-teaching
- Other documentation, as determined by individual

### ***Part IV: Technology***

#### Suggested Documentation

- *Reflections* and examples of technology from the STARTALK Technology seminar
- *Reflections* and work with language learners
- Other documentation, as determined by individual

### ***Part V: Professionalism and Action Research***

#### Suggested Documentation

- *Reflections* and work from the seminar on Reflection, Portfolio Development and Action Research
- Professional Organizations of which you are a member, conferences attended, other professional experiences (e.g., this program)
- Development of Reflective Practice—journal entries (all or selected)
- Action Research Study/Action Plan for implementation next year
- Other documentation, as determined by individual

*Teachers should feel free to add photos and student work to individualize this document. Creativity is encouraged—let you and your true spirit shine through.*

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### ***World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2015)*** **(www.actfl.org)**

**The Five Cs are**

**Communication:** Communicate in Language Other than English;

- Three “communicative modes”: interpersonal, interpretive, presentational

**Cultures:** Gain knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures

- Perspectives: meanings, attitudes, values, ideas;
- Practices: pattern of social interactions; and,
- Products: books, tools, foods, laws, music, and/or games

**Connections:** Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

**Comparisons:** Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture

**Communities:** Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World

### ***ACTFL/CAEP (formerly NCATE) Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (2013)***

(<http://caepnet.org/standards/introduction>)

<http://caepnet.org/accreditation/caep-accreditation/spa-standards-and-report-forms/actfl>

Standard 1: Language, Linguistics, Comparisons

Standard 2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts

Standard 3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices

Standard 4: Integration of Student Standards into Curriculum and Instruction

Standard 5: Assessment of Languages and Cultures

Standard 6: Professionalism

#### **APPENDIX C**

##### **Pre-Program Survey**

##### **Demographic Questionnaire**

1. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender? Female Male
3. What is your primary language? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Please tell us about your teaching experience, including how many years you've been teaching, subject(s), the age range, grade levels of your students, etc.
5. Please tell us about your educational experiences.
  - a. Bachelor's (undergraduate/college) degree in \_\_\_\_\_ (Completed / To be completed in \_\_\_\_\_)
  - b. Master's degree in \_\_\_\_\_ (Completed / To be completed in \_\_\_\_\_)

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- c. Doctoral degree in \_\_\_\_\_ (Completed / To be completed in \_\_\_\_\_)
  - d. Professional degree (MD, JD, etc.) in \_\_\_\_\_ (Completed / To be completed in \_\_\_\_\_)
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ (Completed / To be completed in \_\_\_\_\_)
6. How many years has it been since you completed your last degree program (e.g., BA, MA or PhD, Other)? \_\_\_\_\_ Years
  7. What is your citizenship? \_\_\_\_\_
  8. Please describe any previous international experiences, including personal, educational, and professional travels (destination, purpose, length of stay).

## Taiwan Pre-Program Questionnaire

1. What do you believe is the purpose of learning a foreign language?
2. Please describe an effective language teacher.
3. Please describe a typical language classroom in your country.
4. Are there general standards in Taiwan for teaching a foreign language?
  - a. If yes, please describe what they are like.
  - b. How do you plan to incorporate these standards in your own classroom?
5. How do you plan your lessons? Select all that apply.
  - a. National or regional curriculum
  - b. National or regional standards
  - c. Internet resources
  - d. Materials from countries or regions that speak the foreign language
  - e. Foreign language standards from international contexts
  - f. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Please describe the teaching strategies do you use or plan to use in your classroom.
7. Are you familiar with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages standards?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, how would you describe your understanding of the standards?
8. Based on your current knowledge, describe a typical foreign language class in the United States.
9. In what ways do you use technology in your everyday life? What kinds of technologies do you use?
10. Do you use technology in your planning and instruction? If yes, how? If no, why not?
11. Do you believe teachers should be knowledgeable about international educational systems and practices? Why or why not?
12. What do you expect to learn from this professional development experience?

**Taiwan Post-Program Survey**

1. What do you believe is the purpose of learning a foreign language?
2. Please describe an effective language teacher.
3. Please describe a typical language classroom in your country.
4. Are there general standards in Taiwan for teaching a foreign language?
  - a. If yes, please describe what they are like.
  - b. How do you plan to incorporate these standards in your own classroom?
5. How do you plan your lessons? Select all that apply.
  - a. National or regional curriculum
  - b. National or regional standards
  - c. Internet resources
  - d. Materials from countries or regions that speak the foreign language
  - e. Foreign language standards from international contexts
  - f. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Please describe the teaching strategies you use or plan to use in your classroom.
7. Are you familiar with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages standards?
  - a. Yes. How would you describe your understanding of the standards?
  - b. No.
8. Based on your current knowledge, describe a typical foreign language class in the United States.
9. In what ways do you use technologies in your everyday life? What kinds of technologies do you use?
10. Do you believe teachers should be knowledgeable about international educational systems and practices? Why or why not?
11. What did you learn from this professional development experience? Were your learning expectations met? If so, in what particular ways?
12. What would you like to learn more about as part of your ongoing professional development as a World Language teacher?
13. Please list the new concepts, instructional strategies, and/or assessment strategies you feel you will definitely try with your students in the future as a direct result of information you learned or activities in which you were engaged at this professional development experience.
  - a. Concepts
  - b. Technology Strategies
  - c. Instructional Strategies
  - d. Assessment Strategies.
14. Please list all special resources, materials, or equipment you will need in your classes to engage students in learning the concepts, and using instructional and assessment strategies for language teaching and learning presented in this professional development experience.
15. What problems, if any, do you anticipate when introducing these new

## Learning to Implement the Five Cs

- concepts, using learning strategies and/or assessment strategies in your courses?
16. What is the single most important thing you learned or experienced in this professional development course/workshop? Why was it important for you as a teacher?
  17. What areas of content, pedagogy issues, classroom management issues, or other areas for professional improvement would you like to have addressed in future professional development opportunities offered?
  18. What aspects of this program helped you:
    - a. Develop an understanding of US culture and US schools?
    - b. Use technology in your classroom?
    - c. Become a teacher leader?
    - d. Learn about instructional strategies?
    - e. Learn about assessment strategies?
    - f. Exchange ideas with other teachers?
  19. What aspects of the program did you find not helpful?
  20. Other comments?

## APPENDIX D

### Excerpt of an Actual Sample Lesson Plan from Participant

- Curriculum Integration-Mummy with death
  - THEME or TOPIC of LESSON/UNIT: Life and Death
- Daily Lesson Plan sub-topic:  
PLANNING PHASE
- Performance-based Objectives—As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:
    - To know more about traditions of Mummy in Egypt
    - To recognize concepts of life and death in Chinese cultures
    - To compare different concepts of life and death among each
  - Alignment with Standards (Five Cs):
    - Communication
      - (Interpersonal) Students can discuss the topic of life and death and exchange their opinions in Chinese.
      - (Interpretive) Learn knowledge about Mummy through the exhibition in museum and understand each other's ideas
      - (Presentational) Wrap a student with toilet paper and discuss (interpersonal and presentational) Share and show how their funeral would look like and explain reasons
    - Culture-Recognize life and death concepts of both Chinese and Egyptian cultures
    - Connection-
      - Connect to their own experience of “Life and Death” (e.g., the feeling of their puppies’ death and life)
      - Link to other subjects, such as Social Studies and Philosophy

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- Connect to how they preserve the organs
- Comparison-Compare different concepts of life and death cross cultures.
- Community- Interview their parents about their experiences of life and death.

**Application of Standards  
to  
Instructional Practice**



## Literary Connections through Interdisciplinary Topics

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Mary Helen Kashuba SSJ, *Chestnut Hill College*

### Abstract

In this article teachers will find a rationale and examples for connections between literature and other disciplines, such as history, science, art, political science, philosophy, and psychology. The article addresses the goal of the Connections standard, as defined by the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (W-RSFL) (NSFLEP, 2015), namely, to help students expand their knowledge, engage in critical thinking, and attempt to solve problems creatively. With this goal in mind, it examines two literary avenues for making connections: first, literature in the original language, and second, literature in translation. It demonstrates connections with history, political science, and art within a language or literature course. Some examples include the question of immigration through Marie-Thérèse Coliman-Hall's short story *Bonjour Maman, Bonne fête, Maman*, [*Greetings, Mama; Happy Mother's Day, Mama*]; the role of colonialism in French history through the poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor; and the question of national identity through Daudet's *La Dernière Classe* [*The Last Class*]. The article also addresses literature in translation through examples taken from the author's personal experience in teaching an interdisciplinary course. Among the topics are the role of memory through Bergson and Proust, and Einstein's "space-time" through Proust and Bakhtin. This topic includes folk-tales, accessible in the original and translation. Finally, the article illustrates a multi-disciplinary approach to atomic warfare through the film *Hiroshima mon amour*. It emphasizes the role of the language teacher in guiding students to make connections between language

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and content disciplines, notably through the three modes of communication, and illustrates the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to problem solving and critical thinking.

## **Introduction**

The history of language teaching has always given strong emphasis to the importance of the study of literature, as literature is one of several ways in which language comes alive while also serving as witness to time and history. Notwithstanding the importance of language as a vehicle for conversation and communication, the ability to comprehend and interpret literature was, and still sometimes is, regarded as the end product of language learning, or certainly as evidence of high-level language development. Many times, professors required students to develop lengthy literary criticisms which, though valid, did not necessarily engage those who had a scientific or practical bent. The development of the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (W-RSFL) (NSFLEP, 2015), however, gives a much broader dimension to language and literature. The five broad areas addressed in the W-RSFL include Culture, Communication, Connections, Communities, and Comparisons. Of these five, it is the Connections standard that is most specifically addressed in this article. The Connections standard states: “Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines while using the language to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively” (p. 54). Building on this descriptor, the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC, 2014), in *Teaching World Languages*, expands this statement to include “a multidisciplinary approach to learning, combining foreign language study with anything and everything else. Students should learn content through the language, and not just the language forms and vocabulary” (p. 1). One might then add that literature, as the product of language, is not an end in itself, but it has the possibility of providing connections to other disciplines.

The history of language teaching has always given strong emphasis to the importance of the study of literature, as literature is one of several ways in which language comes alive while also serving as witness to time and history.

## **The Connections Standard, an Overview**

The Connections standard, while appreciated as essential for supporting communication and understanding in a global society, needs both reinforcement and explicit incorporation in instruction from teachers of foreign languages in order to be effective. The NCLRC (2014) reminds teachers, “Explicitly teach your students to transfer what they know across disciplines and languages and help them see they can do it” (p. 21). Students focus on their immediate assignment and often miss the relevance of what they are learning. Teachers can accomplish this goal by including thoughtfully selected literature on every level of instruction, from elementary to advanced, and even through literature in translation. This article offers pertinent examples of ways that teachers can incorporate the Connections standard into classroom instruction, both from texts in the target language

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as well as through literature in translation. It includes examples of interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication. In addition, it emphasizes the rationale for the transfer of knowledge across disciplines. In doing so, it will examine both the *how* of connections, but more than that, the *why*.

The Connections standard articulates one of the primary goals of education: “to develop critical thinking and to solve problems creatively (NSFLEP, 2015, p. 55).” Literature can provide a major contribution to this goal by helping learners identify, evaluate, and explore solutions to problems facing society today. Some literary examples include colonialism in Africa through the poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor, whose poems can evoke parallels in history, political science, and sociology. The question of immigration, including illegal entries, can be illustrated through Marie-Thérèse Coliman-Hall’s short story, *Bonjour Maman, Bonne Fête, Maman* [Greetings, Mama; Happy Mother’s Day Mama]. Alphonse Daudet’s *La Dernière Classe* [The Last Class] illustrates an important event in European history and explores the question of national identity. Finally, on a less controversial note, art, music, and poetry can enable everyone to better understand and appreciate the beauty of the universe. Baudelaire’s *Invitation au voyage* and its parallels in great paintings afford such an opportunity for the transfer of aesthetic appreciation.

The Connections standard can also expand access for students to greater contextual understanding through literature in translation. While focusing primarily on the use of the target language, it also states: “Learners access and evaluate information and diverse perspectives that are available through the language and its cultures” (NSFLEP, 2015, p. 56). As teachers of a foreign language, we transmit not only the language but also its culture in a way that those unfamiliar with the language cannot. While the ideal still remains with the literature in its original language, the reality of today’s students points in a different direction. The number of students who reach the point at which they can understand and appreciate literature in the original language is diminishing rapidly, since most foreign language departments require only two semesters of the language. (Lusin, 2012, p. 2). The *Chronicle of Higher Education* notes a 6.7% drop in language study between 2009 and 2013 (Berner, 2015). The Modern Language Association in its 2007 report *Foreign Languages and Higher Education* has also recommended “a broader and more coherent curriculum in which language, culture and literature are taught as a continuous whole, supported by alliances with other departments and expressed through interdisciplinary courses” (par. 8). Literature has a message for today’s young people. We as language teachers can provide this and show them how literature can be incorporated into many disciplines, and why it is necessary.

### Connections through Literature in Translation

An approach to literature in translation that embodies the spirit of Connections is best implemented in an interdisciplinary setting. For example, if

This article offers pertinent examples of ways that teachers can incorporate the Connections standard into classroom instruction, both from texts in the target language as well as through literature in translation.

the language teacher can partner with an expert in another content area, students stand to benefit from the knowledge of both. Several of the examples examined here come from an interdisciplinary course on “Time,” taught at Chestnut Hill College, PA. In addition to literature, the partnering content disciplines include science and psychology, illustrated through the classic *madeleine* and cup of tea in Proust’s *Swann’s Way*, from his lengthy novel *In Search of Time Past* (1956), the Alain Resnais film *Hiroshima mon amour* (1960) with its connections to the atomic bomb and its consequences, and Bakhtin’s idea of the *chronotope* (1981) as embodied in folk tales of various peoples. These are but a few examples. Through these works and others, in English or in the target language, students can use critical thinking to arrive at creative solutions to contemporary issues, such as national or individual identity, terrorism, or immigration.

### Colonialism

The poetry of Léopold Sédar Senghor provides an example of literature in the original language and is accessible to students on many levels. Senghor (1906-2001) was a poet, a diplomat, and a politician. He served as President of Sénégal from 1960-1980, and led a period of transition from colonialism to independence with relative stability. He was a citizen of Sénégal as well as of France, and was the first African elected to the Académie française. His experiences as a student in France marked him profoundly, and his poetry combines images of European culture and African traditions. *Jardin de France* [*Garden of France*] compares the classic formal French garden with the uncultivated vastness of the African wilds. Senghor is called back to his native land by:

... *l'appel du tam-tam*  
    *Bondissant*  
        *par monts*  
            *et*  
                *continents* (Senghor, 1984, p. 223)

[...the call of the tam-tam, leaping over mountains and continents]

His poem *Femme Noire* [*Black Woman*] exalts not only the beauty of woman, but also the nobility of the African black race. Both poems are readily accessible for elementary and more advanced students, who can read and analyze them through interpretative communication guidelines. The teacher can emphasize the connections with the geography and history of West Africa, and note the role of women in traditional and modern Senegalese society.

Students might amplify these connections with further research on the poem, *Jardin de France*. Through photographs, films, and written descriptions, they could examine the formal French gardens of Versailles as well as the uncultivated deserts and tropical forests of Senghor’s native Sénégal. As an interpersonal communication activity, they could have a paired exchange; one person commenting on Versailles, and another on Sénégal. Finally, students could present the results of their research in oral or written form. Thus they would be able to solidify their comprehension of the text with their own personal research.

## Literary Connections through Interdisciplinary Topics

The poem *Neige sur Paris* [*Snow over Paris*] is a little more subtle and complex, and raises issues that challenge the reader to the critical thinking and creative solution of problems noted in the Connections standard. Senghor writes it in the form of a prayer for Christmas Day. He hears the refrain of *Peace on earth*. He sees the snow covering the city:

*Vous l'avez purifié par le froid incorruptible  
Par la mort blanche...  
Seigneur, vous avez proposé la neige de votre paix au monde divisé ...  
Voici que mon cœur fond comme neige sous le soleil.* (Senghor, 1984, p. 21)

[You have purified it (the city) by incorruptible cold  
By white death...  
Lord, you have proposed the snow of your peace to a divided world...  
My heart melts like snow in the sun.]

Senghor calls to mind the Spanish Civil War and the divisions it produced among Nationalists and Republicans, eventually leading to the dictatorship of Franco. He recalls the evils perpetrated against his own people by those who called themselves Christian and civilized:

*Les mains blanches qui tirèrent les coups de fusils qui croulèrent les empires  
Les mains qui flagellèrent les esclaves qui vous flagellèrent  
Les mains blanches poudreuses qui vous giflèrent, les mains peintes poudrées qui m'ont giflé* (p. 21)

[The white hands that fired shots that brought down empires  
The hands that scourged slaves, that scourged you  
The white powdery hand that struck you in the face, the painted powdery hands that struck me in the face]

More specifically, he notes the hands that cut down the beautiful African forests:

*Elles abattirent la forêt noire pour en faire des traverses de chemin de fer  
Elles abattirent les forêts d'Afrique pour sauver la Civilisation, parce qu'on manquait de matière première humaine.* (p. 22)

[They cut down the black forest to make railroad ties  
They cut down the forests of Africa to save Civilization, because they did not have human material.]

Senghor ends with the refrain that indicates how his heart melts like the snow under the sun of Christmas Day, under the sun of the Lord's gentleness,

*Mon cœur, Seigneur, s'est fondu comme neige sur les toits de Paris  
Au soleil de votre douceur* (p. 22)

[My heart, Lord, has melted like snow on the roofs of Paris  
In the sun of your gentleness]

One might also see this as symbolizing a desire for forgiveness of the injustices done to Senghor's people. He expresses the paradox of colonialism: on the one hand, suppression of the native culture; on the other hand, the gift of language and education, as seen in the beauty of the French language found in the poem. Ironically, Senghor was able to receive his training in France and denounce colonial abuses through poetry, because of the French presence in Sénégal.

Students might begin with guidance from the teacher through the interpretive phase of communication so that they might appreciate the points noted above. An interpersonal discussion could address the implications of colonialism and the effects it has had on today's society. After some research appropriate to their level, students could follow up with an essay or presentation on the historical and political factors underlying colonialism, more specifically in Sénégal, considering its impact on individuals and on identity. Students can enrich their knowledge through what they have learned in history or political science, or bring their literary knowledge to these disciplines.

### **Immigration**

Colonialism has far-reaching effects. Haiti is an example of a country that suffered from exploitation by foreign powers, as illustrated in *Bonjour, Maman, Bonne Fête, Maman* [Greetings, Mama; Happy Mother's Day, Mama]. The author, Marie-Thérèse Coliman-Hall (1918-1997) was a native Haitian who, like Senghor, received a good education both in her native country and in France. She became a pioneer of pre-school education in Haiti, and wrote plays, short stories, and school books. In 1975, she received the literary award France-Haiti (Prix Littéraire France-Haïti). Much of her work comes from a feminist and human rights perspective.

The short story *Bonjour, Maman, Bonne Fête, Maman*, is set in a boarding school in Haiti. As students learning French read this story, the teacher can help them note important points. Dolcina, a fourteen-year-old girl, is told to write a Mother's Day letter to the mother she never knew. Rebellious, she refuses, yet begins to write, and in the process, imagines the life of her parents "là-bas" [over there], a life of ease, comfort, and prosperity. Her teacher has told her the contrary, but she refuses to believe it. Dolcina has learned from her grandmother that the parents lost everything in a disastrous hurricane followed by floods when she was only eight months old. They departed in a small boat, leaving her with her grandmother. Dolcina anticipates her reunion with her parents and a life of ease with them. The reader surmises that the parents are illegal immigrants, and hence cannot return or be reunited with her. Dolcina ends her letter with the simple message, "*Bonjour, maman, bonne fête, maman*" (Coliman-Hall, 2015).

After an interpretive reading of the story, students can discuss in pairs or small groups the conditions in an already poor country after a natural disaster. First a drought, then crop failure, then loss of livestock, and finally floods devastated the region. Students might include research on the background of such disasters, including deforestation which led to landslides and loss of life. They might note that these events occur all too frequently today as they did when the story was first published in 1979. They can also discuss the difficult circumstances facing the

## Literary Connections through Interdisciplinary Topics

immigrants in a new country, presumably the United States. The father works as a valet in a hotel, and the mother as a housekeeper in several homes. They can barely support their four children, born in America, who have American names: Eddy, Betty, Jeff, and Daisy, in an effort toward assimilation.

A useful assignment for students in the form of presentational communication is a response to the letter. They might imagine that the mother (or father) received it, and will answer it, based on the information contained in Dolcina's letter. A sampling of responses from such an assignment reveals sympathy for both Dolcina and her parents. In most cases, students showed understanding of the illegal immigrant situation and the difficulties it poses to both immigrants and their children. The response to these problems remains controversial, but students need to be aware of the personal conflicts involved, and explore eventual solutions. They can bring examples of this story to other courses, such as Sociology and Human Services, or Psychology, or conversely, enrich their essay by what they have already learned in these disciplines.

### Immigration Statistics

In order to enrich discussions or presentations on the issue of immigration, students can consult census reports that are easily accessible. Recent French statistics are available through INSEE, *Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques* (National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies). Tables make the assignment applicable to first-year students, who can identify countries and numbers. Intermediate students can find further information through the text. Because immigration became a vital issue in France's electoral campaign, and since immigration to the United States has assumed equal importance, students should be knowledgeable in this area. US statistics are available at the Center for Immigration Studies (Camarota & Zeigler, 2016). While only documented immigrants are included, the country of origin and level of English language ability is interesting to bring to students' attention. Such statistics can reinforce written or oral work on Coliman-Hall's short story and others like it, by supporting fictional works with factual information.

### National Identity

Much literature requires historical knowledge in order to appreciate it fully. Connections between language study and history might be represented through Alphonse Daudet's short story, *La Dernière Classe* [*The Last Class*] (1873). If students do not know the events of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, they can learn them while also coming to appreciate the situation described by Daudet. In fact, the historical connections of this piece of literature are deep seated. The roots of this conflict actually go back to Charlemagne's Empire of the year 800, the forerunner of today's European Union. Its division in 843 finds echoes in the disputed area of Alsace-Lorraine, which passed into German rule in 1870. Frantz, a young Alsatian who preferred to roam the fields rather than sit in a school room, is surprised to find the classroom

Much literature requires historical knowledge in order to appreciate it fully.

occupied not only by the children, but also by the elders of the village. They have come to attend the last class in French. Tomorrow the village, the province, the people, will pass over into German hands. Tomorrow's lesson will be in German. The schoolmaster leaves them with the admonition that they maintain their language and their culture, and thus preserve their identity (Daudet, 1930, p. 19).

Students on the intermediate level or higher can easily appreciate the simplicity of this story. While the history it involves makes an obvious connection, students can extend their understanding beyond both history and literature. As an interpersonal activity, students might discuss the issue of national identity, and the role played by language and culture. They might begin with the story. How will the children and the villagers feel tomorrow, when they have to speak German? How would you feel if you could no longer speak English (or your own native language, if you came to the United States as an immigrant)? As an essay or a presentation, students might explore the question: How does the language imposed by the conqueror affect the spirit of the people? Examples such as the imposition of Russian on the republics and satellites of the former Soviet Union, or the role of English and French in Africa can provide topics. How does a nation preserve its identity? How can it recover after losing it? In Poland, Ukraine, and Lithuania, national poets such as Adam Mickiewicz reappeared. In France, the image of Jeanne d'Arc re-emerged after 1870, as a motivation for national unity. In Africa, Senghor's poetry returns to the tam-tam, the dance, and nature. What other examples can students offer, and what is the result? They might choose one of these countries based on their national origin, and thus enrich the class by experiences in diversity. Thus, the Connections standard involves not only language and other disciplines, but critical thinking and problem solving as well.

...the Connections standard involves not only language and other disciplines, but critical thinking and problem solving as well.

## Poetry and Art

While critical thinking and problem solving are important phases of education in all disciplines, students should be aware that literature is also an art form. Charles Baudelaire expresses this in a unique way in his poetry. An easily accessible work is his *Invitation au Voyage* [*Invitation to the Voyage*]. Baudelaire himself was a connoisseur of art and wrote numerous commentaries on the Paris *salons*. Students can make connections between art and poetry by examining this poem, as well as others. While he wrote *Invitation* as a love poem, it also affords multiple connections with art, throughout the work and in its refrain:

*Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme, et volupté.* (Baudelaire, 1975, p. 51)

[There everything is only order and beauty,  
Luxury, calm, and pleasure.]

The refrain quoted above inspired artist Henri Matisse, who entitled his work *Luxe, calme, et volupté* [*Luxury, calm, and pleasure*], painted in 1904. In it, he portrays the same dream atmosphere as Baudelaire in a sketch of bathers by the sea,



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with evocative colors and an exotic landscape. Students at the intermediate level and beyond can easily describe the simple sketch and its colors. This can be part of the interpretive reading, as well as the interpersonal communicative activity.

Other sections of the poem offer opportunities for paired or group interpersonal activities. The first stanza addresses the woman as a child and a sister “*Mon enfant, ma sœur,*” and speaks of the misty suns (“*soleils mouillés*”) as it extends the invitation to a sea voyage. Salomon van Ruysdael’s, *Lagune avec un voilier* (1660) [*Lagoon with a Sailboat*] corresponds well with the images created by Baudelaire. The second stanza of the poem reflects the interior of the house to which Baudelaire invites his guest:

*Des meubles luisants,  
Polis par les ans,  
Décoreraient notre chambre;  
Les riches plafonds,  
Les miroirs profonds,  
La splendeur orientale...* (Baudelaire, 1975, p. 51)

[Shining furniture  
Polished by the years  
Would decorate our room;  
Rich ceilings,  
Deep mirrors,  
Oriental splendor...]

Johannes Vermeer’s, *Girl Reading a Letter by an Open Window* (1657-1659), reflects the shining wood polished by time and evokes a rich interior. This section, along with the painting, could also be used to complement a lesson on the home and furniture.

The sunset in the final stanza can be illustrated by Claude Lorraine’s, *Port de mer au coucher du soleil* [*Seaport at sunset*] (1643):

*Les soleils couchants  
Revêtent les champs,  
Les canaux, la ville entière  
D’hyacinthe et or...  
Tout s’endort...* (p. 51)

[The setting suns  
Clothe the fields,  
The canals, the whole city  
In hyacinth and gold...  
All begins to slumber...]

The artist’s blues and gold and the setting sun on the seaport evoke the atmosphere of peace and rest which the poet wished to transmit to his readers. Students might describe the atmosphere of the poem and the painting.

As students make the connections between poetry and art, they may begin to appreciate other works of Baudelaire and find suitable paintings that capture

the same sentiments. They are not to illustrate the poem, but rather to capture its impression, and learn to make the “*correspondances*” that Baudelaire outlined in his famous poem by the same name. Some further suggestions include Baudelaire’s *Parfum exotique* [Exotic Perfume], for which Paul Gaughin’s lush *Paysage martiniquais*, [Landscape in Martinique] (1887), can provide a tropical image, and his *Bords de mer* [Seashores] (1887), which echoes the sailors’ songs that transport Baudelaire to another land. As a presentational activity, students might read the poetry, show the paintings, and add music appropriate to the poem. This could involve several students, featuring artists and musicians among them.

### **Literature in Translation**

The goal of critical thinking leads to the question of literature in translation. We have already noted its role in the implementation of the Connections standard, which invites the learner “to access and *evaluate information and diverse perspectives* that are available through the language and its cultures” (NSFLEP, 2015, p. 56). Learners who are unable to read the material in the original can indeed have access to it through the intervention of the teacher. A person trained in the literature and culture of one or several other languages is best qualified to lead students to their own evaluation of the diverse perspectives the target culture offers, and to help learners make the connections.

### **Memory**

Another example of Connections might occur for students of psychology who could explore the role of memory in human development. They may have heard of Proust and the famous madeleine. Perhaps they have not read the text, which can be rather daunting in any language with its lengthy sentences and frequent abstractions. Proust’s contemporary, Henri Bergson, composed an influential work *Matière et Mémoire* [Matter and Memory], in 1896, which states scientifically as well as philosophically many of Proust’s literary observations. Bergson (1912) provides a basis for Proust’s rejection of voluntary memory: “The process of localizing a recollection in the past, for instance, cannot at all consist, as has been said, in plunging into the mass of our memories as into a bag, to draw out memories, closer and closer to each other, between which the memory to be localized may find its place” (p. 223). He indicates what Proust noted when he drank the cup of tea and ate the madeleine: “But on the lower planes these memories await, so to speak, the dominant image to which they may be fastened. A sharp shock, a violent emotion, forms the decisive event to which they cling” (p. 224).

Proust (1956) records his experience:

And I begin again to ask myself what it could have been, this unremembered state which brought with it no logical proof of its existence, but only the sense that it was a happy, that it was a real state in whose presence other states of consciousness melted and vanished. I decide to attempt to make it reappear. I retrace my thoughts to the moment at which I drank the first spoonful of tea. I find again the same state, illumined by no fresh light. (p. 63)

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He reflects further:

But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, still, alone, more fragile, but with more vitality, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls, ready to remind us, waiting and hoping for their moment, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unfaltering, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection. (p. 65)

In order to appreciate Proust's sensations and Bergson's philosophy, one must not only examine the content of the writing, but the time and place in which they were written. Proust's isolated childhood, his attachment to his mother, his aunt's home in Illiers-Combray, all combine to form the cultural background. Bergson struggled with the nature of memory, trying to demonstrate that it was spiritual rather than material, contrary to current philosophies. While students may learn about both of these authors in other classes, they can best make the appropriate connections through the aid of a teacher proficient in the language and literature. They can also appreciate the affinities between literature, philosophy, and psychology, which otherwise they may not have seen. Although not a foreign language assignment, these readings can follow the model of interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication. Students will need guidance to interpret the readings. They can discuss the passages cited above, and other pertinent pages. They can then give a presentation comparing Bergson's "cone of memory" and Proust's "*madeleine*."

### The Fourth Dimension

Surprisingly, Proust also speaks to the scientist, through affinities that he shares with Albert Einstein. In 1915, Einstein published his theory of general relativity and the notion of space-time with its four dimensions. While it is impossible to illustrate space-time because our minds cannot think in four dimensions, Proust has described it in artistic terms. He speaks of Combray, the people, Tante Léonie's house, and finally the church:

...all these things made of the church for me something entirely different from the rest of the town; *a building which occupied, so to speak, four dimensions of space—the name of the fourth being Time*—which had sailed the centuries with that old nave, where bay after bay, chapel after chapel, seemed to stretch across and hold down and conquer not merely a few yards of soil, but each successive epoch from which the whole building had emerged triumphant,.... (Proust, 1956, pp. 84-85)

The church is a building with length, breadth, height, but also *time*. Without the fourth dimension it could not exist. It has stood through the ages and its stone walls have witnessed generations of men and women who have passed through its portals. Students can often relate similar experiences if they have traveled abroad or visited ancient historical monuments. Once again, scientists can study Einstein and world literature classes can read Proust, but the essential aspect is the

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*connection*, which students may not have seen without the juxtaposition of the two disciplines.

Proust was not unique in exploring the concept of space-time in literature. Another was Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), the Russian philosopher, literary critic, semiotician and scholar who worked on literary theory, ethics, and the philosophy of language. He invented the term “chronotope” to describe the relation of space and time in literature. He defines it thus:

We will give the name chronotope (literally, “time space”) to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. This term [space-time] is employed in mathematics, and was introduced as part of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity. . . . We are borrowing it for literary criticism almost as a metaphor (almost, but not entirely). What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space). We understand the chronotope as a formally constitutive category of literature. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 84)

Bakhtin notes the role of space-time in folklore, stating that “Folkloric man demands space and time for his full realization; he exists entirely and fully in these dimensions and feels comfortable in them. Therefore, the fantastic in folklore is a realistic fantastic: in no way does it exceed the limits of the real, here-and-now material world” (pp. 150-151). An idealistic world with a fixed eschatology, for Bakhtin, is based in the present and the past, and has a vertical timeline, since it does not have an open future. He cites Dante’s *Divine Comedy* as a classic example of the fixed world. The folkloric world, on the other hand, deals with the here and now, and operates on a horizontal timeline with options for the future. Thus, by exploring folktales, students can make the connections between literature and space-time.

### Folktales

Through folktales, students can also make powerful connections by going back to the primitive origins of humankind. Researchers use scientific methods to determine their age, which may be pertinent to students of science and anthropology. Durham University anthropologist Tehrani (Graça da Silva & Tehrani, 2016) claims that *Jack and the Beanstalk* was rooted in a group of stories classified as “The Boy Who Stole Ogre’s Treasure,” (p. 7) and could be traced back to the time when Eastern and Western Indo-European languages split more than 5,000 years ago. He and Graça da Silva used phylogenetic comparative methods to document their findings. In a 2016 article they state, “[*Beauty and the Beast* and *Rumpelstiltskin*] can be securely traced back to the emergence of the major western Indo-European subfamilies as distinct lineages between 2500 and 6000 years ago and may have even been present in the last common ancestor of Western Indo-European languages” (p. 8). They also trace the story of the smith and the devil, one of the oldest known, back

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to the Bronze Age. While this science is in its infancy, Tehrani and Graça da Silva do not dismiss “research into tale types and motifs in Graeco-Roman, Germanic and Celtic mythology (which) support the antiquity of many of the magic tales that were reconstructed in ancestral Indo-European populations” (p. 9). A further exploration of these rich data can provide material for presentational communication, both oral and written.

The world of folklore with its ancient roots offers many opportunities for connections. Students can read the stories in their target language or in translation. Simplified versions are available for less advanced students. More literary options, such as those by Perrault in French, the Brothers Grimm in German, or Afanasiev in Russian, will be suitable for advanced students. Not only do folk tales connect with science such as the space-time principle, or phylogenetic research; the actual stories will promote discussion of topics that are relevant to today’s society, such as child-abuse, discrimination, or identity theft. Modern nations whose independence was suppressed, notably those subsumed by the Soviet Union, have used folklore to assert their identity. This can provide interpersonal communication in pairs or small groups, in the target or native language, depending on the context of the lesson.

The story of *Rumpelstiltskin* tells of the greediness and abuse of a king toward an unsuspecting young woman. Students can find many parallels in history and political science. Graça da Silva and Tehrani’s recent evidence points to the probability of such a story 4000 years ago, so the greed of those in authority is not new! In the many strikingly similar stories of *Rumpelstiltskin*, we also meet a parent who makes exaggerated claims about the child’s talents. Not too unusual—parents often either overestimate or underestimate their offspring. Hansel and Gretel’s parents, in an opposite situation, left no room for the initiative of their children, either out of fear for their own survival or cruelty towards their children. The miller is a braggart who places his fame above his child’s welfare. We also meet a greedy king or prince, who demands an impossible task and who threatens death if the victim does not complete it. Indeed rulers often overtax their poorest subjects and seemingly try to extract gold from straw. More advanced students, or those with a creative bent, might undertake the presentational task of a modern fairy tale with the same or similar themes.

In *Rumpelstiltskin*, the donor or helper does not meet with a reward, as is common according to Vladimir Propp’s (1928) characterization of a folk-tale (p. 23), but is rather the victim of identity theft. Among primitive peoples and throughout the Middle Ages, one’s name was the equivalent of one’s identity. To know the name of a person meant to have power over him or her. The heroine in this cycle is a victim of her father’s and the king’s greed, and she is in a vulnerable if not desperate situation. She must gain power over him by learning his name. This she does, and he disappears, sometimes splitting himself in two, and sometimes simply flying out the window. As Zipes (2010) notes, once we name the forces that threaten us we gain control over them and they all but disappear.

This analysis of personality can provide connections with psychology, among other disciplines. Stories such as *Cinderella* and *Hansel and Gretel*, common to most European and some Asian cultures, can provide connections to many disciplines

and invite students to critical thinking and problem solving. In addition, different versions reflect variations in the societies which have formulated them, leading to a study of anthropology and cultural comparisons. If students read these stories in the original or in translation, they can engage in paired or group discussion on such themes as child abuse, parental responsibility, or sibling rivalry. Presentational communication topics can address the variations in the stories according to the societies in which they are found. For example, one might explore the role of the shoe in *Cinderella*, not found in the Asian versions!

### **Film**

Finally, we can use film to establish connections between disciplines. Marguerite Duras' and Alain Resnais' classic *Hiroshima mon amour* [*Hiroshima my love*] (1959) appeals to science through the construction of the atomic bomb, to psychology with its evocation of memory, and to history with its basis in the Second World War. In addition, the technique of cinematography so carefully orchestrated in the film adds another dimension to its artistic and literary quality. The two actors, a nameless man and woman, speak in short, clipped phrases easily comprehensible in the original or through subtitles. The stark black and white of the film evokes the horrors of war and the mysterious role of memory.

The historic moment that begins the drama is August 7, 1945, when the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima. It expands into the effects of the bomb: destruction, death, physical deformities, not to mention mental anguish. All this is juxtaposed with an artistically crafted image of love-making between a Japanese man and a French woman in August of 1957, when she has come to Hiroshima as an actress in a documentary for peace. He insists that she has seen nothing of the fateful day; she maintains the contrary:

*Lui : Tu n'as rien vu à Hiroshima. Rien.*

*Elle : J'ai tout vu. Tout... Ainsi l'hôpital je l'ai vu. J'en suis sûre. L'hôpital existe à Hiroshima. Comment aurais-je pu éviter de le voir ?*

*Lui : Tu n'as pas vu d'hôpital à Hiroshima. Tu n'as rien vu à Hiroshima...*

*Elle : Je n'ai rien inventé.*

*Lui : Tu as tout inventé. ...*

*Elle : Rien. De même que dans l'amour cette illusion existe, cette illusion de pouvoir ne jamais oublier, de même j'ai eu l'illusion devant Hiroshima que jamais je n'oublierai. De même que dans l'amour.*  
(Duras & Resnais, 1991, pp. 22-23; 28)

[He: You saw nothing at Hiroshima. Nothing.

She: I saw everything. Everything... Even the hospital, I saw it. I am certain. There is a hospital at Hiroshima. How could I miss seeing it?

He: You didn't see any hospital at Hiroshima. You saw nothing at Hiroshima....

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She: I invented nothing.

He: You invented everything.

She: Nothing. Just as this illusion exists in love, this illusion of never being able to forget, I also had this illusion that I will never forget Hiroshima. Just like in love.]

As the drama unfolds, the viewer learns the woman's personal story of her romantic involvement with a German soldier, his death, and her punishment. In fact, through memory, she is able to "see" what the Japanese man has experienced, and both are transposed and connected to the past in this present moment of union.

While the first atomic bomb was constructed in utmost secrecy, the scientific theory behind it is readily accessible. In fact, students will learn it in their physics classes. They can read a summary of the Manhattan Project and view contemporary art related to the events in Gamwell's (2002) *Exploring the Invisible*. The art work of Newman and Rothko is particularly expressive (Gamwell, 2002, pp. 270-271). The text, the paintings, and the film provide obvious connections. They also address the moral issues involved in the use of nuclear armaments. As Cohen (1995-1996) observes, "Continuity in this world of nuclear armament, in other words, requires two things: assumption of guilt for the massive destruction and the waste of human life, and complete identification with the object of mourning. In this sense, *Hiroshima mon amour* is a monument not simply to memory, but to active, responsible, historical remembering" (p. 182).

### Conclusion

When making connections between literature, in the target language or in translation, and other disciplines, it is the student who must see the link. The teacher may act as a catalyst, but it is only if the student actively participates that the required result will occur. Although an interdisciplinary situation is the ideal, any teacher of the target language can invite connections. The teacher does not have to be an expert in any of the disciplines we have discussed. The student can use material from other courses, or do the research individually. Students who may be less gifted in literature and language may be invited to bring their knowledge of other disciplines into the class and share them with others, thus giving them a larger portion of ownership and enabling them to gain a greater sense of accomplishment.

By consciously aligning the study of a target language's literature with the Connections standard, the teacher is drawn to think of the linkages across disciplines and making them visible to the student, thus expanding the power of language learning beyond conversation. Connections enhance the power of language and literature. It puts these content areas on a par with science, history, art, psychology, anthropology, and other disciplines.

When making connections between literature, in the target language or in translation, and other disciplines, it is the student who must see the link. The teacher may act as a catalyst, but it is only if the student actively participates that the required result will occur.

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Knowledge need not be compartmentalized, but rather expanded to include as many areas as possible. Interdisciplinary studies are becoming increasingly more popular. Literature and the arts fit well into any such program. By emphasizing the power of language and literature from the beginning courses, perhaps by a short poem such as Senghor's *Jardin de France*, students may learn to see connections between the language they are studying and another world with its natural beauty that has undergone the ravages of conquest and the struggles for independence.

Literature in translation can provide a window into the target culture and its language. The teacher who knows the language can explain the use of certain terms, share the original for particularly meaningful expressions, and even use a few words in the target language. In some cases, this may motivate the student to learn the language, or continue with it. In others, it will promote respect for the language and the target culture, especially if the student sees the literature in relation to other areas.

Students tend to think in isolated and compartmentalized segments. Making connections between literature and other disciplines will help them to see a fuller picture, if not the complete one. No one discipline will bring a solution to the problems we face as a society, but a combination of them will offer a better alternative. One can see a more accurate picture of the danger of nuclear weapons by looking at them through the lens of film in *Hiroshima mon amour*, science in the construction of the bomb, history in the actual events and their consequences, art in their figurative representation, and psychology in the role of memory. If we teach our students to think globally, approaching an issue through as many avenues as possible, we will have made an important contribution to education. We will approach the goal of the *Connections* standard, where we use the language and its culture to help learners think critically and solve problems creatively.

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## France 2 Television News for Cultural Learning, Critical Thinking, and Language Practice: Steps Toward Intercultural Capability

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### Abstract

This article describes a modular set of activities based on television news for teaching French language, cultural knowledge, and intercultural capability. The latter term echoes Lantolf and Poehner's symbolic capability (2007), a teaching and learning goal that the author considers more holistic and feasible than the more commonly used term Intercultural Competence (or IC). Generally speaking, the instructional strategies described here are best used to produce supplementary or complementary modules or lessons in courses whose principal focus is not news or current events. This modular strategy can offer significant opportunities for language practice, cultural learning, and culturally-focused critical thinking. In the modular lesson, a carefully-chosen but authentic, unedited, and non-subtitled news report, typically two to five minutes long, forms the basis for a fifty-to seventy-five-minute session, with follow-up activities. The lesson's structured sequence of viewing, listening, discussion, and debate exercises with follow-up speaking, research, or writing activities is presented in this article, which comments on ways in which this approach supports intercultural models like Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1993), Byram's Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997), and the culture components of the *World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). It also evokes challenges inherent in models of intercultural learning and conceptual and practical shortcomings that shape assessment of intercultural capabilities. Finally, it suggests that this television news-based approach, used

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jointly with a model of intercultural learning that is informed by cognitive science and an attitude of intellectual humility, may offer a productive approach for promoting the intercultural capability in the language classroom and in students' lifelong learning.

## **Introduction**

There are many challenges for teachers of foreign languages in the early twenty-first century. They face what might seem like a virtual obstacle course made up of a long string of tasks and obligations. In fact, language teachers must do far more than teach language. They must weave together and harmonize divergent criteria informing their teaching, varying pedagogical models, and sometimes imposed methods or approaches, all in the expectation of developing students' target language skills, cultural knowledge, open-mindedness, and curiosity about other cultures. Finally, they must develop their students' ability to navigate L2 encounters in the target culture. Foreign language teachers seek to align their work with the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (W-RSFL) (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), including "Culture," while keeping an eye on the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL] Proficiency Guidelines (2012). Many are also called upon to meet Common Core State Standards and other state requirements. Additionally, language teachers often feel a deep need to meet personal criteria for teaching. Some want to ignite students' enthusiasm for learning about other languages and cultures and most want to prepare them for life and work as competent global citizens in a complex, multilingual, multicultural world.

In this complex mix, the broadly used and generally accepted notion of Intercultural Competence [IC] sounds like a helpful and powerful umbrella concept for doing many, if not all, of these things. While it may seem easy or obvious to promote and development intercultural competence in language learning, actually attaining IC can be a slippery endeavor when it is a term with multiple understandings, dimensions, and aspects. It can also take on the appearance of a nearly impossible-to-meet challenge. For this reason, it may be helpful instead for teachers to think in terms of fostering students' intercultural capability. The teaching approach evoked in this article may provide teachers with a general model, a set of strategies, and a few insights into helpful ways that they might foster the development of intercultural capability in their students.

While it may seem easy or obvious to promote and development intercultural competence in language learning, actually attaining IC can be a slippery endeavor when it is a term with multiple understandings, dimensions, and aspects.

## **Developing Students' Intercultural Capability: A Strategy Using News Media**

The strategy described here has been developed and classroom tested over time by two teachers at different universities seeking to implement learning activities that would help students develop speaking, listening, and writing

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skills while integrating substantive cultural learning and fostering cross-cultural understanding. The approach was developed parallel to, but not necessarily explicitly informed by, the IC models referenced here. In brief, the strategy is to use well-selected recent television news reports for intensive language work, for communicating cultural information, for promoting critical thinking about media and news-based representations of the contemporary world, and for developing students' understanding of target culture perspectives. This strategy is best used in an iterative fashion, giving both teachers and learners multiple opportunities to practice the approach using a variety of thematic content. While it does require significant preparation on the part of the teacher in order to be effective, it stands to yield quite positive results. Teachers should be comfortable with both the target culture and students' native culture(s). They should also be attentive to students' motivation and learning needs and hold expectations that include preparing students for working with intellectually and linguistically challenging content. When students first encounter activities based on television news, it can be frustrating because they are interacting with authentic cultural artifacts and native speakers of the language; however, with regular practice, lessons created using the approach described here lead to significant learning outcomes.

One of the advantages of this instructional strategy is that it generally avoids one of the pitfalls of early implementations of the culture standards—what Fox and Diaz-Greenburg (2006), following Sleeter and Grant (2002) and Banks (2002), call the “Four F’s” (that is, offering little more than a superficial treatment of discrete kinds of knowledge about target-culture: Food, Fashion, Festivals, and Folklore). The strategy evoked here draws on information-rich authentic content that has been crafted for target-culture consumers. Using authentic documents drawn from mainstream, high-quality news media, in this case, the France 2 evening newscast, allows teachers and students to engage with readily available, significant, and up-to-date linguistic and cultural content that can be structured in a way that facilitates meaningful, effective communication and learning. It is, in effect, a strategy for “drinking from the fire hose” by carefully capturing and processing manageable doses of news that may be chosen to fit the thematic focus of a course in which the modular lessons are used. This approach has demonstrated itself to be effective for the teachers who use it somewhat differently, at different institutions, in multiple courses that have varying content and learning objectives. This suggests that this approach may be viable for adaptation to a variety of instructional needs.

It is an instructional strategy that emerged organically and has proven effective and sustainable, although its efficacy has not yet been formally measured. Our view of its effectiveness derives from anecdotal evidence, subjective student responses, and a perceived general pattern of student success in subsequent courses. This article provides a practical description of the instructional strategy, with some theoretical considerations and comments on implications for IC standards and for teacher training.

Using authentic documents drawn from mainstream, high-quality news media ... allows teachers and students to engage with readily available, significant, and up-to-date linguistic and cultural content that can be structured in a way that facilitates meaningful, effective communication and learning.

Before proceeding to a description of the concrete steps for creating and using these kinds of news media anchored lessons, there are some provisos. A teacher's ability to teach current events content and to foster cross-cultural reflection is crucial. This strategy may be most appropriate for teachers who have significant knowledge of the target culture, who are in the habit of following target-language news, and who know how to foster and sustain student engagement with challenging materials. Finally, like most new practices involving technology, while it requires a significant investment of time and energy at the outset, over multiple iterations, it becomes easier to integrate as a systematic building block of instruction.

What is important in this approach is the way in which it treats language skills, cultural knowledge, cultural perspective, and news literacy in a holistic manner, rather than treating culture as a simple adjunct to language instruction or assuming that literacy is an automatic consequence of it. This instructional strategy echoes other holistic approaches that treat language, culture, and literacy as aspects of a single integral phenomenon, such as Lantolf and Poehner's symbolic capability (2007), Warford and White's (2012) Second Symbolic Competencies model or Liddicoat and Scarino's (2013) Intercultural Language Learning. What is more, by teaching from contemporary authentic documents—recent television news reports—this strategy assures that the lexical and conceptual elements that students actively process, along with the general patterns of verbal language that they sample multiple times to extract both denotative meaning and contextual clues, are drawn directly from the target culture. This approach is optimized for helping students develop intercultural understanding not only in the form of explicit knowledge, but also in the form of increasing awareness of the conscious and unconscious cognitive interpretive underpinnings that are shaped by one's native cultural experience. The approach is well-suited for developing intercultural capability, drawing on authentic language inputs to develop sensitivity and understanding and authentic content and context to inform student language production and reflection. Students have the potential to realize, through hearing a variety of speech samples, that there exists in any target language (French, in this case) a range of acceptable speaking styles and accents. Additionally, because the approach uses authentic documents to provide information about events, perspectives, practices, and products in French society, it aligns with the Culture objectives of the W-RSFL. It aligns fully with the Knowledge element of the International Learning Outcomes that the American Council on Education [ACE] originally articulated in 2008 (see the list adapted in Deardorff 2017, p. 113, table 9.1, also available as a downloadable worksheet on the ACE website).

The approach is well-suited for developing intercultural capability, drawing on authentic language inputs to develop sensitivity and understanding and authentic content and context to inform student language production and reflection.

The use of an authentic news document, processed and interpreted through work in a quasi-anthropological and comparative stance, supports the development of what Byram (1997) calls “knowledge of rules,” “skills of interpreting and

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relating,” and “critical cultural awareness” (p. 88-90), It contributes to Byram’s attitude factors, particularly the ability to decenter oneself and to be open to difference (pp. 42, 83). Furthermore, in combination with extension exercises and sustained practice in investigating France and French culture through its media, this instructional strategy contributes to the development of what Byram (1997) calls “skills of discovery and interaction” (pp. 34, 35-37). In short, this modular way of teaching from television news video aligns quite well with Byram’s Intercultural Communicative Competence model.

It is compatible, as well, with Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity [DMIS] (1993), a descriptive set of socio-cognitive stages that people generally experience during intercultural learning or kinds of encounters with other cultures. Although Bennet’s model does not incorporate world languages specifically, it does provide a framework that ranges from Denial of Difference, where one believes one’s native culture to be the sole valid one; to Minimization or Acceptance, which is the equivalent of disregarding differences to find common ground or accepting multiple cultural perspectives as valid and valuable; to Adaptation and Integration, offering expanded worldviews in which other cultural perspectives and practices are valued and employed. In this phase, one’s sense of self is not centered on any single culture, and but one can adjust readily and smoothly to diverse cultural contexts. By asking students to note differences and to explore perspectives on current events within the target culture, this strategy seeks to foster the development of the more expansive worldviews of the DMIS.

The strategy supports the Culture standards articulated in the W-RSFL (2.1, relating practices to perspectives and 2.2, relating products to perspectives). When successfully employed, the approach can contribute to all of the ACE 2008 intercultural learning outcomes as represented in Garrett-Rucks (2016): *Knowledge* (understanding culture in a global and comparative context; knowledge of global issues, trends and systems; knowledge of other cultures, values, perspectives, practices, products); *Skills* (using cultural frames of reference to think critically and solve problems, communicating and connecting with others with both productive and receptive language skills, using L2 to access information and increase understanding); and *Attitudes* (appreciation of language, art, religion, philosophy, and material culture; accepting cultural differences; tolerating cultural ambiguity; demonstrating willingness to seek out international or intercultural opportunities).

When this way of teaching is employed in a consistent, skillful, and sustained way to inform language classes, it can help students make progress of increasing intercultural capability. While this configuration of content and activities was originally conceived and shaped by pedagogical concerns and teaching imperatives that were independent of (and parallel to) the models devised and promulgated by Bennett, Byram, the American Council on Education, and ACTFL (as well as other language specific organizations), this teaching practice has, over time, been influenced by and converged with these different models of intercultural learning. Like them, it seeks to facilitate what Byram refers to as decentering (1997, p. 42).

This strategy, or model, can help students realize that their attitudes and values are shaped by their socio-cultural and linguistic background and begin to see that there are other valid perspectives that exist beyond their own. It helps students better understand the world as complex and varied. It inculcates intellectual openness and curiosity, while providing knowledge and frameworks for developing a fuller and more complex understanding of the target culture(s). While research remains to be done to document the efficacy of this kind of modular approach using television news, there is, nonetheless, grounding for this approach in the context of current standards for teaching French as a foreign language in the United States, particularly at the intermediate (third and fourth semesters of college French) and the conversation (fifth or sixth semester of college French) levels. This approach has the potential for adaptation to other languages and levels if appropriate news media are available to support it.

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### **Creating the Lesson**

In this section, the strategy under discussion is presented in broad terms. It will be followed by an example from a conversation course. The steps for creating a lesson are relatively straightforward and with practice and experience they become easier to carry out. The first step is to select a news document on which to base the lesson. In this case, choosing an appropriate news report is facilitated by the availability of the France 2 and France Info websites, which include indexes and descriptions of most of the news video content, including segmentation of complete newscasts into individual news reports. The selection criteria we used in devising this approach sought to identify short reports on events or trends that have obvious social impacts, that evoke target-culture values, or that raise questions about national character or social identity. Additionally, we believed that such news reports should include some sort of debatable or controversial aspect in order to elicit conversation, questioning, and points for comparison.. Themes that we have found to be fruitful include art (e.g., the exhibition of work by Jeff Koontz at the Versailles Palace), cultural heritage (e.g., UNESCO's choosing the French gastronomic meal to be placed on its list of humanity's immaterial cultural heritage), ethical debates (e.g., laws allowing euthanasia in other countries), general anxiety about sweeping social change or innovations (e.g., French ambivalence about automation in workplaces, marketplaces and public services).

Once a news report that seems likely to generate reflection, dialogue, and debate has been chosen, screen-capture software can be used to record the streamed news video. (A movie file can be archived and is easier to use in class than a streamed video.) After creating this digital artifact, it is helpful for the teacher to transcribe all spoken language in the report. The transcription is not intended to be shared with students; rather, it helps the teacher prepare the lesson. The transcription allows the teacher to more readily note the vocabulary, background information,



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and concepts that students are likely to need help understanding. Taking the time to do a full transcription makes the job of preparing certain activities (e.g., generating a quasi-Cloze listening exercise) easier.

With the transcription, the teacher can then prepare learning activities in the form of a document for students' use. This document typically includes a list of vocabulary that may offer explanations, illustrations, or synonyms (or in some cases, glosses in English). Generally, it also offers at least one priming or pre-listening exercise in which students might be asked to anticipate content based on the vocabulary list, to summon their own conceptual or linguistic resources relative to a particular facet of the report, or to imagine themselves in a particular situation related to the report. In-class activities might include a focused listening exercise (e.g., a Cloze-like passage based on the transcription, preferably featuring a person-on-the-street interview, testimony from a witness or a comment from an expert, or someone else whose voice is different from the reporters'). Other kinds of comprehension checks may be added to the document or be evoked via oral prompts (e.g., asking for students to provide a gist, eliciting details, asking students to characterize the sociolinguistic register of certain speakers or asking them to identify particular vocabulary items or language features).

The heart of in-class work is discussion or debate activities, which may be explained in the document or framed via oral prompts, as will be described in the following section. Finally, the lesson ought to include some sort of follow-up exercise, such as a reflective journal prompt, a research question, a group project that would allow students to explore the matters mentioned in the report more fully, or another kind of extension exercise that seems appropriate for the students, the course focus, and the course level. Following in-class work in interpretive and interpersonal modes in class, extension exercises can also give students practice in the presentational mode and encourage deeper reflection. Moreover, this approach can incorporate writing opportunities, with brief writing tasks in class being followed by long-form writing assignments and reflective journals outside of class. Other potential sorts of follow-up that might build on the strengths of the in-class work for developing both L2 skills and intercultural capability include, for example, blogging (Elola & Oskoz, 2008), student-produced digital news stories (Lee, 2014), forming communities of inquiry or pursuing project-based learning (Wu, Hsieh & Yang, 2017; Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Yang, 2013), ethnographic interviews (Bateman 2004), and email exchanges with native speakers (Bohinski & Leventhal, 2015). Generally speaking, this approach is relatively flexible and can be combined with many other strategies. Further examples and suggestions appear in the following section and in the Appendix.

### A Sample Lesson

A unit prepared and used in April 2015 offers one illustration of how this approach works. This section evokes a lesson used in a fifth-semester college conversation course (with seven students enrolled), drawing on a series of news reports about a presumed terrorist who was allegedly planning to attack two churches in Villejuif, in the southern part of greater Paris, with guns and explosives.

Those plans were foiled on April 19, 2015, and the incident was revealed to the public three days later. A series of reports about the plot and about the suspect aired on France 2's evening news on Wednesday, April 22, 2015. The lesson, which took one seventy-five-minute period and about half of another, was based largely on the following two-minute report about Sid Ahmed Ghlam, the man arrested and interrogated about his terrorist intentions, and about police surveillance of this Algerian immigrant for approximately two years before the planned attack (Boisseau et al., 2015). An archived copy of the news video may be found here:

[https://www.francetvinfo.fr/faits-divers/terrorisme/video-qui-est-sid-ahmed-ghlam-suspecte-d-avoir-projete-de-commettre-un-attentat-a-paris\\_884047.html](https://www.francetvinfo.fr/faits-divers/terrorisme/video-qui-est-sid-ahmed-ghlam-suspecte-d-avoir-projete-de-commettre-un-attentat-a-paris_884047.html)

In the following four sections, a description of how the module was created and taught appears, illustrating the instructional strategy. Comments on learning outcomes and student engagement concludes the description of this specific lesson.

### 1. Selecting the news report

In this case, major aspects of this report that made it seem appropriate were its immediacy and its pertinence. It referred to an emerging current event that echoed another incident already treated in class, the terrorist attack on the offices of *Charlie Hebdo* on 7 January 2015. It also invited students to delve further into a significant minority religious identity and community in France (Muslims). It allowed the teacher to contrast the French experience with the Muslim world with that of the United States, as well as differences in law enforcement and domestic intelligence.<sup>1</sup> The report raised questions about tensions between the protection of privacy versus police surveillance, and about the efficacy of domestic surveillance for assuring state security.

In short, the events and the report about Ghlam raised debatable issues in which there were likely to be noticeable differences between French and American points of view. The piece also presented three distinct voices (a reporter, a witness, and an expert). What is more, the visual style of the piece seemed likely to draw student attention. It was clear at the outset that a significant portion of the vocabulary would be challenging for students in the course. In general, however, the language and the gist of the report seemed sufficiently straightforward that students could understand them with some lexical support and guided listening. For all of these reasons, it was a good choice for creating a modular lesson created with this instructional strategy.

### 2. Transcription

After selecting the news report, I completed a transcription of the spoken language of the report. This textual version of the report facilitated the preparation of a lexical list to support student comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. It also helped me prepare focused listening activities. In general, transcriptions serve as a first step toward creating materials and activities based on the news report but are not themselves intended for consumption by students. In the following, the transcription is presented, accompanied by screen shots to help readers of this

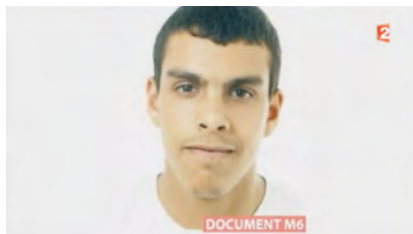
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article understand visual clues that helped shape the student listening and viewing experience. The reporter's voice is in a boldface and italics and the voices of the brother-in-law and of the police representative, the witness, and the expert whose testimony the journalist incorporates into his report, are in italics. A translation of the transcribed French language appears in brackets.

Transcript (with images and translations)



***La maison des parents de Sid Ahmed Glahm. C'est ici à Saint-Dizier***  
[Sid Ahmed Glahm's parents house. It is



***que le jeune homme suspecté de préparer un attentat***  
[that the young man suspected of planning



***avait ses attaches, sa famille, et qu'il évoquait parfois sa vision radicale de l'Islam, selon son beau-frère:***  
[had his attachments, his family, and where he sometimes evoked a radical vision of Islam, according to his brother-in-law:]



***Moi, il me considérait pas comme un musulman parce que... pour lui j'étais pas un bon musulman, euh,***  
[He didn't consider me to be a Muslim because ... for him, I was not a good Muslim, um,]



***voilà quoi, parce que j'suis pratiquant normal. Je désavoue totalement ce qu'il a fait.***  
[yeah, well, because I'm just a regular practicing Muslim. I totally disavow what he did.]



***Selon nos informations, la compagne du suspect habite également à Saint-Dizier.***  
[According to our sources, the suspect's girlfriend/partner also lives in Saint-Dizier.]



*Elle a été placée en garde à vue ce matin, et son domicile perquisitionné, comme le montre cette image.*

[She was placed in detention this morning, and her home searched, as this image shows.]



*un pays qu'il quitte en 2001 avec sa mère, pour la France.*

[a country that he left in 2001 with his mother, moving to France.]



*En 2011 le jeune homme commence des études d'électronique*

[In 2011, the young man begins studying electronics]



*Sid Ahmed Glahm est né en Algérie il y a vingt-quatre ans,*

[Sid Ahmed Glahm was born in Algeria twenty-four years ago,]



*À Saint-Dizier il rejoint son père. Une procédure de regroupement familial.*

[In Saint-Dizier, he joins his father. A process of family regrouping.]



*dans cette école de la Tour Montparnasse à Paris, une formation qu'il abandonne deux ans plus tard.*

[at this school in the Montparnasse Tower in Paris, training that he abandons two years later.]



*C'est en 2014 que Sid Ahmed Glahm est repéré par les services de renseignement français.*

[It's in 2014 that Sid Ahmed Glahm comes to the attention of French intelligence services.]



*et le placent en garde à vue à son retour pendant quatre jours.*

[and place him in detention for four days on his return.]



*une fiche "S" comme on l'appelle.*

[a fiche "S" as it is called (a file for gathering information about a person considered to be a security risk).]



*Il se rend en Turquie. Les enquêteurs le soupçonne d'avoir rencontré des islamistes radicaux,*

[He goes to Turkey. The investigators suspect that he met Islamic radicals]



*Durant son interrogatoire, le jeune homme affirme s'être rendu en Syrie. Les policiers décident alors d'établir une fiche de renseignement à son égard,*

[While being questioned, he admitted that he had traveled to Syria. At that time, the police decide to set up an intelligence file about him,]



*Lorsque vous faites l'objet d'une fiche "S", et bien, cela permet lorsque vous êtes contrôlé dans un aéroport ou lorsque vous êtes contrôlé dans un véhicule, par exemple, de savoir avec qui vous êtes, ce que vous faites, et là où vous allez, et ce qui permet en fait de vous pister.*

[When you are the focus of a fiche "S," it means that when you go through an identity check at the airport or in a vehicle, it allows (the police) to know who you are, what you are doing, where you are going, and it allows (the police) to track you.]



**Sid Ahmed Glahm est surveillé,**  
[Sid Ahmed Glahm is placed under surveillance,]



**mais les enquêteurs ne relève aucun élément laissant présager un acte terroriste.**  
[but the investigators detect nothing allowing them to foresee a terrorist act.]



**En 2015 le jeune homme effectue un deuxième séjour en Turquie.**  
[In 2015, the young man travels a second time to Turkey.]



**Au retour, il est une nouvelle fois placé sous surveillance. Là encore, rien ne justifiait son interpellation.**  
[On his return, he is once more placed under surveillance. Yet again, there was nothing justifying detention or interrogation.]

Working from the transcription, with an awareness of students' linguistic abilities, cultural knowledge, needs and limits, I prepared a *fiche lexicale*, two focused listening activities, and multiple comprehension questions and reflection prompts, as follows.

### 3. Creating materials for students

The materials for this lesson included the following, which follows: vocabulary list (*fiche lexicale*); focused listening and comprehension exercises; broader comprehension prompts; debate and reflection prompts; follow-up activities.

#### Fiche lexicale

*un attentat* = une attaque terroriste, un acte de violence inattendu et, en général, massif et choquant  
*une attache, des attaches* = une relation, un lien avec des personnes, des lieux ou des objets  
*un beau-frère* = le mari de la soeur ou le frère de l'épouse. (Jean-François, qui

est le frère de ma femme, est mon beau-frère. Je me suis marié avec sa soeur. Je suis donc son beau-frère.)  
*un musulman, une musulmane* = un ou une personne qui croit aux doctrines de l'islam, une personne qui pratique cette religion

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*un pratiquant, une pratiquante* = une personne qui pratique une religion, qui participe régulièrement aux cérémonies religieuses

*désavouer* = dire publiquement qu'on n'est pas d'accord, qu'on désapprouve [quelqu'un ou les actions de quelqu'un], prendre une distance avec quelqu'un, couper les relations avec quelqu'un.

*une compagne* = une femme avec qui un homme habite, sans qu'ils soient mariés

*un domicile* = une maison, un logement où l'on réside, où l'on vit

*perquisitionner* = entrer dans une maison, avec une autorisation légale, pour chercher des traces ou des preuves d'actes criminels ou pour obtenir des informations pendant une enquête (une investigation) policière

*Une procédure de regroupement familial* = procédure pour remettre ensemble des membres d'une famille qui ont été séparés (souvent pendant une migration ou un départ en exil)

*une formation* = un ensemble d'expériences éducatives pour préparer une carrière ou un métier

*repérer; se faire repérer, être repéré* = remarquer, voir quelque chose qui est caché; attirer l'attention, surtout des policiers ou des surveillants

*les services de renseignement* = service de police qui obtient et qui garde dans des archives des renseignements (informations) sur des citoyens qui sont soupçonnés d'être capables de commettre un crime, service de police qui surveille tout le monde.

*soupçonner* = avoir des suspicions, croire que quelqu'un a fait quelque chose de destructif ou de criminel

*un islamiste, des islamistes* = quelqu'un qui est musulman et qui croit à une version très politicisée et extrême de l'Islam; quelqu'un qui veut imposer aux autres personnes sa version extrême de l'Islam ou qui veut provoquer une révolution en faveur

de cette version de l'Islam. (Souvent, les islamistes détestent la culture européenne, la tolérance religieuse et la démocratie.)

*radical, radicaux* = quelqu'un qui a des idées extrémistes et qui veut faire des actions en faveur de ses idées extrêmes

*placer en garde à vue* = garder dans une station de police pendant un temps limité une personne qui est soupçonnée d'être un criminel ou de connaître les détails d'un acte criminel et pendant cette période, les policiers questionnent la personne qui est détenue.

*un interrogatoire* = processus formel de questionnement, en général par des policiers ou les autorités légales

*se rendre [dans un pays]* = y aller

*une fiche de renseignement* = un dossier d'information sur une personne qui est considérée comme suspecte ou potentiellement dangereuse

*une fiche "S"* = un dossier d'information spécifiquement pour les personnes que l'on soupçonne de tendances islamistes ou terroristes

*à l'égard de [quelqu'un]* = relative à [quelqu'un], ou bien au sujet de [quelqu'un]

*syndicat de police* = organisation qui représente les policiers en tant qu'employés et en tant que professionnels

*lorsque* = synonyme de "quand"

*contrôler; se faire contrôler, être contrôlé* = vérifier l'identité, le statut légal ou les documents de quelqu'un, vérifier la légalité de la voiture que l'on conduit, interroger brièvement quelqu'un; avoir l'expérience d'être confronté par des policiers qui demandent les papiers d'identité et posent des questions

*pister; se faire pister, être pisté* = traquer, suivre, faire une enquête sur; être pisté, c'est être sous surveillance, être observé et suivi [par les policiers]

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*un enquêteur* = quelqu'un qui fait une enquête, professionnel qui fait une recherche sous l'autorité judiciaire

*placer [quelqu'un] sous surveillance* = décider de suivre et d'observer [quelqu'un] systématiquement mais discrètement

*interpellation* = questionnement ou interrogatoire par un policier, souvent lors d'un contrôle, qui mène potentiellement à une arrestation

### Réflexions avant de visionner

- Dans quelles sortes de circonstances la surveillance systématique d'un citoyen est-elle justifiée?
- Après l'attentat aux bureaux de *Charlie Hebdo* en janvier 2015, les musulmans en France doivent-ils avoir moins de droits à une protection de la vie privée qu'avant l'attentat? Doit-on soupçonner ou surveiller tous les musulmans de France? Est-ce possible de surveiller tous les musulmans qui vivent en France?
- Qu'est-ce que la "radicalisation"? Quelles sortes de personnes sont susceptibles d'être radicalisées? Comment peut-on détecter les signes de radicalisation?
- Quelles sont les ex-colonies française où l'Islam est la religion la plus importante?

### A l'écoute

Écoutez les extraits de la vidéo, puis complétez les deux passages

A. *témoin (le beau-frère)*

Moi, il me \_\_\_\_\_ pas comme un \_\_\_\_\_ parce que... pour lui j'étais pas un \_\_\_\_\_ musulman, euh, voilà quoi, parce que j'suis \_\_\_\_\_ normal. Je \_\_\_\_\_ totalement ce qu'il a fait.

B. *expert (le policier)*

\_\_\_\_\_ vous faites l'objet d'une fiche "S", et bien, cela permet, lorsque vous êtes \_\_\_\_\_ dans un aéroport ou lorsque vous êtes \_\_\_\_\_ dans un véhicule, par exemple, de savoir avec qui vous \_\_\_\_\_, ce que vous faites, et là où vous allez, et ce qui permet en fait de vous \_\_\_\_\_.

### Comprenez-vous?

- Où est né le suspect?
- Quand est-il arrivé en France?
- Quelles sortes d'études a-t-il faites?
- Pourquoi les policiers ont-ils décidé de le classer fiche "S"?
- Quelles sont les autres personnes affectées par l'arrestation de Sid Ahmed Glahm?



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### A discuter

- La surveillance de Sid Ahmed Glahm était-elle justifiée? Pourquoi?
- En notant que la surveillance de Sid Ahmed Glahm n'a pas permis de découvrir son projet d'attentat, le statut de fiché "S" était-ce justifié? Était-ce efficace?
- Si vous appreniez que vous étiez l'objet d'une fiche "S", que feriez-vous? Comment réagiriez-vous?
- Que pensez-vous du témoignage du beau-frère de Sid Ahmed Glahm?
- Quelles autres choses remarquez-vous? Qu'est-ce qui vous frappe ou vous étonne?
- Quelles question avez-vous?

### Débat

- Faut-il surveiller tous les musulmans résidant en France qui voyagent en Turquie? Pourquoi?
- Est-ce que la radicalisation doit être considérée comme criminelle? (NB: La radicalisation peut exister au niveau de la pensée, au niveau de la communication ou du discours, au niveau du recrutement ou au niveau des actes ou des intentions terroristes.)

### Pour aller plus loin

- Recherche: Combien de musulmans y a-t-il en France? Quelle pourcentage de la population s'identifie comme musulman?
- Recherche: Combien de musulmans français sont partis en Turquie? Combien se sont installés en Syrie avec le groupe Daech (État Islamique)?
- Réflexion: Pourquoi tant de jeunes musulmans sont-ils susceptibles d'être recrutés par les groupes islamistes? Pourquoi sont-ils tellement désenchantés de leur vie en France? Que faut-il que l'état français essaie de faire pour lutter contre le recrutement des jeunes musulmans?

### 4. Teaching the lesson

This lesson was lively, with a high level of student engagement over one-and-a-half class periods. Students completed the comprehension exercises successfully during the first class period, viewing the report multiple times, asking and answering questions. As part of the listening exercises, I invited students to identify language features that seemed irregular or puzzling. Students noted that the language of the brother-in-law was quite different from the rest of the speech in the report. They particularly noted the lack of a *ne* in the negative, the contraction of *je* and *suis* (*j'suis* or *ch'suis*) and the interjection of *euh* and *voilà quoi*. They recognized these features as informal speech, generally not considered careful or polished ways of speaking. They noted the contrast with the police representative's somewhat more careful speech and sociolinguistic register. (Students cited the use of *lorsque* rather than *quand* and said that his speech seemed to most students to be more precisely articulated.)

On completing the initial listening and comprehension exercises, the lesson did not proceed smoothly through the pre-planned debate and reflection prompts. Nor did students focus as much on the visuals in the latter part of the video as I had anticipated. They accepted, largely without comment, the superposition of voice waveforms over an image of a man speaking on a cell phone and an animated background including changing strings of binary code and a pair of hands typing at a keyboard in the background behind a photo of Sid Ahmed Glahm. Instead, students interrupted the planned flow of the lesson to ask their own questions, mostly along two major lines of inquiry. First, they were particularly interested getting me to speculate about Sid Ahmed Glahm's motivations. (I demurred and told them that one of their reflection activities would be to investigate and to think about that question.) The other major focal point of students' questions were shots of a police representative, shown in civilian clothes, walking down the street, followed by the interview of the policeman in the street, clearly in front of a bar. Those shots, which students contrasted with the mostly static shot of Glahm's brother-in-law's legs, and with typical presentations of policemen in US news reports, excited their interest and presented an opportunity to shift the thrust of the lesson.

What struck the students was what they perceived as a surprising contrast between the intellectual content of the police representative's speech, which seemed appropriate for a police expert, and his clothing, which did not seem police-like to the students. They were surprised by the visual style of the presentation of the policeman, showing him walking down the street in a scene that some students thought looked cinematic. They were also astonished that the interview took place in the street, in front of what was very clearly a bar. It led to a speculative discussion about the journalists' and news producers' thinking about police officers and their contexts. Students collectively arrived at the conclusion that the French must consider police officers as social human beings first and foremost. For French journalists, they said, representing police expertise or a police perspective does not eclipse a policeman's personal sense of style. Nor does it overshadow his social presence as a person with a certain taste in clothing. In US news, on the other hand, students suggested, police representatives are almost always depicted in a uniform (or, more rarely, in a suit and tie), almost always at a crime scene or in some sort of controlled or official environment (at a podium, in a police station or other public area). They suggested that French news professionals recognize a level of personal identity and social presence in police officers, whereas US news tends to reduce police to their professional roles, symbolized by the uniform. Students recognized at the same time that the discourse of the police representative in this report was similar to what police or intelligence service spokespersons might say in a report on American television. Students recognized that their own expectations had been shaped by US news practices, acknowledging that French journalists and news consumers have expectations and criteria that diverge from those of their American counterparts. They concluded that the French, generally speaking, see and present individual police experts as human beings who happen to work for the police, rather than as a dispassionate and largely depersonalized incarnation of police expertise or information-dispensing authority.

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Students also noticed that Glahm's brother-in-law was presented in a very different manner. A majority of the students said that they believed that the journalist was protecting his privacy by hiding his identity, which is why viewers see only his hands, torso, legs, shoes and other clothing. That, they hypothesized, was the principal reason he was not presented as an individual with distinct taste and style. Other students suggested that there might be a degree of bias in the representation of the brother-in-law, where he seems reduced to a somewhat stereotypical representation of a Muslim as dressing in traditional white clothing, including a tunic. Other students pointed out that he was also wearing more typical French or Western clothing (his coat, his athletic shoes). Two students also suggested that he might be less educated. They argued this point based on clues in his verbal expression (*voilà quoi*, the lack of a *ne* in *Moi, il me considérait pas*), signs that some students took to mean that his education level and his socioeconomic class were different from the journalist's and the policeman's. For that reason, students thought, the journalist might not have much consideration for his taste in general or for his sartorial presentation, and therefore not present him in the same visual manner as Patrice Ribeiro, the policeman, whose clothes and status may have seemed more interesting or worthy of attention to the journalist. I conceded that there were differences in the speech of Glahm's brother-in-law, and that those differences might signify a difference of social class; I avowed that it might have influenced the way the journalist viewed and represented him. However, I also reminded students that they did not have a sufficient basis for judging the brother-in-law's social class or taste or for evaluating the journalist's presentation of the man's words. Students agreed that the policeman, as an expert, probably had greater status as a part of the story than someone who was a bystander witness, and therefore received more careful and favorable attention from the journalists. At any rate, students also noted that the mix of what seemed to be traditional Muslim garb and Western clothing (coat, athletic shoes), which they thought sent a mixed message about the status of the brother-in-law. His presentation by the journalist might have been informed by stereotyping, they thought, but did not seem to be purely stereotypical, the students concluded.

As time ran out, students were tasked with investigating the Muslim population of France as a percentage of the total population, and instructed to seek information about how many Muslims had been arrested for presumed terrorism, how many seem to have traveled to Turkey or Syria, and how many had been designated as *fiche 'S'*. Most students did Internet searches about the Muslim population of France and about the number or proportion of Muslims assumed to have acted in ways that identified them as radicalized. A few also investigated causes of resentment or disenchantment with French society that may have contributed to radicalization among Muslim youth, particularly young men like Glahm.

The next class period began with student expressions of surprise at the relative size of the Muslim population of France, estimated between approximately five and seven million in of a total national population of sixty-five million, or approximately 7% to 11%, which contrasts with the state of affairs in the United States, where there are approximately three million Muslim citizens or permanent

residents, comprising about 1% of the total population (Central Intelligence Agency, 2017). They were also surprised that proportionately more French citizens or residents are believed to have joined or attempted to join Islamic State in Syria. The variation in estimates found by different students led them to the conclusion that such figures may not be reliable, but that the phenomenon is significantly more common in France than in the US. It is clear that there have been many hundreds of ISIS recruits who traveled from France to Syria, as many as 1500 as of April 2015, as reported by *Le Parisien* in a web article, “Le nombre de Français partis faire le jihad.” This contrasts with only approximately one hundred Muslim citizens or residents of the United States who were radicalized and presumed to have been recruited by ISIS (Goldman, Yang and Muskens, 2017). Students were initially astonished at the relatively large number of French residents who chose to travel to Turkey or Syria or to join jihadist organizations elsewhere. On further reflection, they realized that the larger Muslim population of France and that country’s proximity to the Middle East partially explained the difference with the US.

At this point, I refocused the reflection on possible grievances among Muslims in France that might inspire some to join terrorist organizations. Students shared whatever information they had gathered and came to a few conclusions. First, some students said that their reading and research suggested that some young Muslims in France were convinced that they were the victims of racism and exclusion. Other students evoked high unemployment in immigrant neighborhoods and the absence of compelling, optimistic, and inclusive visions for the future of such neighborhoods or of the youth who live there. Still others spoke about difficult relations between Muslim youth in many neighborhoods and the police. Students generally agreed that it was not clear why, in the case of Sid Ahmed Ghlam, he turned to radical Islamist ideologies. While the conversation could easily have continued along these lines, there were other priorities to address in the class, so I brought the activity based on France 2’s news report on Sid Ahmed Ghlam to a close, acknowledging that a general sense of alienation or exclusion may have influenced Ghlam, but that it was not clear from the news report. Indeed, I admitted that the true reasons might never be known, since Ghlam was refusing to talk to police. I then refocused student attention on a different activity, while inviting students to continue following the story of Ghlam and to write about it in their reflective journals.

The learning outcomes sought and generally attained through this lesson included high interest and enthusiasm and significant student use of the target language. Most students spoke robustly in the interpersonal mode. They also developed and articulated a clear awareness of a divergence between French and American news representations of police spokespersons. They developed reasonable hypotheses to explain at least part of that particular cultural difference. Students became more acutely aware of Islam as an important socio-cultural force in France, and discovered that it contrasts significantly with the relative weight and place of Islam in US culture. Students gained some insight into historical and socio-cultural reasons for the emergence of resentment among a small but significant part of the Muslim community in France. Finally, students gained

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greater insight into police powers and security standards in France, learning what a *fiche* 'S' was. The results of this lesson included not only increases in student knowledge of culturally important practices and products, but also new insights into their own perspectives and the ways in which their expectations obviously diverged from those of French journalists, news producers and news consumers. One might consider each of these results as part of a series of steps in the direction of increased intercultural capability.

### Intercultural Capability and Assessment (Concerns, the Need for Humility)

It is appropriate to adopt an attitude of humility not unlike the decentering of Byram's model, so that we step away from the notion that we can fully, directly, and precisely teach, perform, and accurately measure intercultural capability. Intercultural capability can be observed, however, measured only to a certain degree, and certainly not with the kind of precision that would generate a precise numerical score.

Deardorff points out that developing intercultural perspectives and dispositions is a matter of lifelong learning (2009, p. xiii), which is tantamount to acknowledging that it is a progressive individual developmental pathway with no real terminus (Fox, 2017, p. 7-8). It is difficult, therefore, to establish precise timetables or, for that matter, concrete performance markers like those in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. What is more, as Deardorff (2017), Hoyt and Garrett-Rucks (2014), K. Byram (2011), Byram and Kramsch (2008), and Fox and Diaz-Greenburg have noted, there are ways in which the challenge of incorporating culture standards, the complexity of IC, or confusing divergences between different intercultural models can discourage teachers and make them feel obligated to pursue complex and multipartite assessments, which can become excessively burdensome in the absence of robust institutional support.

More pointedly, at some institutions, there seems to be a clash between the imperative of what one might call "spreadsheet-reportable" assessment and that of preparing students to pursue a long-term goal of developing habits of open-mindedness and cross-cultural understanding, supported by intercultural dispositions. The former is a mostly reductive and straightforward enterprise of verifying or validating skills and knowledge acquisition. The latter is a far more expansive process. Common institutional approaches to assessment, including the assessment of intercultural capability, diverge in significant ways from the greater imperative of "deep and meaningful implement of the 'cultural standard'" (following Fox & Diaz-Greenburg, 2006, p. 407). For many teachers, the gulf that exists between assessment reporting about intercultural capability and the greater goal of effective integration of intercultural capability as a long-term goal in curricular design, teaching, learning, and assessment practices can be very frustrating. The latter kinds of full, deep, and meaningful implementation of intercultural capability are complex, resonant, long-term enterprises that seek

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to enact sweeping, profound cognitive and socio-professional change in students and teachers. Such a project seems to have little overlap with semester-to-semester reports of numerical values on spreadsheets or with the presumption that we can easily discern well-defined stages of intercultural capability.

### A “Humble” Proposal

I posit that invoking humility as a necessary attitude for understanding and assessing intercultural capability is an approach that teachers should take when considering how to measure IC. Such an approach would not be tantamount to abdication in the face of challenge and complexity. Rather, it amounts to a recognition that facilitating the development of intercultural capability requires a lifelong commitment to discovery, self-reflection, and self-critique on the part of all learners, including teachers and assessors. To claim achievement of a significant level of competence or of mastery in the intercultural realm, particularly in only one, or only a few semesters of study, is, on the face of it, ludicrous. Assessing college students for clear markers of progress toward developing significant competence in the intercultural realm seems rather impossible. Assessment is especially a challenge in the case of students taking only one or two language courses to satisfy a language requirement, but the circumstance may also apply to students completing a minor or a major. Attaining true intercultural competence requires significantly more work than can be achieved in a few courses that meet a few times per week for a quarter or a semester. At best, most learners can demonstrate signs of engagement in a process of development, but little or no measurable changes in skill. Perhaps a better approach may be found in another model of intercultural development, the cognitive-science-informed approach that Shaules (2015) proposes in *The Intercultural Mind*, which is helpful for understanding the need for humility and the need for intellectual and social engagement in the process of developing our own and others’ intercultural capability.

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An important aspect of Shaules’s strategy is a recognition of the role of unconscious cognition. Recent research and emerging theories in cognitive neuroscience make clear that most human beings have not one mind or one kind of cognition, but two (Wilson, 2002; Evans & Frankish, 2009; Evans, 2010; Kahneman, 2011; Mlodinow, 2012; Shaules, 2015; Hayles 2017). As many cognitive scientists now realize, what we had been thinking of as the unitary human mind, which gives us self-awareness, conscious thought, perception, conscious learning and so forth, truly comprises a very small part of the cognitive work that our brains do. The vast majority of our brain activity is devoted to a second kind of mind—unconscious cognition—whose neural patterns tend to be very persistent and are not particularly amenable to modification through conscious thought or conscious learning. As it turns out, unconscious cognition or, in an alternative formulation, the intuitive mind (Shaules, 2015, pp. 40-41) underlies and informs nearly all of our cultural perceptions, attitudes, reactions, judgments, and decisions. Much of what

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he calls deep culture (Shaules, 2015, pp. 31-32) or, to evoke the widely-used iceberg metaphor from Hall (1976, 1979), much of the submerged part of the cultural iceberg, amounts to unconscious cognition. That is, much of what we think of as hidden or implicit culture is indeed hidden, not only from outside observers, but also from the cultural actor her- or himself. Those deep or submerged aspects of one's cultural conditioning lie within the ongoing patterns of neurocognitive function that allow us to navigate and to manage in the natural and social world without being aware of the ways in which our brain is engaging in these processes. Such unconscious patterns of brain activity are persistent and extremely difficult to change, largely because they are formed and reinforced by a long and vast experience in immersive cultural environments and persistent exposure to patterns of sensory and emotional inputs. These often-repeated patterns of thought and response become an integral and highly stable part of our high-functioning neural configuration. In this view, much of what we think of as intercultural competence is an effect of unconscious cognition, i.e., it derives from intuitive feelings, sentiments, unconscious perceptions, attitudes, split-second decision-making, and behavioral dispositions over which we are able to exert very little conscious control. At best, we can use cognitive and metacognitive approaches to facilitate the formation and reinforcement of new neural patterns that may overlay and, with sustained iteration, have a moderating influence on previously developed patterns of unconscious cognition.

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This “two mind” cognitive model is important. Once we acknowledge that intercultural capacity resides mostly in the preponderant nonconscious part of our mind whose functions we do not control, and when we know, furthermore, that our conscious thought is molded, undergirded, and framed and even, to some degree, managed by unconscious cognition, the necessity of humility and circumspection become more apparent.

There is another way in which this model can impact the ways in which we think about the culture standards and intercultural capability. It helps us recognize that culture is not a semi-static object or phenomenon. It is a dynamic pattern of practices and products that emerge from social and cognitive engagement. Culture comprises the resonant, mutually reinforcing cognitive patterns shared by many individuals who form a relatively cohesive community. Group cohesion and cultural belonging are identified by markers like shared language, similar habits, adherence to sets of values or codes of conduct, and common material culture. Those shared or overlapping patterns of cognition are largely unconscious, like most of the work of the brain. It is true that shared patterns of unconscious cognition can ultimately manifest themselves in products and practices that may be objectively identified, described, and consciously analyzed. However, perspectives tend to remain within unconscious cognitive patterns of perception, conceptualization, interpretation, meaning-creation, and feeling. These are patterns that tend to be shared and normalized within a community through a process that involves relatively little explicit deliberation or attention. Implicit learning and cultural norms acquired by

habitual exposure inform the basic structures of unconscious cognition. In turn, those underlying mental models tend to shape or reaffirm the cultural milieu, often without fully emerging into conscious thought. Because perspectives are largely submerged and because they tend to rise to the level of conscious thought only on occasion, it is in the implementation and assessment of the perspectives part of ACTFL culture standards or other measures of intercultural capability that we must be most humble, recognizing the limits of conscious investigation or explanation.

Rather than thinking in terms of making progress toward a goal of ostensible competence that we claim to discern, track and document, we would be better advised simply to monitor the quantity and quality of engagement in a process of critical reflection. At best, we can capture occasional insights as we notice our own and others' perspectives when they reveal themselves in a process of open-minded cultural comparison, informed by metacognition. It is when we take a comparative stance that cultural perspectives are most likely to rise to consciousness, particularly in those instances where we notice particular manners, expressions, gestures, or other practices or products that seem strange or unusual. Surprise can lead to conscious awareness when we encounter unexpected instances of behavior, objects, or expressions, understanding that the unconscious mind interprets them as odd or threatening, and therefore worthy of attention. Developing metacognitive awareness of these reactions and understanding that they are the result of unconscious cognition can be helpful critical tools. Reflection and self-reflection that focus on cultural shocks, surprises, or similar reactions and that are tempered by cultural humility, can help us acquire new awareness of our own perspectives and can help develop and reinforce new cognitive patterns relative to the cultural phenomenon that surprised us. Habitually cultivating new patterns of awareness and thought, inflected by cultural humility, helps nudge learners toward increased intercultural capability. In Shaules's approach, these moments of surprise tend to lead to one of three broad categories of reaction: resistance, acceptance, and adaptation. By gently guiding students, interculturally capable teachers may be able to bring students more readily to the latter kind of reaction.

Combining metacognitive awareness with critical and imaginative inquiries into target cultures, accessed via current events, shifts our interpretive stance and gives us insight into our own mental filters. Over time, we hypothesize, the teaching and learning practices described here can reconfigure our neural patterns away from a defensive and culturally closed reaction like resistance toward a more open and flexible reaction like adaptation, which is to say, toward an increased intercultural capability. This is not a process that can be verified or assessed in the same way as, for example, checking whether or not a student is capable of narrating in the past or in the future in a sustained way. This approach is more nebulous, tentative, and subjective than seeking to attain level-specific markers of language proficiency. Its results are, therefore, more discernible through qualitative means like self-reflective writing, discussion boards, extensive conversations, or formal interviews than through quantitative or ostensibly objective forms of assessment.

A cognitive science-informed view of intercultural capability combined with teaching with video news reports can be highly effective. Anecdotal evidence from



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students suggests that in combination with a modest amount of follow-up research and writing, it is highly effective in a number of ways. It motivates students and gives them a strong impression that they are learning in impactful and meaningful ways about contemporary France and the wider Francophone community, an effect that is not negligible. Students who have extensive experience with this teaching strategy generally believe that they make significant progress in developing listening and speaking skills. Additionally, students returning from study abroad in France typically report that their systematic work with televised news reports before departure bolstered their confidence to engage in substantive conversations overseas and gave them insight into French attitudes and manners, making their adaptation to daily life and study in France smoother than it was for other students. Some students report that they regularly make connections between the information and insights that they gather from news reports in French and their intellectual work in other courses, whether in French or in other disciplines. Finally, a small number of students have reported that the forced habit of viewing a France 2 news report weekly or bi-weekly as part of a class eventually affirmed for them the value of monitoring news regularly and paying attention to current events. Some reported that after completing our courses, they continued to view France 2 newscasts and to sample other news sources regularly. In brief, the value of this general approach lies elsewhere than in its ability to deliver assessment results documenting or verifying a discernable increase in cultural capability, movement along the DMIS spectrum, or progress within Byram's or others' models of competence in the intercultural realm. Rather, this strategy's greatest contribution is in the conscious and unconscious cognitive work of uncovering and reflecting on perspectives. Its merit resides in the way it promotes most students' precognitive dispositions for openness, curiosity, discerning patterns of connections, meaning-making, cultural humility and self-aware cultural-critical reflection. It is these latter results that best align with the potential and actual development of intercultural capability as a part of lifelong learning.

## Note

1. Over the last fifty years or so, domestic intelligence-gathering has consistently been more robust and less restricted in France than in the US, most of it conducted by the police, rather than by intelligence agencies.

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### **APPENDIX (generic lesson plan)**

#### **Phase 1: Pre-viewing / Viewing (15 to 20 minutes)**

- Elicit student knowledge about the general subject area (and/or context) of the news report
- Give title or a brief evocation, asking students to imagine what the report is likely to present
- First viewing (no pauses)
- Ask “who understood everything?” (Students typically laugh and shake their heads.)
- Ask “Who understood *something*?” and begin eliciting information.
- Ask framing questions: What is the report truly about? Why report on this? What's the point? What are the implications? What conclusions are drawn? Who are the witnesses or experts cited? Why did the reporter(s) talk to them? Where else did the reporter get information? Did the reporter talk about facts or offer opinions or present a mix of the two? etc. Brief discussion.
- Second viewing (no pauses). Ask for a comprehensive summary or explanation of the report, eliciting additional details. Ask what aspects of the video seemed surprising or particularly interesting.
- If there is time, do a third showing of the video (pausing periodically at students' request, answering questions, commenting, pointing out anomalies or visually interesting features, contextualizing)

*At this point, a two-minute news video played two or three times, with some follow-up questions and discussion will have taken approximately 20 minutes of class time.*

#### **Phase 2: Focused Listening (five to ten minutes)**

- Play a pre-selected brief excerpt twice while students complete a “quasi-Cloze” exercise (usually a 30- to 45-second excerpt)
- Check and debrief
- Questions and answers, brief discussion

**Phase 3: Debate or In-Depth Discussion (20-30 minutes or more; the activities may be continued during the subsequent class periods)**

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- Form small groups, distribute tasks (e.g., explore a controversy, develop arguments pro or con; write brief scenario for a follow-up report extending or deepening investigation of the issue or phenomenon; write a role play presenting the same story from a different angle; identify a witness or a point of view that seems particularly cogent, collectively explain why; identify a witness or point of view that seems confusing, collectively explain why; speculate as to why a French news producer believed that this subject was interesting or worthwhile to present, comment on features of the newscast, its visual style, its tone, its orientation; note surprises and seek to discern which divergent cultural expectations are at play; other discussion activities may be planned as teachers think appropriate; in the classrooms of teachers who are comfortable with a measure of instructional improvisation, fruitful lines of discussion or ideas for additional activities may arise impromptu in class.)
- Work in small groups for 10 to 15 minutes
- Report out, summarize or otherwise perform or present the group work

## Phase 4: Post-class follow-up

- Write a reflective journal entry (in the target language). Prompts may include the following: detail any cultural surprises you noticed and reflect on the cultural differences that your reaction seems to reveal; think about the style of this news report, then compare it to a typical news report in the US or in your own culture and explain the major differences and what they suggest about the two cultures; answer these questions: Would this news subject or a similar report occur in a newscast in your native culture? Why or why not? In some cases, the prompt might elicit creativity, for example by formulating an imaginative response to the report, or to writing a short piece where one imagines being in the place of one of the witnesses or of one of the reporters.
- Another possibility: do a modest research project, gathering additional contextual information or further investigating an issue or question raised by the report.

