NECTFL Review

A Journal for K – 16+ Foreign Language Educators

Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

The Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages serves educators in all languages (including classical, less commonly taught, and ESL), at all levels from kindergarten through university, in both public and private settings. In existence since the late 1940s, NECTFL is the largest of five regional associations of its kind in the United States, representing educators from Maine to Virginia but exercising leadership nation-wide.

Today NECTFL is governed by a Board of Directors composed of 15 language educators from the NECTFL region, with additional support from the central office staff and consultants. The Board chooses a Conference Chair annually, and its committees carry out the organization's mission of providing the best professional development in the field. Candidates for the Board are nominated by and voted upon by the NECTFL Advisory Council.

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**Go to
Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**

NOR**THE**AST
CONFERENCE
on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

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The NECTFL Editorial Board —————

From the 2018 Conference Chair

We go to press with *NECTFL Review 81* immediately following the 64th Northeast Conference held at the Hilton Midtown February 8-10, 2018. Over 1400 participants explored the theme of *Unleashing the POWer of Proficiency* through a wide-ranging variety of pre-conference workshops and one-hour sessions.

In this latest edition, you will find two new pieces of scholarship selected by members of the Editorial Board under the guidance of *NECTFL Review* Editor, Robert Terry, and a number of timely product reviews solicited, edited, and curated by Thomas Connor. We are delighted to lead off this new issue with the complete text of the keynote address given by Dr. Eileen Glisan during the General Session of the 2018 Northeast Conference, which she has generously allowed us to share with you in its entirety.

On behalf of the 2019 Conference Chair, Roseanne Zeppieri, I invite you to submit session proposals for the 65th Northeast Conference, which will take place February 7–9, 2019 at the Hilton Midtown in New York City. The theme for the 2019 conference is *Authentic Language, Authentic Learning.* The deadline for submitting proposals is May 4, 2018. You can find the link to the proposal form at **http://www.nectfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Call-for-proposals-2019.pdf**

On July 1, the NECTFL Board will welcome its member Class of 2022, who were recently elected by the NECTFL Advisory Council. They are James Wildman from Connecticut, Dr. Catherine Ritz of Massachusetts, and Dr. Cynthia Chalupa of West Virginia. In addition to nominating and electing members of the Board of Directors, Advisory Council members can offer nominations for various NECTFL awards, give guidance and support to the Board of Directors, and volunteer to lend a helping hand at the conference. Read more about joining the Advisory Council as an individual or as part of an institutional memberships at **http://www.nectfl.org/advisory-council/**

In the coming months, keep an eye out for mailings from the Northeast Conference to recent attendees seeking qualitative data concerning the long-term impact of attendance at the Northeast Conference on professional development and student learning outcomes. These data will be used to identify present strengths and to offer guidance for making the Northeast Conference even more vibrant and impactful in the future.

Please consider submitting an article for publication in the *NECTFL Review.* Find submission guidelines and download past issues at **http://www.nectfl.org/nectfl-review/**

Preparations are already well underway for the 65th NECTFL Conference. We look forward to welcoming you next year in New York City.

Warmest regards and best wishes,

Bill Heller
2018 Conference Chair
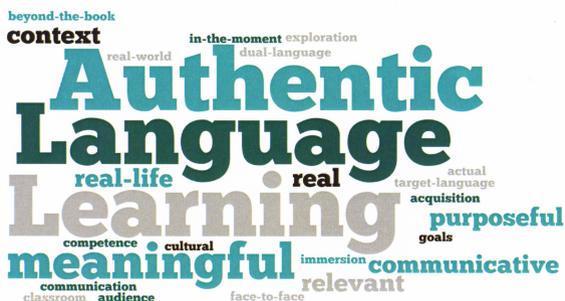
Authentic Language, Authentic Learning

New York Hilton Midtown
February 7–9, 2019

Rosanne Zeppieri, Chairperson

Deadline for Submission: May 4, 2018

Sessions may address a wide range of topics related to language teaching and learning. Proposals should address methods and strategies that are used in K-16 settings. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to, the following aspects of the theme *Authentic Language, Authentic Learning*:

- Integration of Culture, Content, and Language
- Proposals may address the integration of culture, content, and language in traditional classroom settings, in content-based programs, in dual language programs and/or in immersion classrooms.
- Authentic Resources as Tools for Teaching and Learning
- Proposals may address the nature of authentic resources, how to access these sources, the benefits, and/or the ways that they can be used in the three modes of communication at all levels of instruction.
- Authentic Classroom Discourse
- Proposals may address strategies to promote effective classroom communication (teacher-student and/or student-student interactions) as a means to develop interpersonal communication skills.
- Performance-Based Assessment

Proposals may address the design, implementation, and evaluation of formative and/or summative performance-based assessments in the three modes of communication.

Please note: We welcome all proposals—those with a connection to our theme as well as those that address topics of general interest in the field.

Unleashing the POWer of Proficiency

Northeast Conference 2018 Keynote Speech

Eileen W. Glisan, *Indiana University of Pennsylvania*

February 10, 2018

I am extremely honored to have been invited to keynote at the Northeast Conference. NECTFL holds a very special place in my heart because I got my start in conducting workshops and presentations here. I am not referring to having a session proposal accepted for the first time. Some of you younger folks might not know that back in 1986 NECTFL sponsored its Outreach Program, through which those new to the field were trained in how to conduct presentations and then sent out to practice back in our states. I was fortunate enough to have been selected for that initiative, so now it's a joy to be able to give back in a small way to the Northeast Conference for the professional growth and leadership opportunities it opened to me as I embarked on what would be a very rewarding career.

The second reason I am happy to address the group today is that the topic is proficiency, and proficiency is what has influenced so much of my work, both in teaching and research. I'm sure that many of you could say the same. So.... let me ask you.... How many of you remember a time when we weren't talking about proficiency? I think this is analogous to using cell phones—it's difficult to recall a time when we functioned without them!

repeat after me...

I can tell you what I remember doing as a first-year teacher before proficiency unleashed its power on me.

But those are years gone by and it's a new era where we all speak the language of proficiency. Well, let's see if this is really the case.

What do you recognize?
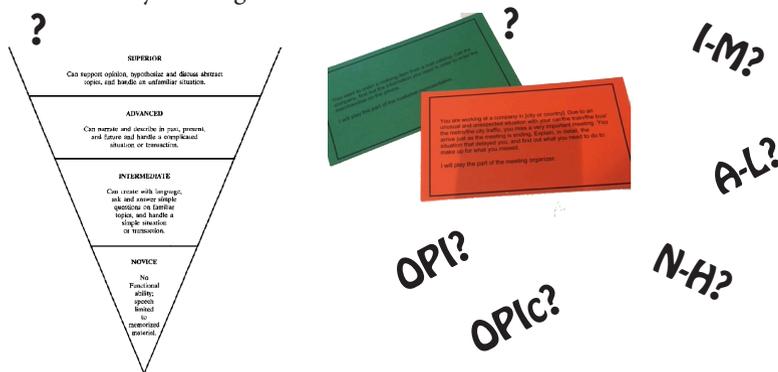
It was called "the proficiency movement" back in the early days. As stated by Judy Liskin-Gasparro in the 2003 special issue of *Foreign Language Annals*, "... the so-called proficiency movement and the ACTFL Guidelines and the OPI that served as its emblems, sparked significant change in the foreign language field that resonated even at the local classroom level" (p. 486). This movement brought together communicative language teaching and assessment, which had begun to influence each other in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In that same special issue of *Foreign Language Annals*, the title of the Guest Editor editorial (Ray Clifford was the Guest Editor) was "The OPI Has Everyone Talking."

The OPI has everyone talking (then and now) in large part because it was the first time in our history that classroom instruction was so influenced by the results of an assessment. I like to remind my methods students that proficiency didn't come from a group of people who sat around and dreamed it up, but rather the principles of proficiency emanated from the OPI and proficiency guidelines. This was what we might call a backward-design movement in which assessment began to drive what would be done in the classroom.

Let's talk about unleashing the power of proficiency.... The Merriam-Webster definition of "unleash" is "to free from or as if from a leash." POWER is such an appropriate word to be used with proficiency, because proficiency really empowered several different groups of people, not the least of whom were teachers and learners.

Proficiency empowered—and I would even go so far as to say "freed" or "unleashed" educators…

1.   to have license to adapt/abandon the textbook, which historically had been used to drive the curriculum and was followed page by page even when so much of what was on those pages was not meaningful to learners and didn't even fit well with the curriculum.

2.   to take control of the curriculum and prompted them to begin to think in terms of what they wanted students to know and be able to do with the language they were learning, rather than simply following the table of contents of the textbook. Accordingly, many language departments found themselves throwing out grammar points that didn't serve a purpose at a particular level of instruction to make room for more time to engage learners in meaningful communication.

3.   Educators began to personalize language around the interests and needs of learners, and conferences began to feature an abundance of sessions and workshops that focused on this issue.

4.   Educators began to relinquish greater control to the learners in their classes, allowing for more open-ended interactions that were not micromanaged by the teacher.

5.   For the first time, educators began to think about how they could assess the oral abilities of students to engage in meaningful communication with one another—when there was not one correct response. In the early days of proficiency, the term "prochievement test" appeared in the literature to capture the notion of testing achievement but with a proficiency flavor. In this vein, educators began to expand the criteria by which they evaluated their learners' speaking skills to include the content of what they were saying, their fluency, and strategies they used to make themselves understood.

POWER.....Proficiency certainly empowered learners—

1.   to take more risks as language learners as they tried to convey their own messages to others, not provide the one right answer expected by the teacher.

2.   to ask questions about language and request assistance to mediate their language.

3.   to communicate with others even when they didn't know what their conversational partners were going to say in response.

4.   Of utmost importance, to set goals for their own proficiency development and self-assess their progress in meeting proficiency-oriented goals (maybe this was an early precursor to the Can-Do statements).

POWER.... But there were other groups beyond educators and learners who were empowered by proficiency.

First, state departments of education were able to set concrete goals for what learners in PK-12 programs could accomplish as a result of language study. A quick glance online will illustrate how many states have developed goals based on a proficiency construct and how many school districts have even established proficiency levels as exit goals for programs.

Secondly, proficiency has empowered state foreign language organizations to engage in more effective advocacy with which they could advertise functional outcomes that could serve learners in very real ways.

Third, proficiency has had an incredible impact on the quality of language teachers being prepared by post-secondary teacher preparation programs across the country. Beginning in 2002, our profession had developed three sets of teacher standards that span the career continuum of a language teacher. One critical component of each of these sets of standards is the expectation that language teachers should be able to speak and write at a certain level of proficiency. Imagine that we no longer rely on only seat time in courses as the measuring stick for being prepared to teach a language, but rather we actually expect our teachers to be able to function at an Advanced level (for most languages). Without the power of proficiency, we would never have achieved this milestone.

Fourth, the use of proficiency expectations in teacher education programs has spilled over into the language programs in colleges and universities. Many language programs have set proficiency goals, have changed their curriculum to make it more proficiency-based, and have even attracted greater numbers of students to language study by offering certificate programs that students complete by taking a certain number of courses and taking the OPI or OPIc for external validation of their oral proficiency.

Let's not forget that proficiency has also empowered parents who now can understand more clearly how foreign language study can impact their children. Proficiency goals make sense to parents, who also are more apt to urge their children to study language if they can see real-world outcomes that they can embrace.

Finally, I'd like to mention the empowerment of employers who have a tool for determining the extent to which prospective employees can function in the language that they may be expected to use as part of the job. Do you remember the days when job applications asked applicants to list the languages in which they were "fluent?" It seems like a long time ago.

At the start of my talk, we took a look back at where we were before proficiency, so now let's look at the results of the power of proficiency in our profession.

Perhaps the most far reaching impact is that we have a universally familiar scale used to assess language ability. An Intermediate High rating that a student receives in New York is understood by a school in Los Angeles or even Madrid. Ratings go with students and do not always correlate with seat time hours spent in classes. Proficiency has freed us from the unfortunate process of using grades in courses to project a student's language ability, especially when we know that grades can seldom be used for that purpose. What a powerful tool we have, and we should really embrace it!

Students are assuming greater ownership of their learning. Students are increasingly becoming more familiar with their own levels and seek out ways to reach the next level on the proficiency scale. I have been shocked in recent years when incoming students are already familiar with the proficiency scale, have an idea of what their own level of proficiency is, and seek advice on how to reach the next higher level. This is happening more and more as students graduate from secondary programs that are focusing on the development of oral proficiency. In this vein, ACTFL and specifically Language Testing International (LTI), have

made it increasingly easier for students to have their proficiency assessed. Did you know that as of the end of last year, individuals are now able to take ACTFL assessments through LTI and certify on their own—via remote proctoring and their individual certification resources online. Thus, if a student's campus does not have the option of providing proctored language proficiency testing, students can go directly to the LTI website and arrange for testing and certification.

Post-secondary institutions who choose to do so (mine does!) are able to give college credit for a student's level of oral proficiency as a result of ACE credits, ACE standing for the American Council on Education. Incoming students are able to take the OPI and receive course credit depending on their OPI scores. Therefore, they receive credit no matter how or where they acquired the language. This is such a powerful tool both for institutions and for learners! Institutions can use this as a recruitment tool to attract learners who stand to earn credits for how well they speak the language, which they may have learned in a classroom, at home, or abroad.

ACE CREDITS FOR PROFICIENCY

ACTFL RATING	OPI/OPIc	WPT	ACTFL RATING	LPT	ACTFL RATING	RPT
Novice High/ Intermediate Low	3LD*	3LD	Intermediate Mid/ Intermediate High	3LD	Intermediate High	2LD
Intermediate Mid	6LD	6LD	Advanced Low/ Superior	6LD	Advanced Low / Advanced Mid	3LD
Intermediate High/Advanced Low	9LD	6LD+1UD			Advanced High/ Superior	6LD
Advanced Mid	6LD+3UD	6LD+3UD				
Advanced High/ Superior	6LD+6UD	6LD+6UD				

As a result of research on the OPI and proficiency, we are learning more about what it takes to reach a particular proficiency level—that is, the types of learning experiences both in and out of the classroom and even a little about how long it might take to advance up the scale depending on the language being studied as well as other factors. Our journals are filled with research articles on the construct of the OPI, reliability of the OPI, training of OPI testers, inter-rater reliability among OPI testers, the length of time that it takes to reach particular levels of proficiency in certain languages, and the development of proficiency in study abroad programs, to name only some of the areas investigated. So much of this research has had direct implications for classroom instruction and assessment.

Proficiency made its way into foreign language textbooks and other pedagogical materials, providing an impetus to change the traditional narrow grammatical focus to one that at the very least has sought to reflect more natural language and meaningful goals. In addition to including greater opportunities

for more open-ended interaction in the target language (TL), textbooks began to include more realistic cultural content, which I believe was also an impact of proficiency and the search for more meaningful contexts, culture included, for encouraging interpersonal communication. In this regard, proficiency also served as the impetus for engaging in backward design in which proficiency development is one of the goals, and for developing performance-based classroom assessments that elicit meaningful language use and interaction.

Proficiency set the stage for another change agent, the national student standards, which first premiered as the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century,* and more recently updated as the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages*. Although the standards go beyond proficiency in terms of the five goals areas that they established, the Communication goal area and the three modes of communication reflect many of the tenets of the OPI and the Proficiency Guidelines. Think about how much work we have done in the area of interpersonal communication, which is largely based on proficiency principles. In fact, developing an oral discourse community in the classroom is one of the high-leverage practices in our field! By the way, the six high-leverage or core practices are all relateld to language proficiency in some way.

The OPI spawned a whole generation of standardized summative assessments that are used from the elementary school level to middle-high school levels to college and throughout one's career. Look at a glance at these proficiency assessments that benchmark

The Language Proficiency Journey:
Language Learning & Benchmarking through Assessment

Slide courtesy of Language Testing International
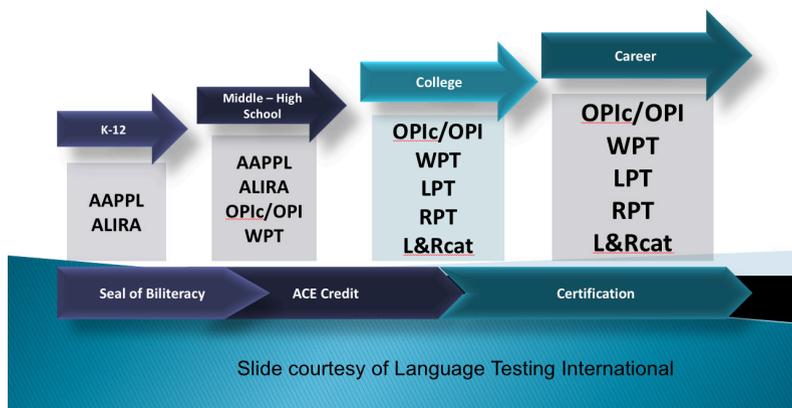
students' progress on their journey toward proficiency. These are only some of the proficiency-based assessments out there.

The power of proficiency.... Now let's think about how all of us can unleash the power of proficiency in our classrooms. First of all, I recommend that everyone go through OPI or MOPI training, even if you have no interest in becoming a certified tester. OPI training serves a much broader purpose, as it enables you to see your classroom and

Unleashing the POWer of Proficiency

learners through new lenses. As I mentioned earlier, I was an ALM-trained educator before I went through OPI training, and honestly, it changed my professional life for the better! During training, we not only learn about the OPI scale and interview procedure, but we also watch interviews with individuals who speak at different levels, and we may even have the opportunity to conduct a practice interview. During the training, we have "aha" moments when we see how learners respond during the interview and just what we might tweak in our own classrooms to support our learners' journey in advancing their proficiency. Additionally, we also realize the types of oral assessments that we might do in our classrooms to mirror what is expected on the OPI. Trust me…you will see your textbook in a different light and you will be motivated to do what it takes to make time for oral interpersonal interaction in the target language. If at all possible, see if you can have your colleagues go through OPI training with you! This should be the goal, for only then can you make changes at the departmental or program level when you can work together with the same goals in mind.

Secondly, we can unleash the power of proficiency by re-examining the content of what we are teaching in our classes. Is the content driven by a textbook and/or an outdated curriculum that is no longer functional? Do the grammatical structures serve as a tool for a larger communicative goal in which the learning of grammatical concepts enables learners to make meaning in the target language, be it through the interpretive, interpersonal, or presentational modes? Do our learners have maximum opportunities to explore texts from the target cultures that serve as the impetus for interaction and communication, not to mention interesting content to discuss?

Third, we can unleash the power of proficiency by pondering the amount of time that our learners have to engage in actual communication in our classrooms. Do we (as teachers) do most of the talking? Do we always insist on accuracy when learners speak? Do learners feel comfortable enough to take risks in expressing themselves in the language by trying to create utterances that they've never said before? Do we engage in chit-chat in the TL when we aren't in the lesson itself, such as before class begins, between activities, during the last few minutes of class? In other words, would we characterize our classrooms as having a TL discourse community? As I mentioned earlier, this is a high-leverage teaching practice! If students are to develop oral proficiency, they need maximum opportunities to hear the target language and to speak in meaningful and interesting contexts.

Fourth, we can unleash the power of proficiency by engaging our learners in target language communities. Possibilities include connecting them to speakers of the language face to face in our classrooms, taking them to places in the local community where they can interact, or arranging for them to interact via technology such as Skype. In terms of speakers coming into our classrooms, I am not suggesting that people come in to give presentations to a captive student audience but rather that they be incorporated into interpersonal activities and discussions. Research has shown that learners identify the Communities goal area as the most important one because their goal is to be able to interact with speakers of the target language. Proficiency-oriented goals can be addressed effectively via interactions with members of target language communities.

Fifth, we can unleash the power of proficiency by setting proficiency goals and giving students some responsibility for reaching them through self-assessment and can-do statements. To this end, we can assess our students' speaking skills, borrowing from

the proficiency construct. That is, we can structure assessments around meaningful interpersonal speaking tasks and grade them on criteria that emanate from the OPI, such as comprehensibility, use of text type, and fluency… in addition to accuracy. We could collaborate with our colleagues in developing OPI-like assessments so that we can assess proficiency at benchmark points. I'd highly recommend administering OPIcs to have reliable ratings that are externally validated. These ratings can be communicated to administrators and parents as proof of what our language programs can deliver to learners. This is an effective way to recruit students into programs when they know that they will receive a credential that is externally validated.

We've looked at where we were before proficiency and where we are now as a result of proficiency, and we've explored some ideas for unleashing the power of proficiency in our classrooms. What might the future hold in our field for proficiency? That is, what possibilities lie ahead for further unleashing the power of proficiency? The OPI is 36 years old, so what might our realities be when it's 50 years old….in 2032? I'd like to explore a few possibilities…

1. I predict that in 2032 research prompted by questions surrounding proficiency will be ongoing. Investigations will reveal additional data regarding how learners move from one level of proficiency to the next, how length of time studying a language intersects with other factors to advance one's proficiency, specific ways in which learners can mediate their own proficiency to produce results in terms of proficiency levels, and how the classroom can be exploited more effectively to unleash the power of proficiency. Accordingly, this research will yield valuable information illustrating how proficiency can intersect with other goals of language study such as intercultural competence, connections to other disciplines, and interaction in language communities.

2. In 2032, EVERY student leaves a FL program of instruction with an oral proficiency rating.

3. In 2032, students are placed into language courses on the basis of their proficiency levels, implying that every language course is designed with a proficiency outcome or goal in mind.

4. In 2032, ALL post-secondary institutions accept ACE credits for students' oral proficiency levels. [This would be a good project for the Northeast Conference to take on!]

5. And… really thinking far outside the box… perhaps eye recognition will enable others to identify our OPI level!
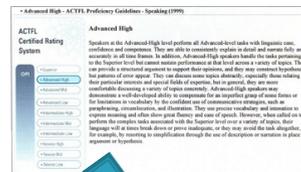
Unleashing the POWer of Proficiency

I hope that you have enjoyed coming on this 30-minute proficiency journey with me and that you perhaps have a few things on which to reflect as a result. And I'm sure that when you see a leash or use one with a pet, you might think about how you have also unleashed the power of proficiency in your classroom!

You are **IH**.

Graduate Student Perspectives on Linguistic and Cultural Growth in Online Language Courses

Leah Fonder-Solano, *The University of Southern Mississippi*
Joanne Burnett, *The University of Southern Mississippi*

Abstract

In this study, 64 master's students and program graduates in French, Spanish, and TESOL evaluated their online experiences in two areas in which learning effectiveness is often questioned in online settings: linguistic proficiency and cultural knowledge. This study was informed by national data documenting attitudes toward online learning, existing studies of online language learning and a faculty commitment to program review. It used three different data sources, including an anonymous questionnaire with open-ended comments, interviews, and content analysis of final portfolio reflections. The overwhelming majority of questionnaire participants reported improvements in proficiency, cultural knowledge, and cross-cultural awareness. They also reported interacting in the target language with peers and instructors, as well as feeling part of a language learning community. Individual comments from final portfolios, interview data,

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and the open response section of the questionnaire contextualize and elucidate these findings.

Introduction

(Hall & Knox, 2009). Even those who may have general knowledge about online learning may distrust the format or conflate very different online learning contexts and populations (e.g., MOOCS vs. small-group academic courses (Ko & Rossen, 2017). In fact, *Inside Higher Ed* (2014) published a national Gallup poll showing that only 33% of faculty believe that online courses can produce learning outcomes equivalent to those in-class; 83% of faculty respondents rate student interaction in online courses as inferior to that of classroom-based courses; and faculty in humanities (including foreign or second language instructors) are generally the most skeptical; 54% view online courses negatively.

Profession-wide, it is accepted that learning takes place in face-to-face instruction. In online contexts, however, poll results such as these *Inside Higher Ed* survey responses show that many still question whether meaningful learning can or does take place online without regard for academic context, instructor qualifications, program level, or course set-up. Indeed, during several years of teaching graduate language courses online, the authors[1] commonly encountered both pointed and subtle critiques of online instruction particular to language learning, e.g., that online courses could not provide high-quality language or cultural development. These concerns regarding online learning did not match our experiences over a decade of combined administration and online instruction, nor did it reflect the experiences typically described in graduating students' final program reflections, such as the following comment:

> Online learning organized through learning management systems has been present in higher education for almost two decades. Nevertheless, uncertainty persists about its appropriateness and even how or whether it works, particularly in the field of language learning where relatively few studies have been conducted.

> As far as improving my knowledge of the Spanish language, I can definitely say that I was pushed and challenged academically in this area. It was so exciting to have opportunities to improve my knowledge as well as being taught with different tools like: service learning, watching films in the target language, and reading literature. It's not to say that I didn't already do some of these things before, but I expanded upon them to reveal the next level of learning a language. (Final Portfolio)

As faculty in a well-established online Master of Arts in the Teaching of Languages program with concentrations in Spanish, French, and TESOL, the authors decided to conduct a program review to gauge the experiences and perspectives of actual online language students and program graduates regarding their linguistic and cultural growth. This review identified commonly-voiced critiques that could be attributed to online programs in general and to online language teacher education in particular. For the purposes of this article, we explore

only those categories associated with language learning: improvement in the four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), interaction with peers and instructors, improvement in cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness, and participation in a community of language learners.

This research adds to the literature because most of the studies (and positions) regarding online language learning to date address only lower-level learners in undergraduate populations (Hauk & Stickler, 2006; O'Dowd, 2011; Russell & Curtis, 2013). In their review of language education programs via distance learning, Hall and Knox (2009) call for more empirical studies that are both quantitative and qualitative in nature, grounded by the data, and triangulated by more than one data source such as interviews, self-reported data, observation, or teacher collaboration. They also encourage a focus on languages other than English as a second language. We believe our study meets these requirements, as it uses a triangulated approach to look at language learning and language teacher education online. It offers insight from an anonymous questionnaire, student interviews, and content analysis of final program reflections.

Program context and instructional history

While the master's program at The University of Southern Mississippi has always offered classes on campus, in 2008 an online option for year-round study replaced a summer intensive model. Since that time, the majority of master's students have enrolled exclusively online, with a small number (9-12) of on-campus students and graduate teaching assistants taking a mix of traditional and online courses. Students may enroll in Fall, Spring, or Summer sessions and take one or two courses online per session; for this reason, there are no traditional student cohorts except for on-campus teaching assistants. Online students are typically practicing teachers who take five to six semesters to complete the degree. Graduate students in the program are required to take five core linguistics and education classes (second language teaching methods, applied linguistics, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics and culture, and a second/foreign language practicum completed in a school setting), along with five classes in their language emphasis and one elective of their choice. As a final program assessment, they are required to create a professional portfolio that includes an open-ended reflection on their experience in the program.

All the core courses in the program are taught by full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty members who are content specialists in fields such as language acquisition, applied linguistics, and teacher education. These faculty members teach the language emphasis courses along with two other area specialists in literature and culture studies.

Review of pertinent literature

Despite skepticism, online learning will continue to form part of higher education in every field of study and continues to grow both at the researcher's own institution and nationwide. During the period of our study, Allen and Seaman (2008) found that over 20% of US college students were taking at least one course online. In 2010 they documented a 21% annual growth rate for online enrollments,

compared to only a 2% growth rate in college enrollments overall. By 2012, online enrollments had grown to comprise 33.5% of all undergraduate enrollments nationwide (Allen & Seaman, 2014). Studies cite economic, institutional, and administrative pressures (Allen & Seaman, 2010) as well as demand from time-pressed students for convenience, flexibility, and ease of access (Burnett & Fonder-Solano, 2016; Murphy, 2002; Russell & Curtis, 2013) as contributing factors to this explosive growth. Not surprisingly, the bulk of these reports reflect lower-level, undergraduate populations with multiple sections and large enrollments. But online courses are offered at every level, including upper-level courses for the major and graduate programs—particularly in graduate degrees that cater to working adults, such as ubiquitous online MBA or TESOL programs. Because online instruction represents the single largest growth area in higher education and is constantly evolving in terms of tools and functionality, it is imperative to study how online learning takes place in different contexts and with different student populations. With regard to language study, however, research on higher-level language learning and language teacher education is scant.

Language learning online

Studies that have explored online language learning have highlighted the difficulties of documenting the effectiveness of this format in language acquisition. In 2015 the *Modern Language Journal* devoted a special issue to proficiency outcomes in online language courses, exploring issues such as the challenges of evaluating proficiency (Blake, 2015; Rubio 2015), student outcomes and measures for success (Lin & Warschauer, 2015; Van Deusen-Scholl, 2015), and standards for program accountability in student outcomes (Doughty, 2015). Some researchers, like Doughty, lamented the lack of research using quantifiable, objective measures to support claims of online effectiveness (particularly for commercial products such as *Rosetta Stone* or *Pimsleur*). Blake (2015), however, explains that for many studies of online language learning, research using so-called "objective" measures may not be either possible or desirable. In particular, he makes the case that using the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) to assess proficiency outcomes is inherently "messy," with complicating factors such as different instructors, different course set-ups, different levels, different curricula, different class formats, and even different standards for proficiency: "After all, seeking out comparative student outcomes between in situ and online language courses might constitute a reasonable exercise if the profession actually knew how to measure rigorously, or even define, language proficiency in a scientific manner" (p. 409).

The authors agree with this assessment: for an online graduate program in which students do not all take the same courses, do not complete the program within the same time frame, and would not be expected to make measurable language proficiency gains within the scope of a single semester or academic year[2], the ACTFL OPI would not yield meaningful

> ... for an online graduate program in which students do not all take the same courses, do not complete the program within the same time frame, and would not be expected to make measurable language proficiency gains within the scope of a single semester or academic year.

data. The most important conclusion drawn by these researchers is that context matters. For example, the unproven claims of software publishers like *Rosetta Stone* or *Pimsleur* are not equivalent to studies of what happens in an academic environment, and studies of lower-level online language classes may not be relevant to graduate language learners who, though they may already have a strong foundation in the target language and culture, still need to maintain and improve their language skills to remain viable in the profession.

Online classroom interaction and community

One of the main critiques of the online format is a perceived lack of student interaction between peers and between students and the instructor. This may be due to conflation of different online learning contexts (e.g., MOOCs vs. small-scale academic courses) or simply to confusion about how interaction can and does take place in an online environment. O'Dowd (2007) argues that the online format may actually provide advantages over in-class learning, including the opportunity to interact with peers and native speakers beyond the time constraints of the traditional classroom, to use a wider variety of communication tools, to save and print interaction transcripts, and to interact with authentic media and materials. Some research suggests that learning outcomes and student satisfaction in language courses may depend less on course format than they do on class size (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Orellana, 2006; Russell & Curtis, 2013), with smaller enrollments permitting both student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction. Because these studies addressed lower-level language courses in which students often enroll simply to fulfill a language requirement for their degree with little intrinsic motivation, this finding might be even more apt with regard to a self-selecting graduate population of practicing teachers. Online language classroom communities may be defined as groups whose members share a common interest, passion, or professional concern for what they do and learn how to improve in this mutual interest by frequent interaction (Khalsa, 2012). These communities of practice can enhance student motivation, engagement, and connection to the language learning content when "instructors integrate small and large group discussion to facilitate team-based projects" (Khalsa, 2012, p. 84-5). Hall and Knox (2009) find that while many researchers laud the sense of collaboration and community created by online discussion, others openly question whether such discussions create—or even have the ability to create—a meaningful online community that goes beyond completing required interactive tasks to foster reflective learning and meaningful social connections. Putz and Arnold (2001), for example, argue that a community of practice must be small enough for learners to get acquainted, share an understanding of purpose and conduct, and facilitate the incorporation of new members into the group. According to van Weert and Pilot (2003), a community of practice must be linked to problem-based learning and team-based cooperative learning. This social networking aspect of online language learning, while lauded, is rarely addressed in academic studies; most investigations are short-term (a single semester or course) and look only at non-majors. Because

our study does involve a population of people who share a concern or passion for language teaching, it adds to the body of literature regarding whether a community of learners can be created online and the conditions in which this might take place.

Learning culture online

Development of cultural knowledge is another area that is less studied in online language learning contexts, with most studies again addressing basic language learners. With regard to teaching target-language culture with online tools and materials, most studies laud the advantages of online technology for in-depth cultural learning, even in the context of traditional classroom instruction. Several researchers (Allen, 2004; Levet & Waryn, 2006) find that the teaching of culture is most effective when students discover the target culture for themselves, rather than having information presented as a series of facts. Online instruction allows students to interact directly with authentic materials, sources, and native speakers via audio and video resources without the time constraints of the traditional classroom. Bush (2007) notes that online resources make it easier for teachers to find and integrate culturally authentic materials, and that these, in turn, make teaching cultural awareness more motivating and effective. A number of researchers highlight the benefits of online technologies which provide authentic and real-time communication, such as professional networking, in an interactive environment that facilitates the teaching of culture (Lee, 2009; Moore, 2006). Dema and Moeller (2012) conclude that inquiry-based learning with digital media results in, "a rich and meaningful environment in which students interact with authentic data and build their own understanding of a foreign culture's products, practices, and perspectives" (p.75). This is particularly important in the context of a graduate population like ours of sophisticated language learners who have an extensive background in the target language and culture. Students who have advanced language skills, are native speakers, or are practicing language teachers still need to develop in-depth cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness. For this reason, it is well-worth exploring whether online students felt that they had made gains in this area and the kinds of experiences they highlight in developing this awareness.

> With regard to teaching target-language culture with online tools and materials, most studies laud the advantages of online technology for in-depth cultural learning, even in the context of traditional classroom instruction.

Our study adds to the discussion of linguistic development, classroom interaction, and cultural knowledge in online contexts by examining the experiences of a group of high-level learners throughout an entire online curriculum, with program graduates experiencing different courses, instructors, and course formats. No program—much less one offered entirely online—can or should take positive student evaluations for granted; student views of their own learning and student feedback about a program of study are valuable, both from a program review standpoint and from a research perspective. A strength of our study is the different data sources that inform our results: the anonymous survey is supported by open-ended comments, unsolicited comments from final program reflections,

and focus group interviews. As Hauck and Stickler (2006) note, online language learning is perceived nationally as being "second-best" compared to face-to-face formats, with online language learning relegated to "peripheral status" for many researchers. No one questions whether learning takes place in traditional formats, but learner gains of any kind are questioned in online courses (Rovai & Barnum, 2003). Our study uses learner self-assessments to address online language learning because we value the experiences of our students and we believe their level of professional sophistication makes them better equipped than undergraduate basic language students to address their own progress thoughtfully. Thus, our research adds to the body of literature because it studies online learning from actual online language learners.

Research Questions

- How do graduate language students assess their linguistic development in online courses?
- How do graduate language students assess their development of cross-cultural awareness and cultural knowledge in online courses?
- How do graduate language students assess their target-language classroom interactions with peers and instructors in online courses?
- Do graduate language students in online courses feel part of a language-learning community?

Research methodology

Questionnaire

Since the goal of the study was to see if common critiques of online learning were reflected in the experiences of our own graduate students, we developed a twenty-five item questionnaire (see Appendix A) using *Qualtrics* to examine seven areas of language teaching in which learning effectiveness is commonly questioned in online settings. The themes we addressed were linguistic development, cultural development, interaction, learning community, professional development, academic rigor, and online technology issues. This article will focus specifically on linguistic and cultural development, as the other topics were addressed in a separate article (Burnett & Fonder-Solano, 2016).

The questionnaire was developed over a period of three months using models from the literature in language education. Before being sent to potential respondents, it was reviewed by two departmental faculty members with academic training in language education. All of the statements pertained specifically to experiences with online language learning. The questionnaire also included questions about respondents' current employment, geographic location, language of the home and high school, and program language emphasis, as well as why they chose to take an online program. Participants who had not completed at least one online course were redirected out of the questionnaire. Research participants rated their agreement or disagreement on a Likert scale of 1–5 with statements such as, "My L2 oral proficiency improved," "My cultural knowledge improved," or

"I felt part of a community of language learners." At the end of the questionnaire, students were given an open comment space to make additional remarks about their course or program experience.

The questions pertaining to linguistic development excluded native speakers (e.g., English speakers studying TESOL, or Spanish speakers completing the Spanish concentration) to allow only the responses of L2 learners. For this reason, although there were 64 total survey participants, statements regarding L2 development have a maximum of 51 responses. Because even native speakers can still gain new cultural insights, all 64 respondents were included in questions about cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness. Thirty-seven participants also provided open-ended feedback.

After a test mail-out to determine which e-mail addresses were still active, the questionnaire was e-mailed to two different groups: the "current students" e-mail list, which contained 145 names, and 46 alumni who had graduated between 2008 and 2012. The questionnaire was also posted to the departmental *Facebook* group. Once the questionnaire was distributed, we waited one month before printing out the results. There were 64 total participants. This gave us approximately a 34% overall response rate. Of these, 40% were alumni and 60% were current students.

Student Interviews and Final Reflections

To supplement the questionnaire data, we compiled graduating students' final program reflections from the same time period (2008-2013), coded them for online-only versus mixed in-class and online students, analyzed them for the themes addressed in the survey, and used the reflections that spoke to these issues for further content analysis. These final reflections form a standard component of all graduating students' final portfolio assessment. Students are asked to write a five- to seven-page final reflection that relates their graduate coursework as a whole to their development as language teaching professionals. In these reflections, students are not prompted to write about any particular issue. Sixteen student responses totaling ninety pages from these final reflective papers were selected for in-depth analysis of comments relevant to the themes under study. These data from program completers provided important context for the questionnaire responses because most survey participants had not yet graduated. Another source of data triangulation came from a one-hour interview with graduate teaching assistants in 2014 who took both online and on-campus classes (Appendix B). Once transcribed, this interview totaled twenty-nine pages.

Data Analysis

Once the authors agreed upon the themes that would guide the study, each researcher took a data set to analyze and code for the themes mentioned above. The same process was followed for final portfolio reflections, the focus group interview, and the open responses on the questionnaire. Each researcher took a set of transcripts from all of the qualitative data and parsed student comments into the seven thematic categories cited above, which were then listed in separate columns on a spreadsheet. The authors then cross-checked each other's work to

ensure that there was agreement on where each comment should be categorized. Finally, the researchers consulted syllabi from language emphasis courses since 2008 regarding specific course requirements, policies, and written expectations.

Results

Study participants

The data, including questionnaire responses, final reflections, and interviews, do not so much reflect students' experience with one particular class or instructor as they do the online format of instruction throughout a series of language courses. Moreover, study participants were all experienced language learners, as evidenced by stringent program admission requirements: a university major in the target language, a score of Advanced-Low on the ACTFL OPI, or acceptable TOEFL scores. Thus, this population of graduate students and alumni provided the opportunity to gather feedback from a relatively sophisticated audience of language learners. Because study participants were either practicing language teachers or teachers-in-training, they were better equipped than most to analyze and interpret their online language study. In addition to their experiences as language students, they were also able to frame their self-appraisals through the theoretical lens of their language education core coursework, their experiences abroad, their portfolio reflections, and/or their day-to-day engagement as language professionals.

Questionnaire participants described themselves as follows: 82% were employed in the field of language teaching; 25% of survey respondents either studied abroad with the program or planned to do so; 40% had completed the master's degree; 32% took classes both in-person and online; 73% took six or more courses online; 65% were in the Spanish emphasis; 31% were in the TESOL emphasis; and 25% were in the French emphasis.

Linguistic Development

Linguistic development is assessed through questions regarding overall proficiency and gains in each of the four skills (speaking, listening, reading, writing), with all questions referring specifically to online coursework. Questions about target-language interactions with peers and instructors as well as whether students felt part of a language-learning community were also included in this category because they relate to language acquisition. To simplify interpretation, the sections and tables combine the number of responses for "agree" and "strongly agree" and for "disagree" and "strongly disagree." The mean score is also provided in each table (See Table 1 on the next page).

Linguistic development: Four skills

When asked about overall proficiency, 88% (45/51) of questionnaire participants reported they had in fact improved; none disagreed. In final portfolio reflections, online students generally expressed satisfaction with their linguistic development: "My Spanish has improved; my comfort with the language in reading and writing and speaking are all measurably better. Additionally, and perhaps more

Table 1. Linguistic Development Online

Survey Statement	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Mean	Total Respondents
My L2 oral proficiency improved.	33 (65%)	12 (24%)	6 (12%)	3.73	51
My L2 listening comprehension improved.	33 (65%)	13 (25%)	5 10%	3.76	51
My L2 writing skills improved.	47 (92%)	4 (8%)	0 (0%)	4.39	51
My L2 reading proficiency improved.	48 (94%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	4.37	51
My overall L2 language proficiency improved.	45 (88%)	6 (12%)	0 (0%)	4.20	51
I interacted with my online peers in the language of my concentration	42 (82%)	3 (6%)	6 (12%)	4.06	51
I interacted with my instructor in the language of my concentration	42 (82%)	5 (10%)	4 (8%)	4.12	51
I felt part of a language learning community	42 (82%)	5 (10%)	4 (8%)	4.00	51

importantly, I am more engaged with the language now than I was before I began my study" (Final Portfolio). Broken down by skill area, the highest mean was in writing, at 4.39 (n=51) and the lowest was in oral proficiency, at 3.73. In speaking and listening, 65% (33/51) agreed that their oral and listening proficiency had improved while 12% and 10% respectively disagreed. In these same skill areas, a number of students neither agreed nor disagreed (24% and 25%, respectively). However, survey respondents rated writing and reading as the skills that showed greatest development: 94% and 92% respectively indicated that their writing and reading skills had improved; none disagreed.

These results for online reading and writing improvement may seem somewhat predictable given the academic requirements of graduate study:

Various classes expanded my ability to read incredibly challenging fiction. To be quite frank, I could hardly understand anything we had to

read at first. What this situation required, then, was an incredible amount of patience and dedication. As a result, I greatly expanded my vocabulary and the type of Spanish literature that I was capable of reading and comprehending. (Final Portfolio)

Not only do online courses include extensive reading and writing assignments, but students must also read to access and navigate the course (course shells are set up in the target language), read course e-mails, read and write discussion board posts, and decode written instructor feedback.

In fact, when responding to the portion of the questionnaire that asked about online tools, students recalled engaging with a wide variety of online interactive tools and resources geared toward all four skills, often in combination. These included the discussion board (100%), live chats (91%), blogs (20%), voice recordings (47%), online resources (86%), library resources (80%), online media (64%), course videos (63%), e-books (48%), and required course texts (89%), which according to syllabi included novels, anthologies, and collections of poetry or stories, poetry, as well as academic or theoretical texts (See Burnett & Fonder-Solano, 2016). The tool with the highest percentage of reported usage was the discussion board, a reading and writing-focused forum. Live chats, an interactive medium for listening and speaking, was the second most-cited tool. Reading materials such as course texts also received high rates of reported usage.

With regard to speaking and listening skills, student open-ended comments from the questionnaire likewise tended to bear out an interactive course dynamic, with some preferring the oral chats to written discussion board assignments: "I really did enjoy my online classes, but felt that many of the required online discussion posts were unnecessary. I preferred a more active approach to sharing thoughts and opinions which was accomplished during the online chats" (Questionnaire Open Response). Others cited the opportunity to improve oral skills as a key feature of chat sessions: "The chat sessions were beneficial, especially when there were clearly-stated objectives. I was able to improve my Spanish [though] my speaking was already strong" (Questionnaire Open Response). Some students viewed these oral interactions as key to their own professional development: "Because I am not a native speaker, it is essential that I practice speaking Spanish a lot so that I don't start to forget pieces of it. These classes ensured that I continued to use the language in an academic setting, reinforcing what I had already been learning" (Final Portfolio). With regard to listening, most students also expressed satisfaction. One students reports: "Another course, SPA 641 *La Fonología del Españo*l [Spanish Phonology], involved an in-depth study of Spanish phonology that improved my own language production, my awareness of phonological variation in Spanish-speaking countries, and my understanding of specific phonological challenges that English-speaking learners of Spanish face" (Final Portfolio).

However, speaking and listening had the highest number of respondents who disagreed (12% and 10%, respectively) that they had improved in the skill. Open-ended comments reveal that some negative responses may be due to dissatisfaction with assignment set-up or even their peers. One student highlights

the inconvenience of synchronous chats, given the program's student population of full-time teachers located in time zones around the globe: "Although the chat sessions are beneficial to the program, it seems that alternate chat schedules could be made for teachers studying from abroad" (Questionnaire Open Response). Another felt that chats could easily "veer off-course" when not managed well by the professor. Another declared chats "a waste of time" because her peers were not prepared (Questionnaire Open Response). Because live chat sessions are the only synchronous program requirement, this type of frustration may explain, in part, lower "agree" scores as well as higher numbers of "neither agree nor disagree" responses to oral/aural improvement.

Another explanation may be that students often related improvements in speaking and listening to affective concerns such as apprehension about engaging with a specific skill or medium. For example, some online assignments took them into the community and outside of their comfort zone:

> My Spanish in the United States course took me out into the community with a service-learning project. One of the pitfalls of teaching elementary Spanish is that it is possible to speak Spanish only to children and avoid adults entirely. This service-learning project put me out in the community, speaking with parents and professionals. It stretched my language, but mostly my confidence. I feel much more comfortable now in speaking to adults in a variety of settings. (Final Portfolio)

This student clearly believed that this experience impacted her oral skills; she expresses that improvement in terms of confidence and willingness to seek out similar experiences in the future. It is important to keep in mind that this real-world experience stemmed from an online course requirement, as online learning may not often be associated with authentic community interaction. In terms of listening, students also describe linguistic gains in terms of "comfort":

> Prior to these courses, I had always viewed French media as something that was a step beyond my comfort level, as I found it difficult to follow the rapid rate of speech. Through watching a large selection of films and learning new tools to access French subtitles online, I felt my own level of comfort grow. (Final Portfolio)

Overall, program completers expressed satisfaction with these experiences. Live chat discussions, for example, were cited as opportunities to "interact with native Spanish speakers," "delve deeper into topics of personal interest," and develop "more accurate and fluent use of the target language while teaching" (Final Portfolios). Even students who had minor complaints about chat sessions (e.g., that chat sessions were at inconvenient times or that other students' oral skills were insufficient) nevertheless reported that these required extensive participation in the target language.

Linguistic development: Interaction with peers and instructors

In terms of the interactions that support linguistic development, 82% (42/51) reported interacting with both peers and instructors in the target language, while

8% did not; 10% neither agreed nor disagreed. This response, while defying conventional wisdom, nevertheless aligned with researcher expectations, given program policies and course syllabi which typically require significant discussion board and chat participation. In fact, 77% (49/64) of all survey respondents indicated that their interactions with online peers were productive; an even higher percentage (88%, 56/64) reported productive interaction with faculty (Burnett & Fonder-Solano, 2016).

Even some teaching assistants, who are based on campus, expressed initial qualms regarding the quality of classroom interaction in an online setting:

> I was actually hesitant about taking an online class because I was thinking that I would rather sit down at the front of the classroom, see the professor's face and be able to interact like that. But [once in chat], with the interaction part, you talk more in the online class because you are put in a group. In the classroom, it might not necessarily happen like that. (TA Focus Group)

In fact, most students indicated a positive experience with peer interactions online:

> I will say this, in terms of building a community of learners through these online courses, I think one of the best things that we did online was actually just different grouping strategies. You had to speak to the person you were assigned, so it was, "Hi, you are? Oh! That's nice, my name is... and what did you think about this?" So it was nice to actually get to share ideas in that respect, because you weren't getting the same opinions over and over again from the same person. (TA Focus Group)

In their final portfolio reflections, many students also gave favorable reviews of their instructors' teaching style and course feedback: "[My instructors] made me feel that my progress and growth were of primary importance. I was encouraged by the positive feedback and comments on evaluations that further increased my motivation to improve my language and my teaching skills" (Final Portfolio). As might be expected, however, not all comments were glowing endorsements; several students stressed the need for clear expectations, strong organization, and timely evaluation: "It took me a while to get used to the self-discipline online courses require. In an online class, there was a bit of a lag time to receive responses to questions and thoughts. This was a struggle for me because I am one who wants immediate responses to my questions. I had to be patient and really take advantage of chat times" (Final Portfolio). Notably, students did not cite the online course format as impeding their interaction with the instructor. As seen in the preceding quote, students were primarily concerned with the frequency and quality of instructor feedback.

Linguistic development: Language learning community

With regard to feeling part of a community, 82% (42/51) of respondents felt that they were part of a community specifically of language learners, 10% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 8% did not feel connected to a larger online community. As may be seen in any learning context, a few students simply did

not wish to interact with others or pursue online friendships with classmates. As one student wrote, "I am an independent learner, which is why I chose the online program, so all I really needed was some feedback from professors to guide me." (Questionnaire Open Response) But student discomfort with social interaction is hardly exclusive to the online environment. Even in traditional settings some students choose not to engage with peers either inside or outside of class for a variety of reasons, depending on their own perceived needs at a particular time. For example, one teaching assistant (who took courses both in-class and online) noted that because she already had close-knit, supportive relationships within the small group of on-campus TAs, she was less interested in making friends with an online peer until the context of that relationship changed:

> I could say, "Hey, I commented on your discussion board post," but I just didn't feel the same relationship with some of the other people in my online classes. There was one girl that I didn't even know who she was until we all went to Spain together. And she recognized me because I always had my video on whenever we talked [in the online chat]. I ended up liking her a lot. (TA Focus Group)

But as may be seen by the survey results, most students did choose to engage with their classmates and felt part of a language learning community. Essentially, the respondents who indicated that they felt part of a community were those who valued such interactions. For some, the relationships they developed with their peers and colleagues were often cited as one of the most rewarding and enduring aspects of the program. One student claimed to have found, "support and idea sources through the partnerships I have cultivated." (Final Portfolio). Another stated that, "the thing I appreciate most from my entire experience are the friendships I have developed with fellow language teachers across the country" (Final Portfolio). A third student agreed: "One of the greatest advantages to studying in this program is the ability to interact with students around the globe" (Final Portfolio).

Some students lived in areas of geographic or cultural isolation (from rural Alaska to ESL teachers in Saudi Arabia). These participants often had no access to native speakers of the target language or to people who shared their own cultural background. Others were struggling language teachers in small communities who had no colleagues in their field with whom they could share teaching ideas or concerns. But many simply bonded over the experience of making it through a very challenging course together or taking several courses together throughout their program of study. Overall, student comments expressed appreciation for the opportunity to "connect on a personal level," "form lasting friendships," "practice language skills with people struggling just like me," "get input from a diverse crowd," and work with others who "share their passion" (Final Portfolio). Unlike basic language courses, which form the basis for most studies of online language instruction, these graduate students were not taking courses simply to fulfill a requirement. Their shared vocation as language teachers, their shared experience of taking the same courses, and their shared enthusiasm for learning the language clearly increased their motivation to bond with each other as a community of language learners.

Cultural development

We defined cultural development in two ways: improvement in cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness (See Table 2). When asked about their cultural development online, 84% (54/64) of respondents felt that their cultural knowledge improved while 6% disagreed and 6% neither agreed nor disagreed. 81% (52/64) reported that their cross-cultural awareness had improved, whereas 8% felt it had not and 8% neither agreed nor disagreed. In the open comment section of the questionnaire and in final portfolios, no student expressed dissatisfaction regarding cultural learning. Rather, the overwhelming majority of respondents felt that they were able to engage meaningfully with different aspects of the target culture in an online environment. This is important, given that students enter the program with a high level of language and target culture experience: 20% were native speakers, some had studied or lived abroad (including 17% who reported studying abroad while enrolled in the program), and many had a target-language undergraduate major.

Table 2. Cultural Development Online

Survey Statement	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Mean	Total Respondents
My cultural knowledge improved.	54 (84%)	4 (6%)	4 (6%)	4.31*	64
My cross-cultural awareness improved.	52 (81%)	5 (8%)	5 (8%)	4.28**	64

*2 participants answered "not applicable"
**2 participants answered "not applicable"

The fact that this population reported engaging in new and challenging ways with the history, popular culture, news, film, literature, and communities of the target culture speaks to the opportunities online courses can provide for continued cultural growth. One student noted, "I learned the importance of incorporating cultural activities in the classroom and how to do it successfully. The [graduate program] allowed me to experiment with different topics and ideas that I originally would not have tried, such as art units discussing Frida and Diego Rivera, the Kuna Indians, and *molas* of Panama, and Fernando Botero and his strange artwork" (Final Portfolio). With regard to history and civilization, another student adds, "In SPA 637: *La Presencia Hispana en la Costa del Golfo* [Hispanic Presence on the Gulf Coast], I was surprised by how much Spanish influence there has been in the Gulf Coast region of the United States. I read about indigenous tribes I had never heard of and learned so much more about Spanish explorers than I had been taught in the past. I realized for the first time how precious little I know about Spanish history and culture." (Portfolio Reflection).

A review of course offerings can also provide insight into the types of experiences these students may have had. Typical French, Spanish, and TESOL language emphasis courses taught both in-class and online include Francophone/ Spanish/Latin American Civilization, Readings in American Cultural Studies, Sociolinguistics and Socio-cultural Perspectives in Language, Topics in French/ Spanish Literature (e.g., Novels of the Dirty War, Young Adult literature), France and the Media, French/Spanish in the Americas, Topics in Culture (e.g., Marie Antoinette and the Revolution, French Cuisine, Afro-Caribbean Culture), Francophone or Hispanic Film, and History of the French/Spanish Language. Moreover, study abroad experiences in France, Mexico, or Spain enhanced many students' graduate education overall. Fully 25% (16/64) of survey respondents either studied abroad with the program or planned to do so. These students enriched their cultural knowledge through an array of opportunities such as big-C excursions to museums or archeological sites or little-c cultural engagement with popular culture and daily life. Finally, community-based research and community-service learning enhanced the depth of students' cultural learning in many courses. One student commented:

> This course allowed me to be more involved in the local Hispanic community; as a service-learning project, I volunteered at St. Francis House, a local non-profit organization that aids those in need in the community, including a number of Hispanics. I also completed an interview with a Spanish-speaking friend and designed lessons for my classes based on the interview. I learned that I can use my own interactions with the Spanish-speaking community to create authentic lessons for my classrooms. (Final Portfolio)

Because our students saw themselves not only as language learners but also as language teachers, several students viewed the cultural knowledge that they gained through these courses as professionally transformative: "Through the [graduate program], I have transformed my classroom from one which focused on grammar and the textbook to one that focuses on content and the world" (Final Portfolio). Others gave very specific, detailed information on how the culture they learned in online graduate courses affected both their linguistic competence and their teaching ability:

> Learning the history of French civilization has helped me to feel more comfortable including Francophone history in my lesson plans. From discussion of ancient Gaul to bringing in reading on the Acadian diaspora to the ongoing struggle France faces with immigration, I feel much more capable sharing French culture with students and have since been including more and more in my units. (Final Portfolio)

In fact, several final portfolio reflections highlighted the program's unique cultural opportunities such as the community service-learning project in the *Hispanics in the US* course:

> In this class I developed a video on Westside community art. Murals I documented were painted by a locally famous muralist who, without the

support of my professor, I probably would never have had the courage to interview. This class provided a profoundly personal experience of Hispanics in the US for me as I focused intensely on my very own neighborhood's history and the people who created it. (Final Portfolio)

These comments stress not only personal gains in cultural knowledge and cross-cultural awareness, but also the importance of this increased cultural knowledge and awareness to their development as language teachers.

Discussion and conclusion

In terms of our research questions, student data regarding proficiency gains, cultural knowledge, cross-cultural awareness, classroom interaction, and feeling part of a language learning community provide a strong, yet nuanced counterpoint to the pervasive skepticism surrounding language learning online. At least for this population of graduate students, participants reported overall that their linguistic (88%) n=51 and cultural competence improved (84%) n=64 and that these courses fostered peer interactions in the target language (82%) n=51 and allowed for friendships and support as part of a language learning community (82%) n=51.

The fact that students almost universally report improvement in overall L2 proficiency is a remarkable outcome, particularly when no student disagreed. One might laud these outcomes in any master's program, but this level of perceived gains in language proficiency would not necessarily be expected of an online master's program. Even the lowest reported skill-area gains (65% in speaking and listening) show that most students report improvement. The fact that these numbers lag behind reported progress in reading and writing may reflect the prevalence of assignments and tools that reinforce those particular skills. The lower perceived improvement for oral/aural skills, as well as the larger group that replied "neither agree nor disagree" may also reflect student ambivalence regarding chat assignments, evolving technology for aural/oral communication, or even willingness to communicate. Certainly, as the technology for online group oral interaction and listening has improved and the platforms have changed, these tools have been more widely incorporated in our courses (e.g., Collaborate Classroom, Big Blue Button, Google Chat).

As seen in the comments regarding classroom interaction, supportive peer communication can and did fulfill social needs of online learners as well as foster linguistic improvement. Most online students reported active participation in the target language with peers, particularly in discussion board forums and live chats. As shown in our results, respondents not only felt part of a community of learners, but specifically felt part of a community of language learners that often interacted in the target language. This becomes quite meaningful when one considers that students do not move through our program in cohorts. Comments from final

portfolios elucidate these findings by showing how important these relationships were to provide a sounding board, friendship, ideas for language teaching, and to share their passion for the language and culture.

Study Limitations

Since the program has only been fully online since 2008, to obtain a meaningful number of respondents, our study included a mixed population of students with online experience: some studied exclusively online, some mixed online and in-class experiences, and some studied abroad as well as taking online courses. The researchers mitigated these differences by how we coded the data for different population groups. Although all students were directed to respond specifically based on online experiences, this relatively small, mixed population did not lend itself easily to statistical analysis. It also addressed a single institution, whose results may not be generalizable. We also recognize that because the questionnaire was not piloted, it could benefit from some revision. However, the authors did get input from faculty colleagues regarding the wording of survey questions prior to implementation.

Conclusion

Encouragingly, this group of online graduate students reported positive experiences, rebutting common critiques of online learning. This result might be expected from highly motivated students who self-select into an online master's program, but it does not negate the fact that they report meaningful learning and positive experiences overall. When reputable national surveys report faculty skepticism regarding the quality, classroom interaction, and learning outcomes of online courses, it is not widely understood that individual courses or programs might present a different picture.

> Encouragingly, this group of online graduate students reported positive experiences, rebutting common critiques of online learning.

The focus must be on creating a whole, comprehensive program of study, regardless of format, with ample opportunities for students to engage in the target language, connect with target-language communities, and interact directly with authentic materials. Some features the authors view as fundamental for creating a successful online language program include providing courses rich in cultural context, an online environment that supports language acquisition (with course shell, syllabi, and assignments all in the target language), both synchronous and asynchronous peer interaction, regular feedback from both peers and instructors, and opportunities to feel part of a community of practice. By soliciting and highlighting student perspectives with regard to their own linguistic and cultural learning, as well as their interactions with professors and peers, this study offers insight into how an online program with high levels of student satisfaction can succeed.

Endnotes

1. Both authors have administrative experience as department chair and graduate director. Fonder-Solano has taught five or more graduate Spanish courses

online over the past decade; Burnett has taught an average of two online graduate courses in French and language education per year during this time.

2. Unlike novice learners, advanced-level students are unlikely to make dramatic gains in proficiency during the course of a single university semester (Liskin-Gasparro, 1982; Moeller, 2013).

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APPENDIX A

ONLINE LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE (See Burnett & Fonder-Solano, 2016)

MATL Program
The University of Southern Mississippi

1. How did you find out about the MATL degree? (**choose all that apply**)
    ☐ Internet search
    ☐ Referral
    ☐ Advertisement
    ☐ Familiarity with The University of Southern Mississippi

2. I chose the MATL program because of: (**choose all that apply**)
    ☐ its flexibility
    ☐ its accessibility
    ☐ its affordability
    ☐ its program emphasis in teaching
    ☐ its online program
    ☐ the language concentrations offered
    ☐ the possibility of getting 18 graduate hours in a language emphasis
    ☐ my familiarity with The University of Southern Mississippi

3. Are you currently employed in the field of language teaching?
    ☐ Yes
    ☐ No (skip to question 5)

4. If yes, in what type of educational environment do you work? (**choose all that apply**)
    ☐ Elementary school
    ☐ Middle School
    ☐ High school
    ☐ Community College
    ☐ College/University
    ☐ Public
    ☐ Private
    ☐ International Baccalaureate
    ☐ Advanced Placement
    ☐ Bilingual education
    ☐ Immersion program

5. What was the primary language of your childhood household?
    ☐ Spanish
    ☐ English

☐ French
☐ Another language

6. What was the language of your high school education?
☐ Spanish
☐ English
☐ French
☐ Another language

7. I enrolled in the MATL program with an emphasis or emphases in (**choose all that apply**)
☐ TESOL
☐ French
☐ Spanish

8. Did you study abroad with the MATL program?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not yet but I plan to

9. What is your age group?
☐ 21-30
☐ 31-40
☐ 41-49
☐ 50+

10. What is your current geographical location?
☐ International
☐ Northeastern United States
☐ Northwestern United States
☐ Midwest/Central United States
☐ Southeastern United States
☐ Southwestern United States

11. Have you completed the MATL degree?
☐ Yes
☐ Not yet

12. If you completed the degree please choose an option:
☐ I graduated before 2002
☐ I graduated between 2002-2005
☐ I graduated between 2006-2009
☐ I graduated between 2010-2014
☐ I have not yet completed the degree

13. If you have not yet completed the degree how many MATL courses have you taken?
☐ 1-2
☐ 3-5
☐ 6-10

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☐ I completed the MATL degree

14. I have taken courses in the MATL:
☐ Exclusively online
☐ Exclusively in-class
☐ Online and in-class

The following statements will all relate to your experience taking online classes in the MATL program.

15. My online MATL courses included: (**choose all that apply**)
☐ Listening assignments
☐ Reading assignments
☐ Writing assignments
☐ Speaking assignments

16. Select the tools that were used in your online classes (**choose all that apply**).
☐ Discussion board
☐ Live Chat
☐ Videos
☐ Blogs
☐ Journals
☐ E-book/s
☐ Electronic articles
☐ Links to online resources
☐ Links to library resources
☐ Voice recordings
☐ Links to online media resources (television, radio, newspapers)
☐ Textbook/s

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Thinking back on your experience taking online course in the MATL program, rate the following on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being STRONGLY DISAGREE and 5 being STRONGLY AGREE).

My knowledge of the field of language teaching improved.
I gained knowledge of professional organizations in the field of language teaching.
My ability to conduct research improved.
My knowledge of teaching techniques and strategies improved.
I have more teaching ideas and activities.

INTERACTION ONLINE

On a scale of 1 to 5 rate the following statements (1 being STRONGLY DISAGREE and 5 being STRONGLY AGREE).

I interacted with my online peers.
My interaction with online peers was productive.
I interacted with my instructor online.

My interaction with my instructor online was productive.
Live chats were beneficial to my learning.
Discussion board assignments were beneficial to my learning.

LANGUAGE LEARNING COMMUNITY ONLINE

On a scale of 1 to 5 rate the following statements (1 being STRONGLY DISAGREE and 5 being STRONGLY AGREE).

I was part of a community of learners.
The online community was beneficial to my overall student learning experience.

ACADEMIC RIGOR ONLINE

On a scale of 1 to 5 rate the following statements (1 being STRONGLY DISAGREE and 5 being STRONGLY AGREE).

My online course/s were academically rigorous.
My academic writing skills improved.
My knowledge of research in my field improved.

TECHNOLOGY ISSUES ONLINE

On a scale of 1 to 5 rate the following statements (1 being STRONGLY DISAGREE and 5 being STRONGLY AGREE).

I was able to access all components of the online course/s.
I was able to interact effectively in the online format.
My questions and concerns about accessing different components of the course/s were addressed.
My questions and concerns about the technology were addressed.

LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ONLINE

Thinking back on your experience taking online courses in the MATL program, rate the following statements on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being STRONGLY DISAGREE and 5 being STRONGLY AGREE).

My cultural knowledge improved.
My cross-cultural awareness improved.

Please respond ONLY to the following if the language of your concentration is your second language (L2) and you have taken online classes in your L2.

My L2 oral proficiency improved.
My L2 listening comprehension improved.
My L2 writing skills improved.
My L2 reading proficiency improved.
My overall L2 language proficiency improved.
I interacted with my online peers in the language of my concentration.
I interacted with my instructor in the language of my concentration.
I felt part of a language learning community.

Graduate Student Perspectives on Linguistic and Cultural Growth

If you have thoughts about your experiences with online instruction and foreign language learning, please feel free to share them here.

Appendix B

Focused Interview Questions for Teaching Assistants (See Burnett & Fonder-Solano, 2016)

1. Tell us about your experiences with online learning and the MATL program.
2. How would you describe your experiences in foreign language classes online?
3. How would you describe your experiences taking core courses online?
4. Before taking a course online did you have any preconceived notions about what online learning would be like?
5. Have your ideas about online learning changed with more experience?
6. Did you find the courses online rigorous? In what ways? Or if not why not?
7. What if any were your concerns about language proficiency in an online context? What activities online do you think assisted you most with your L2? Were there activities that you thought were more worthwhile than others?
8. Can you describe the types of activities that you did in your L2 online that were beneficial to your linguistic improvement? Did you do a lot more writing in your L2 than you were used to? What did you think about the discussion board work? What did you think about using Live chat in an L2? Is there an activity type that you wish was included and was not?
9. Could you describe what the interaction with your peers online was like? Was it important to you to get to know them or to interact with them in the online environment? What course activities contributed to such interaction? Did you find the chats beneficial to your learning?
10. How did the technology enhance or impede your ability to learn? Were there aspects of the course that you found difficult or frustrating due to the technology? How were these issues resolved?
11. Did your instructors interact with you regularly online? If so in what ways? If not what happened? How would you like your instructor to interact with you online?
12. In your experience, why do you think that people question how it is possible to learn a second language online? Have you ever had someone ask you this question? What would you say to critics of online learning?
13. Since you took classes both online and in-class how would you compare the experiences? What would you say to an incoming MATL TA next year about your experiences with the online coursework?
14. What advice would you give about taking a class online? What would you say to prospective language students considering an online program?

Time and history in lyrics: A unique approach to teaching culture and civilization

Haning Z. Hughes, *USAF Academy*
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Abstract

This paper describes an alternative and unique format to the customary culture and civilization course taught at the upper levels in a university foreign language curriculum. The semester-long course employed a content-based design that combined language instruction and learning with authentic music generated during distinct historical eras in China. Song lyrics representing different epochs were the lens through which students investigated the target culture, its historical, social, and political background. Employing music as the major vehicle and organizing principle of the course proved to be highly motivational for students, as shown in pre- and post-test survey results and end-of-course questionnaire responses.[1] This format is easily generalizable across languages and target cultures.

Introduction

Language and culture are undeniably and inextricably intertwined. Language learning is absolutely more than the sum of its (grammatical and lexical) parts and cannot stand alone without the surrounding support of the culture it represents

Haning Z Hughes (Ph.D., University of Colorado) is the Deputy Department Head and Associate Professor of Chinese in the Department of Foreign Languages at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). She has developed numerous courses on Chinese military and government, culture and civilization, history, and literature, etc. Her research interests include language learning motivation, second language acquisition, and instructional methodologies.

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(Díaz, 2016). Indeed, this belief is confirmed in the World-Readiness Standards handbook: "… the true content of a language course or program is not discrete elements of grammar and vocabulary, but rather the cultures expressed through the language" (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015, p. 68). Thus, the ubiquitous culture and civilization course, generally taught at advanced levels of language instruction, takes on paramount importance in the development of students' linguistic and cultural proficiency. Nearly all tertiary institutions with language majors include at least one such course in the curriculum; often these courses are organized around a textbook based on geographic regions of target language countries. The course curriculum described here takes a unique and fresh approach to the study of culture and civilization by using historical time periods and their concomitant representation in music and songs of the eras as its organizing principle. This paper presents a rationale for employing such a format, a detailed description of the development and content of the course, and methods of assessment of student activity during the course. Students took a pre- and post-test survey involving cultural knowledge. They also responded to an end-of-course questionnaire in which they expressed their opinions about the efficacy of this new format and content vis-à-vis their interest, motivation, and overall learning[1]. These results are discussed below.

> Language and culture are undeniably and inextricably intertwined. Language learning is absolutely more than the sum of its (grammatical and lexical) parts and cannot stand alone without the surrounding support of the culture it represents.

Rationale for content-based instruction

Using a content-based instructional (CBI) approach was the first decision made for the course. Rather than concentrate on decontextualized language bits and pieces, a focus on cultural content—specifically historical and political occurrences as reflected through the music and songs of each era—was determined. Met offers quite a detailed explanation of all facets of CBI and provides a continuum against which various hybrids of this approach can be measured and categorized (Met, 1999). At one end (to the left) of the continuum are the variations falling under the label of content-driven instruction. At the other end (to the right) of the continuum are those under the rubric of language-driven instruction. Theme-based courses fall on the right-hand side of this line, as they are frequently courses conceived to facilitate foreign language (FL) instruction but also incorporate a theme around which the curriculum is organized. Themes are selected for a variety of reasons, including their potential to contribute to growth in the learner's linguistic and cultural acumen. Chinese 495 (Time and History in Lyrics) is such a theme-based course, having an underpinning of cultural history and politics through music as its premise.

A CBI curricular method was selected for several reasons. First, CBI is well-supported by second language acquisition (SLA) research (Cammarata, 2009; Channa & Soomro, 2015; Corrales, 2011; Heinz, 2010; Kong, 2009). Next, CBI is viewed as a method in which students focus more on content than form, leading

to a deeper level of the language-learning process (Abrudan, 2016; Met, 1999; Rodgers, 2014; Stryker & Leaver, 1997). A CBI methodology can be effective in teaching advanced language-level classes (Larsen-Freeman & Freeman, 2008) and can be used across divergent instructional contexts, depending on program goals (Lyster & Ballinger, 2011). This pedagogical approach has also proved successful in promoting critical thinking in the target language (Heinz 2010). Often CBI focuses on real-life issues and topics, and as such engenders higher student motivation (Channa & Soomro, 2015; Corrales, 2011; Met, 1999; Stryker & Leaver, 1997). No inconsequential variable in successful language learning, motivation in CBI can be augmented by careful selection of themes of high interest to students. Topics that are relevant, meaningful, interesting, and even controversial can capture student attention and increase student motivation (Corrales, 2011; Heinz, 2010; Iaccarino, 2012; Kern, 2008; Liu, 2013; Met, 1999).

Once the CBI decision is taken, the next step is to decide on themes for the course. This choice is crucial as it will set the stage for the rest of course development and has the potential to "make or break" the course in terms of student interest, motivation, and application. Students viewing subject content as useful and interesting to them are more disposed to positive engagement with the course. The World-Readiness Standards include the goal area of Connections, a purposeful effort to connect the FL curriculum with the rest of students' academic lives and foment an inward and outward flow of information and ideas. The additional knowledge gained through these connections provides students with broader learning experiences leading to acquisition of 21st- century skills for success (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). The Connections standards involve linking the FL and culture to other disciplines; students gain insight into other viewpoints that is only possible to obtain through the target language and culture (Díaz, 2016; Heinz, 2010; Kern, 2008). Chinese 495 is a culture and civilization course that teaches about history, politics, and modern Chinese culture during sequential time periods in the 20th century. The connections to other disciplines made by this immersion course are obvious, powerful, and potentially long-lasting as they are made through the medium of music.

> The Connections standards involve linking the FL and culture to other disciplines; students gain insight into other viewpoints that is only possible to obtain through the target language and culture.

Song lyrics as an organizing principle

The use of music and in particular song lyrics for this course was an appealing idea for two main reasons. First, music is nearly always a reflection of the culture from which it comes, and Chinese 495 is first and foremost a culture and civilization class. As previously stated, there exists an indelible connection between language and culture; therefore, teaching language via culture—in this case as reflected through music—is natural and sensible. Music provides a window into the culture that it reflects (Elliott, 1995; Kern, 2008). The World-Readiness Standards goal area of Cultures come into play here also as music is definitely a product embodying one or more perspectives of a particular culture (Dema & Moeller,

2012; Eddy, 2007; The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). Music frequently reflects the historical values and contemporary life experiences of a particular people and/or era. As such, it is a strong cultural phenomenon that students can examine to see what is significant in the target language culture (Goering & Wei, 2014; Harbon, 2013; Koo, 2000; Larsen-Freeman & Freeman, 2008). Additionally, music—and a close examination of song lyrics—can help students understand social, political, and cultural events that may elude their understanding (Lau, 2007; Law & Ho, 2006; Law & Ho, 2011; Murray, 2005). Improved intercultural understanding and reduction of cultural biases are worthy goals of language instruction through music (Abril, 2003; Liu, 2013; Rodgers, 2014).

> Music frequently reflects the historical values and contemporary life experiences of a particular people and/or era. As such, it is a strong cultural phenomenon that students can examine to see what is significant in the target language culture

The second reason is the long-standing suggestion of an association between musical ability and second language acquisition. Researchers have long been interested in whether or not using music in language teaching is effective (Fonseca-Mora & Grant, 2016). Some studies have shown benefits derived from using music in the FL classroom for instruction, including positive influences on memory, attention and effort, lowered affective filter, better linguistic perception, improved test scores, and improved physiological effects (e.g., lowered heart rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure) (Debreceny, 2015; Fonseca-Mora, 2000; Fonseca-Mora, Toscano-Fuentes, & Wermke, 2011; Fonseca-Mora & Grant, 2016; Kennedy, 2006; Koo, 2000; Li & Brand, 2009; Salcedo, 2010). There is also some evidence that the effects of CBI and the use of music on the brain do have a positive impact on second language development (Debreceny, 2015; Kennedy, 2006; Li & Brand, 2009; Marie, Delogu, Lampis, Belardinelli, & Besson, 2011; Murphey, 1990; Salcedo, 2010).

Some researchers note that adults spend up to 50% of their daily time listening, compared to only upwards of 16% of their time reading (Kean, 2013; Murray, 2005). Thus, auditory input is a prime factor in everyday life. When taken in conjunction with the general popularity of music as an auditory input, it is not surprising that songs can be quite influential in terms of making information "stick" in learners' minds. Murphey (1990, 1992) explains this as the "song-stuck-in-my-head" phenomenon (SSIMHP) and relates it to the din that language learners experience while progressing along their interlanguage continuum. Most likely, everyone has experienced the SSIMHP at one time or another, perhaps to a maddening degree. It seems beneficial, then, to take advantage of this phenomenon to enhance the linguistic and cultural learning of students by using music and song lyrics as vehicles for CBI in Chinese 495.

Methodology

Song Selections

In order to enhance student understanding of Chinese culture, history, politics, and language in various periods of time in Chinese history, it was necessary to ensure

that each song be representative of its time, and that it provide a clear connection between the lyrics and the history and culture it contained. There are many methods for selecting representative songs, including by genres, styles, or chronological periods of time in Chinese history. In this particular course, songs were first selected based on chronological order by decades from the 1920s-1930s, the 1940s-1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s, and so on, and then by genres and styles. These selected songs were well-known during their time, and often contained noteworthy music or very expressive lyrics that reflected the historical, political, and cultural challenges of the period. Another essential consideration—even requirement—was that the lyrics and stories be meaningful, and that they contain appropriate grammar and vocabulary suited to the students' Chinese language level. The literary nature of the lyrics was also an important element as a representation of the cultural and historical period. Finally, the background of the lyricist or songwriter was also considered; those composers who were most representative of each particular era were chosen.

For this course, several genres of songs were employed. In order to underscore the lengthy history of music-making in China, some eight thousand years or more (Moore, 2009), an initial brief treatment of ancient Chinese music was presented. For example, as a general backdrop to the entire theme of lyrics and music, ancient folk songs were selected and presented from *The Book of Songs: The Ancient Chinese Classic of Poetry* (Allen & Waley, 1996), one of the world's most outstanding collections of poetry and traditional songs remaining from China's Ancient Classical period. The end of the Qing dynasty, circa 1911, (Tian, 2013) signaled the beginning of the Republic of China, with all the concomitant influences pouring in from the western world. These influences naturally had a great impact on the sociocultural landscape, including literature, art, and music production. For example, the music available and popular in Shanghai during the 1920s and 1930s closely resembled the music prevalent in the United States during that same time period.

Military songs were identified that represented the 1940s in China, a period dominated by the war with Japan, and later, the Chinese Civil War. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was represented by patriotic songs popular during the 1960s. Next, the open-door policies and economic reforms of the government of the 1970s and 1980s encouraged the influx of foreign culture and influence into China. Thus, this era was represented by popular songs influenced by the so-called "Decadent Music" from Taiwan. Teresa Deng Lijun, for example, reworked Shanghai tunes from the 1930s that had previously been designated as improper or "yellow" music—a reference to its association with pornography and sexually indecent lyrics (White, 1998). Songs from the 1990s-2000s were characterized by the rise of Chinese Rock and Rap protest music that developed following the Tiananmen Square incident as students and young professionals began demanding more political, economic, and social freedoms. The music of Cui Jian, known as the "godfather of Chinese rock," embodied the unrest of the times with such songs as "Nothing to My Name" and "The Last Gunshot," an anthem to the violence of Tiananmen Square (Tong, 2016). Finally, music from the current decade (2010 to present day) was characterized by popular music originating on television or through the Internet. In contrast to movie music from the United States film industry, which sometimes uses already-existing,

classical, popular, and/or famous songs as background (viz., the soundtracks for such movies as "Goodfellas," "A Clockwork Orange," and "The King's Speech"), in China the music and songs are written specifically for that particular medium, such as movie and television drama. Along with the media venue, these songs are almost instantaneously wildly popular.

Curriculum Design and Course Delivery

The course curriculum was structured to enable students to make the connection between their second language acquisition process and how the language actually relates to social development and change in Chinese history and culture. Throughout the semester, as students were introduced to new songs, they were provided with information on the biographical background of the composers and the lyricists. They were also introduced to various music styles in general and their associated terminologies. A contextual explanation of the cultural and historical events of the times was also provided, to expand the students' understanding of the period. The instructor also offered additional information through personal stories, news media accounts, articles, or books to further illustrate the political and societal circumstances in which the songs were created. All instruction by the instructor and interactions in the course between and among students and instructor were in the target language: Mandarin Chinese. A typical daily lesson plan indicating activities of a regular class period is found in Appendix A.

The songs selected were studied in chronological order, beginning from the 1920s. This approach not only allowed the students to immerse themselves in the Chinese culture and society of the period, but also allowed them to explore concurrent musical and cultural developments occurring in the United States. Each decade of musical development in China was accompanied by a corresponding examination of the political, social, and musical movements that were occurring at the same time in the United States. For example, during the 1960s, China was experiencing the Cultural Revolution during which most music was relegated to propaganda directed at praising the Great Leader, Chairman Mao, the Communist Party, and the movement. One notable song from the period was "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is Good" (Bandurski, 2011). During this period, China was experiencing the peak of the cultural and political influence of the Communist party and the government, and individual freedom of expression in music and literature was non-existent. Conversely, in the United States, the students discovered that instead of pro-government platitudes, the society and its music reflected very different attitudes and movements within the country, especially the anti-government and anti-Vietnam War movements, the sexual revolution, and the civil rights movement. A notable song during this period in America was Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind," (1962), which became a rallying call for anti-war protestors, not just in the United States, but all over the world (Naylor, 2000). As indicated in Appendix A, students made such time period-based cultural comparisons between activities in China and the United States on a regular basis in class.

By the 1980s, however, the political landscape in China had changed with the emergence of Deng Xiaoping, who initiated China's open-door policy and economic

reform. These dramatic changes to society were illustrated in film, literature, music, and television. Popular Chinese music shifted away from propaganda promoting the government to lyrics that celebrated love, individual expressions, individual happiness, and societal prosperity. Deng's open-door policy led to the introduction of "Decadent Music" from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the West.

As Chinese society continued its rapid development, bringing with it increased prosperity, especially to the cities, China's music began to reflect contemporary societal concerns. Societal problems surrounding migration of farmers from remote areas of the countryside to the major cities to find work created issues with education, healthcare, and housing. A representative rock and roll song by Wang Feng from the 2000s entitled, "Beijing Beijing," (chinaSMACK, 2013) echoed much of the migrants' frustrations. The expression of their hopes and dissatisfactions while trying to achieve the "Chinese" dream, encompassed by rock and roll style and lyrics, was a phenomenon learned and imported from the West.

The students also encountered an interesting parallel of Chinese musical expression that was very similar to music created in the United States during the 1980s. Known as Charity singles, Chinese music such as "Let the World be Filled with Love," (Ho, 2014) emulates the American classic of the same period called "We are the World" (Sullivan, 2012). In both cases, this music was used to bring attention to African hunger issues, and, most recently, for Haitian earthquake relief efforts. The growth of this type of music in China reflects progress toward a greater connection with the global society and an awareness of global issues such hunger, natural disasters, and world peace.

Student Research and Presentations

To further enhance their language skills, as well as to develop greater cross-cultural awareness, students were assigned projects with the following three components: (1) research Chinese songs within their cultural and historical contexts; (2) compare songs from the same genre or era in both China and the United States; and then (3) present their findings to the group and lead overall discussion based on questions they have generated. All of these presentations were conducted in the target language. For each project, students worked in small groups (2-3 students) and subsequently presented their project to the entire class. These presentations addressed the background of the song, analyzed the lyrics in the context of their cultural and historical period, and identified the political and social undertones of the time. Students explained why they chose the particular songs and also discussed which lyrics were most meaningful to them. Their presentations then generated in-depth discussions about China and its decade-by-decade development, as well as parallels and contrasting ideas concurrent in the United States.

For example, one group of students found a Chinese song entitled "Friends" (Wang, 2015). This song was meaningful to these students because the lyrics suggested the value of having friends to help one through difficult or challenging periods of time. The song resonated with these students because they had collectively conquered a challenging academic and military training experience, and were now about to graduate and be individually assigned to far-flung locations around the

world, far from family and friends. Another example: the song, "Meihua," (Chang & Holt, 2006) is often used metaphorically to symbolize the beauty, grace, strength, and resilience of women. "Meihua" – the plum blossom, is a cherished national symbol in China, and its beauty, resilience, and ability to endure harsh elements are treasured. This song was meaningful to our female students who have had to overcome the challenges associated with a male-dominated military environment.

Examples of student work

The instructional methodology employed in this course resulted in some very impressive student Chinese language and culture learning. During the course, students were asked to write an essay about their favorite Chinese song, select two songs to perform in front of their classmates, and create the lyrics to their own song, all in the target language. And, as the following examples demonstrate, they were fully engaged in a student-centered learning process.

Composition: For the essay portion, each student was instructed to select a favorite Chinese song, research the lyricist and composer, and then either compare the music to a contemporary western piece, or describe how it was representative of the student's own experiences. One student selected a piece entitled "Sunshine in the Cracks" ["裂縫中的陽光"]. In his essay, he described it as an inspiring song about a depressed man who shed tears in bed, and mentioned that occasionally, when he (the student) was feeling dispirited, he enjoyed listening to the song. He described a verse in the song that stated "wait until the dark night passes, for the light of a new day," ["等到黑夜翻面之后，会是新的白昼"]. He interpreted this to mean that individuals should have hope, for every day is a new experience, and that we should not be too worried about the difficult challenges from yesterday. He also described another line that said "life will not only be about the harvest, but will also inevitably include sorrow" ["人生不会只有收获 总难免有伤口"]. The student felt that the sentiment expressed in the lyrics was very real, "because many times, life is not always happy. Often, we are disappointed and do not want to move forward. But this sentence says we have to keep trying." He then went on to explain that the lyrics that had the most powerful impact on him were as follows: "Do not be afraid of the imperfect corner of life, because the sun is scattered in every crack" ["不要害怕生命中 不完美的角落，阳光在每个裂缝中散落"]. He concluded his essay by explaining that "Sunshine in the cracks" was very interesting to him personally because when he was ten years old, he learned to play this song on the piano. He then performed it for the elderly in a nursing home. He felt that the song gave him confidence to share his talents, as well as the personal backstory to his favorite Chinese song.

Song Presentation: Each student was required to learn and sing two Chinese songs. They performed in groups of two or three, to minimize reticence in singing in front of peers. During their presentations to their classmates and instructors, the students were expected to use the target language to explain why they chose each song and describe the period of time in which it was composed, as well as any relevant historical, cultural, or societal stimulus that may have influenced the song writer. In addition, students were asked to research the lyricist and the composer and to explain their background and any personal experiences that may have

contributed to the music development. Students were then asked to discuss their favorite line in the song and explain why that particular verse resonated with them. Following their presentation, classmates and instructors had the opportunity to ask questions and gain more insight into the music.

After singing, the student who chose to learn the aforementioned traditional Chinese folk song called "Meihua" ["梅花"], explained that her favorite line was "it is not afraid of cold or snow, wind or rain" ["冰雪风雨它都不怕"]. She said that line deeply affected her attitude towards some of the challenges and difficulties she personally had been facing. She also stated that she was determined to acquire those attributes of resilience and strength to meet the challenges of her environment, emulating the Meihua.

Composing Lyrics: Through this process, students not only learned the techniques of writing poetry using Chinese characters, they also became more aware of how powerful personal experiences, coupled with societal and cultural changes, can influence the music that is written. Another student wrote lyrics for a song about unrequited love entitled "I Still Love You" ["还在爱你"]. In this composition, he did not draw upon historical or cultural experiences to compose his lyrics. Instead, he reflected again and again on his personal experience to create the lyrics that ultimately expressed his inner thoughts and deepest feelings. The song's refrain is hauntingly beautiful and poignant. In it, he laments "I hold you, You push me; I love you, You hurt me; Whatever I can do, I will do, to show that my love for you is real; Though much time has passed, Still I love you" ["**我抱你, 你推我**; **我**爱你, **你**伤我; **我什么都可以做就做**, 给你看我对你的爱是真正的; 虽然过很多时间, **但我**还在爱你"]. He explained to the class that the song-writing process was cathartic, allowing him to express feelings and emotions that had been long suppressed. He indicated that although his feelings towards his former love had not necessarily changed, he no longer felt the deep loneliness that had once consumed him.

Assessments and Evaluations

Different assessment methods/instruments were employed; all required reception and production skills in the target language. These assessments included classroom discussions, essay writing, vocabulary and sentence structure quizzes, comprehensive questionnaires/exams with translations, group presentations, song writing, and even a singing performance. Students were able to utilize critical thinking skills in relation to history, culture, politics, and societal issues through these music lyrics.

Student progress was assessed through group research presentations, individual written essays, and lyric composition. The aforementioned group research projects were focused on the cultural and societal background of the songs, as well as the historical events of the times and their influence on the music. In addition, students were expected to become familiar with the composer and lyricist background and biographies, as well as to identify any other interesting stories and information about how the songs they researched were inspired or created. Students in the group were graded individually based on their presentation in the language, their

content knowledge, and their ability to generate critical thinking among the rest of the students. The individual written essays were analyses of certain songs from a variety of approaches: for example, (1) compare and contrast (usually) a Chinese and an American song, (2) discussion of the literary quality of the songs, (3) a biography of the lyricist, (4) a recompilation of the sociocultural background of the era and its relation to the song.

Individual written essays in the target language focused on the cultural and historical context in which the songs were written and highlighted societal change that may have been influenced by the music. Finally, students had the opportunity to select their favorite music style, genre, and historical era, and then compose their own lyrics appropriate to the times.

The benefits of the development of these skills had repercussions and a reach far beyond Chinese 495. Exploration and subsequent mastery of these skills help shape the way students approach their other course assignments, assess which books they choose to read, how they evaluate the music and lyrics they listen to each day, how they approach research projects, and the way they think, write, and handle a myriad of tasks every day.

Student knowledge and course perspective

At the beginning of the semester, a simple pre-test (see Appendix B, Mini-survey) was administered to students to assess their overall knowledge of 40 topics directly related to the Chinese civilization and culture of the time periods involved in the course. Students were asked merely to self-rate their knowledge of these topics as "very well," "somewhat," and "not at all." At the end of the course, a post-test (identical to the pre-test) was administered to see if any gains in knowledge were made. This rudimentary measurement of student knowledge showed some remarkable results, as illustrated by Appendix C. In the pre-test, over half of the class expressed a complete lack of knowledge about 31 of the 40 topics. These results were surprising as these were upper-level students enrolled in an advanced class in Chinese. A striking example of this lack of cultural and historical knowledge is reflected in 13 of 15 students indicating no knowledge at all about "The Great Leap Forward" (topic #15) and the remaining two students only indicated "somewhat" as their response about this topic. Even more surprising, not one student recognized the topic "The Gang of Four" (topic #21) at the beginning of the course. The post-test happily showed a vast difference and improvement in the self-rated knowledge of the topics listed. For example, the percentage change on topic #21 was 82% and that of topic #15 was 75%. Overall, 29 out of 40 topics showed a delta of 48% or greater, indicating a definite increase in student self-rated knowledge.

In addition, students responded to an end-of-course questionnaire (see Appendix D) about various aspects of the class. The reactions were overwhelmingly positive in terms of the course content and methodology employed to cover same. Students appreciated the variety of projects and corresponding assessments used throughout the course. They particularly mentioned the comprehensive instructor presentations entailing cultural and historical material as very useful aids to comprehension. Not surprisingly, the use of songs and music to transmit

the historical and cultural content was quite popular and viewed as "very effective" and "engaging," echoing Murphey (1990, 1992) and the other previous CBI arguments (see above) in favor of this type of vehicle for imparting course materials. Indeed, students cited singing as an excellent way to remember the lyrics, Chinese characters, and grammar they encountered during their research and in the course content.

Conclusion

Using music, specifically song lyrics representative of chronological eras in modern Chinese history, as the basis for a culture and civilization course proved to be a unique and effective method of language instruction at the advanced level. Students were engaged and enthusiastic throughout the course. The course material established and sustained an atmosphere of positive cultural and linguistic learning that was evinced by pre- and post-test results as well as comments on the end-of-course questionnaire. Students were able to study the culture, history, and language of modern China in depth. They were also able to leverage their learning in the creation of their own original songs and the concomitant explanation and presentation of their artistic production. Clearly, there are myriad ways to approach an advanced course on culture and civilization in a FL classroom. The course topic and structure presented above is offered as one effective way teachers can consider in their own curriculum. It is a format easily generalizable across languages and target cultures.

Note

1. Instibional Review Board approval for this research project was obtained (FAC20170043E).

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Appendix A

Typical daily lesson outline for Chinese 495: Time and History in Lyrics

The following procedures and activities encompass a typical daily lesson in Chinese 495. Of note is the undercurrent of connections to the United States culture. This reflects a primary belief on the part of the instructor vis-à-vis intercultural competence. That is, in order for students to begin to consider and subsequently understand another culture, they must have a foundation in their own culture and a solid notion of the products, practices, and perspectives underpinning same.

1. The specific time period is determined, e.g., the 1960s
2. Instructor presentation of cultural and historical events of the era, providing the background of society at that particular time; solicitation of student knowledge of events relevant to the time period in both China and the United States; class discussion of same

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3. Continuation of class discussion involving comparison and contrasting of China and the United States with regards to parallel events, themes, incidents, but with an emphasis on China
4. Song presentation by instructor:
   a. lyrics printed out and distributed to students
   b. students listen to song
   c. students analyze lyrics
   d. discussion about style of writing/lyrics used by composer
   e. students select and explain favorite "lines" in song
5. Homework assignment: in order to elicit critical thinking, students are asked to contemplate and respond to the following statement: "Clearly, events affect the songs and lyrics. But how might the lyrics contribute to societal events, if at all?"

Appendix B - Mini-Survey Questions

Chinese 495 – Time and History in Lyrics

Please answer the following questions on Chinese culture, history and music: 请回
答40 个与中国文化，历史和歌曲音乐方面的问题：
Do you know? 你知道吗？

A. very well   B. somewhat   C. not at all

1. The Falling of the Qing Dynasty清朝灭亡
2. The Rising of the ROC中华明国的兴起
3. Shanghai Concessions上海租界地
4. Chiang Kai Shek蒋介石
5. Mao Zedong 毛泽东
6. The Chinese Communist Party中国共产党
7. The Red Army红军
8. The People's Liberation Army中国人民解放军
9. "Three Disciplines and Eight Attentions" "三大纪律，八项注意"
10. The Sino-Japanese War抗日战争
11. The Chinese Civil War解放战争
12. The Establishment of the People's Republic of China中华人民共和国的成立
13. Chinese National Anthem中国国歌
14. The Relationship between Chinese and USSR in the 50s, and songs during that time 50年代中苏关系与歌曲
15. The Great Leap Forward大跃进
16. The Cultural Revolution文化大革命
17. "The East is Red" "东方红"
18. Beijing Opera京剧
19. The Revolutionary Model Plays革命样板戏
20. The Educated Youth, "Go up the Mountains and go down to the Countryside" 知识青年上山下乡

21. The Gang of Four四人帮
22. Deng Xiaoping邓小平
23. The Open-up Policy改革开放
24. The Economic and Technology Development Zones经济技术开发区
25. Taiwan Campus Music台湾校园歌曲
26. Deng Lijun (Teresa Teng)邓丽君
27. Styles of Music and Songs歌曲的分类
28. Folk Songs in China: Areas and Styles中国地方民歌：地区与风格
29. Peng Liyuan彭丽媛
30. Chinese Rock and Roll中国摇滚乐
31. "Bei Shang Guang"/the Beijing Migrants北上广/北漂
32. Internet Music and Songs in China中国网络歌曲
33. "Rats Love Rice" "老鼠爱大米"
34. Chinese Square Dance广场舞
35. Chinese Movie and TV Songs中国影视歌曲
36. Chinese KTV中国KTV
37. The Voice of China中国好声音
38. The Influence of American Music on China/ Chinese Favorite American Musicians 美国歌曲对中国的影响/中国人喜欢的美国歌手
39. Rap in China中国说唱/饶舌音乐
40. I know how to sing two or more Chinese songs. 我会常两首以上中国歌。

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Appendix C – Mini-survey results
Chinese 495 – Time and history in lyrics

Question #	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Number of "C" scores (No knowledge)	11	5	13	10	3	8	10	12	14	7	7	5	1	11	8	9	5	Beginning of semester
Number of "B" scores (Some knowledge)	3	7	2	5	11	7	4	2	1	6	6	8	11	4	7	6	7	
Number of "A" scores (Strong knowledge)	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	1	3	0	0	0	2	
Question #	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Number of "C" scores (No knowledge)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	End of semester
Number of "B" scores (Some knowledge)	9	3	5	12	8	9	9	10	9	5	5	3	2	7	5	6	10	
Number of "A" scores (Strong knowledge)	3	11	9	2	6	5	5	3	5	9	9	9	11	7	5	8	4	
Beginning Average	17%	43%	7%	17%	43%	23%	20%	13%	3%	33%	33%	36%	57%	13%	23%	20%	39%	
End average	54%	89%	82%	57%	71%	68%	68%	57%	68%	82%	82%	89%	93%	75%	54%	79%	64%	
% change in learning	37%	46%	75%	40%	28%	45%	48%	44%	65%	49%	49%	54%	36%	62%	30%	59%	25%	Delta

Appendix C – Mini-survey results (continued)

	Beginning of semester				End of semester					Delta
Question #	Number of "C" scores (No knowledge)	Number of "B" scores (Some knowledge)	Number of "A" scores (Strong knowledge)	Question #	Number of "C" scores (No knowledge)	Number of "B" scores (Some knowledge)	Number of "A" scores (Strong knowledge)	Beginning Average	End average	% change in learning
18	10	5	0	18	0	9	5	17%	68%	51%
19	10	5	0	19	0	8	6	17%	71%	55%
20	14	1	0	20	1	7	6	3%	68%	65%
21	15	0	0	21	0	5	9	0%	82%	82%
22	9	5	1	22	0	5	9	23%	82%	59%
23	10	2	3	23	0	6	8	27%	79%	52%
24	14	1	0	24	1	8	5	3%	64%	61%
25	6	8	1	25	1	9	4	33%	61%	27%
26	11	3	1	26	0	6	8	17%	79%	62%
27	6	8	1	27	0	4	10	33%	86%	52%
28	12	3	0	28	0	10	4	10%	64%	54%
29	15	0	0	29	1	6	7	0%	71%	71%
30	9	6	0	30	0	4	10	20%	86%	66%
31	11	3	1	31	2	6	6	17%	64%	48%
32	10	5	0	32	0	4	10	17%	86%	69%

Appendix C – Mini-survey results (continued)

	Beginning of semester				End of semester					Delta
Question #	Number of "C" scores (No knowledge)	Number of "B" scores (Some knowledge)	Number of "A" scores (Strong knowledge)	Question #	Number of "C" scores (No knowledge)	Number of "B" scores (Some knowledge)	Number of "A" scores (Strong knowledge)	Beginning Average	End average	% change in learning
33	10	3	2	33	0	2	12	23%	93%	70%
34	14	1	0	34	0	11	3	3%	61%	57%
35	7	8	0	35	0	4	10	27%	86%	59%
36	1	9	5	36	0	5	9	63%	82%	19%
37	8	4	3	37	0	2	12	33%	93%	60%
38	4	9	2	38	0	2	12	43%	93%	50%
39	8	6	1	39	0	7	7	27%	75%	48%
40	7	5	3	40	0	1	13	37%	96%	60%

<div align="center">

Appendix D: End-of-course questionnaire (with selected responses)

Chinese 495 – Time and History in Lyrics

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Please respond to the following end-of-course questions. This will help us improve the course for future offerings. We appreciate your honest responses. No identification will be made of your answers.

1. **CHI 495 used a different approach to teach language, culture, and history/ civilization. What were the positive aspects of this new approach in your opinion?**

   - I liked that I got to experience different types of Chinese culture. There was also more free flow of discussion
   - Using media is a lot more interesting than reading text
   - More engaging, interesting to learn about
   - Very interesting course material & usage of videos and verbal prompts were good in increasing engagement
   - Learning through a historical examination of culture provides variety to the language learning program not otherwise seen
   - I think it was a great spin on typical learning. Using music and lyrics of different time periods allowed for the opportunity to learn about cultural & historical influences of the time
   - Created an environment in which I wanted to learn and actively participate

   What were the negative aspects of this new approach in your opinion?

   - It was difficult to learn 40 new vocabulary per class. And it felt like a lot of the discussion was helped by the teacher instead of the students
   - difficult to remember how to sing most of the songs, only remember easy ones
   - very specific aspects (?), limited general knowledge, terminology very specific
   - some of the music was difficult to get into; But that should be something to expect from the class.

2. **What activities helped you most in developing your Mandarin language proficiency?**

   - speaking and singing helped the most
   - Constant speaking in class, especially among tables
   - Watching Chinese videos and analyzing Chinese songs
   - Reading and interpreting lyrics
   - Dr. Hughes unwillingness to speak English & encourage 100% Chinese from us
   - presentations; reading articles and discussing
   - Discussing cultural issues and listening/discovering songs I enjoy; movies & TV clips

Time and history in lyrics

3. What activities helped you most to increase your cultural and historical knowledge of mainland China?

- Listening and finding deeper meaning to Chinese songs
- Outside research and just being in the class in general. Hearing and speaking has helped me tremendously
- Doing research regarding Chinese era and through presentations.
- With every song we learned, our instructor would provide historical context of the time and the reason the song was written

4. How effective do you think using "song" and "music" is in improving your linguistic, cultural, historical acumen/proficiency in Mandarin?

- Very effective, improved my understanding and linguistic understanding of Chinese immensely.
- Very effective, was able to learn phrases/vocab as well as culture
- It is very effective. Songs teach grammar and expands vocabulary
- It is very effective. Music repeats a culture's history so through music I also learned a lot about its history
- Linguistic, maybe a little in terms of understanding vocab; cultural/historical, this class was invaluable
- I think using music to learn the language is very beneficial in improving linguistic/cultural& historical proficiency
- Very effective – going over lyrics improved my Chinese most
- VERY! Gained a great insight into relevant cultural practices

5. What suggestions do you have to improve the course for the next offering?

- No improvements to be made. Great class.
- Have a set of vocab for a week or 2 to quiz and study instead of for each class
- Spend more time on modern, so maybe take out a bit of the older history
- I know it takes away from Chinese, but perhaps some English explanations of history
- Definitely more singing!
- Weekly vocab to study/know and vocab quizzes

Reviews

Edited by Thomas S. Conner, St. Norbert College

The Northeast Conference makes available in its *NECTFL Review* evaluations of both products and opportunities of interest to foreign language educators. These evaluations are written by language professionals at all levels representing all languages. The opinions presented by reviewers and by respondents (publishers, tour operators, webmasters, association leaders, etc.) are their own and in no way reflect approval or disapproval by NECTFL.

We will accept reviews of

- Software
- Videos and films
- Textbooks, instructional packages, and ancillaries
- Websites

- Grant opportunities
- Programs of study, both abroad and in this country, targeting both educators and students
- Reference materials
- Other

Chinese

Chen, Z., & Zhang, H. *Cultural Chinese: Readings in Art, Literature, and History*. *Wenhua zhongwen: yishu wenxue lishi*. Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2015. ISBN: 978-1- 58901-882-2.

From the first lesson, *Cultural Chinese* proves to be a textbook of great depth and sophistication. Written for the advanced foreign language learner, it provides the crucial enrichment materials needed to develop cultural competencies in the form of essential cultural, historical and literary content knowledge, and provides ample activities to improve reading and writing proficiency. Teachers of advanced courses will find this to be a most valuable textbook.

Over the course of nine lessons, *Cultural Chinese* introduces the student to Chinese calligraphy, classic painting, Tang poetry, traditional music, Beijing opera, idioms, holidays, food and drink, and etiquette. Each lesson provides a main text of around 600 characters and two shorter texts, covering a range of genres. Instructional support is provided in the form of vocabulary lists and language points, with between ten to fourteen activities for use in class or as homework assignments. Teachers will also find the English translations of each lesson's texts most useful. At the end of the textbook is a vocabulary index in Pinyin arranged in alphabetical order, which will be helpful to students who wish to look up certain words or to teachers who wish to ensure keywords' coverage in lesson or assessment preparations. There is also a proper names index, which allows easy reference to famous historical or mythical figures, important places, time periods, and more.

In particular, the textbook's instructional design takes into account the importance of culture to language studies. The organic integration of texts and stories representative of a typical native individual's basic education, artistic illustrations that meaningfully supplement the texts, content knowledge that scaffolds in a helpful way, and the textbook's language

features, all clearly demonstrate the designers' deep understanding of the importance of cultural competence. These features are of great value to advanced foreign language learners eager not only to survive or manage everyday needs in a Chinese-speaking environment, but also to understand the core belief system of Chinese civilization, whereby they can acquire the ability to navigate formal and informal circumstances with appropriate understanding and use of cultural references, referential quotes, and literary allusions.

With the textbook's emphases on cultural awareness and knowledge come a couple of necessary sacrifices. First, with the lessons' main and supplementary texts being linguistically and culturally dense, the activities in the textbook exhibit a leaning toward the knowledge and comprehension end of Bloom's famous taxonomy. The lessons' frequent reliance on rewriting, recalling, translating, retelling, and reciting could assure the teacher of students' mastery of the lessons' main features, but some foreign language programs might prefer an increased emphasis on higher order thinking skills. In later editions of this book, or as teachers who wish to use the current edition, it would be advisable to add prompts or elicitations that utilize the texts in each lesson for making cultural comparisons between the student's native culture and the target culture offered by the textbook. Also, the authors should consider expanding the use of scenarios to help foreign language learners understand how such cultural values and beliefs are applied in real-world settings. Another option would be to expand the use of supplementary contemporary articles in lessons that either already have or may be extended to demonstrate a particular viewpoint or belief common to Chinese civilization (such as the lesson on etiquette). This latter option is especially desirable, considering that some of the views or beliefs explored in *Cultural Chinese* might differ in a significant way from the views or beliefs held by English-speaking foreign language learners.

Second, the textbook's knowledge emphases and the need to cover different culturally important topics increase the difficulty of transitioning between lessons. One possible solution would be to find authentic modern commentaries on current phenomena that relate to both the current and the next lesson. This would partly improve the gradual linguistic accumulation from lesson to lesson, as well as provide a more natural segue into the following lesson's topic. More importantly, inclusion of opinion pieces of evaluative or projective modes is necessary for advanced courses, something that the current edition of *Cultural Chinese* does not utilize in a number of its lessons. Increased inclusion of evaluative and project mode modern articles would also have two added benefits: one, it would provide valuable illustrations of the importance of cultural references, referential quotes, and literary allusions to modern Chinese language; two, it would demonstrate that the traditional contents studied in this textbook remain valid in the *Zeitgeist* of the modern China**.**

Third, the extensive use of historic and culturally-rich passages increases the linguistic difficulty of the textbook, so the volume of content-rich vocabulary may prove daunting to some students. However, it should be noted that this concern was already addressed in the User's Guide section of the book, where students are advised to obtain a Chinese dictionary for use alongside this textbook, in particular to complete the translation activities.

Fourth, the textbook's culturally oriented lessons increase the difficulty of finding ways to recycle and build upon linguistic gains from one lesson to the next. This is one issue that users of this textbook might like to see addressed in a future edition. The explanations of linguistic features, currently covered under the Language Points section of each lesson, relies mainly on English translation, which does not make full use of the designers' rich cultural

and linguistic talents. Although there are sections provided for explaining the words, sentence patterns, and idioms, each explanation consists of only a quote from the text, a sample sentence of its use, and an English translation of the sample sentence. Some instructional designers might point out that, in order to rise to higher proficiency levels, students' needs go beyond finding the English equivalent of words, structures or idioms, and that students would benefit from more detailed explanations of requisite linguistic features, especially relating to lower frequency or more archaic language features. Such additions would further increase the textbook's accessibility.

Another matter worth exploring in future editions might be the inclusion of multimedia or interactive components. In the current form, the lack of multimedia, even for such topics as Chinese instrumental music and Beijing opera, feels very much like opportunities lost. Imagine if a CD accompanied the textbook, whereby teachers would readily play the most representative music or operatic pieces that best illustrate the designers' points for those lessons. The value of such visceral experiences as a precursor or follow-up to the descriptive narrative texts cannot be understated.

The above suggestions aside, on the whole, it is evident that the authors of *Cultural Chinese* have considerable experience in foreign language teaching, translation, and interpretation. There is a deep truth in the authors' belief that culture governs personal behaviors and directs social dynamics. *Cultural Chinese* is a textbook that not only explores the Chinese language but also the arts, literature, and rich history that buttress the Chinese language. Such a textbook's importance for advanced foreign language programs is self-evident and unquestionable. I greatly look forward to future editions of *Cultural Chinese*.

Daniel Wang
Translator, Interpreter, and
DLIFLC Assistant Professor
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French

Allons au Cinéma: Promoting French Through Film. Vol. 2. Eds. Hurtig, Dolliann, and Joyce Beckwith. Marin, IL: American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), 2016. ISBN: 978-0-9885496-6-1. Pp. 153. Price $25.

Like so many of my colleagues, I have used film in all of my classrooms, in first- and second-year language courses as well as in General Studies courses taught in English, and I have done so with much success, I might add. However, in the beginning I had to develop my own teaching materials. No more. Thankfully, publishers had an "aha moment" and are now making up for lost time, outdoing each other with well-conceived and pedagogically well-designed texts. The AATF has recently published Volume II of its *Promoting French Through Film* series and, more importantly, has committed itself to promoting the use of film in the classroom as a vehicle to better understand French and Francophone society and

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1. The first volume, *Allons au cinéma: Promoting French Through Film*, appeared in 2014 and presented a total of fourteen films, including such masterpieces as *Inch'Allah dimanche* (2001) and *Monsieur Ibrahim et les fleurs du Coran* ((2003).

culture. As the authors of the book under review here describe their methodology: *"Non seulement nos étudiants adorent le Septième Art et les discussions qu'engendrent les films, mais les directions que l'on peut prendre dans notre enseignement du cinéma francophone s'avèrent multiples, variées, dynamiques et stimulantes. Elles encouragent de la part des étudiants un travail en profondeur: un effort de réflexion et d'ouverture, mais aussi l'attention à l'expression orale et aux choix visuels ainsi qu'une analyse intégrative intellectuelle, équilibrée, complète"* (vii).

The volume under review here contains no fewer than seventeen film modules and there are bound to be at least three or four films that will capture an audience of high school and college students. It will be up to the instructor to select the most appropriate films and perhaps also supplement the pedagogical materials in each module with a handful of individually tailored exercises.

The films presented are: 1. *Indochine* (1992), 2. *Quand les étoiles rencontrent la mer* (1996), 3. *Ma vie en rose* (1997), 4. *Au plus près du paradis* (2002), 5. *Le silence de la forêt (2003)*, 6. *La petite Jérusalem* (2005), 7. *Good Cop, Bad Cop* (2006), 8. *OSS 117: Le Caire, nid d'espions* (2006), 9. *Ratatouille* (2007), 10. *Le chant des mariés* (2008), 11. *Le Hérisson* (2009), 12. *Panique au village* (2009), 13. *La rafle* (2010), 14. *La fille du puisatier* (2011), 15. *Couleur de peau* (2012), 16. *Haute cuisine* (2012), and 17. *Alceste à bicyclette* (2013).

Many of the films included in this volume, such as *Indochine*, *Ratatouille* and *La Rafle*, are well known to American audiences; others never made it to our shores. But rest assured that all films selected are quality productions that most viewers are sure to appreciate for their coverage of the richness and diversity of the French and Francophone experience. Each module is presented by a different scholar of French, providing a multiplicity of points of view, all the while conforming to the stated outcomes of the volume.

The presentation of each film follows the same basic order and is divided between a few short sections providing information and far more numerous sections soliciting a wide variety of student input. The authors' approach is practical and pedagogical almost to a fault. Each chapter contains the same subsections, each with clearly defined parameters, which isn't to say that teachers cannot pick and choose among subsections as indeed they do with any text. The text is billed as appropriate for an intermediate or advanced course, but could be tweaked for use already at the first-year level.

Each 10-page module contains a plot summary, a list of useful vocabulary, discussion questions, and an assortment of classroom activities that explore the meaning of each film: *"le but est donc d'aider l'enseignant à aborder les questions essentielles de tous les films et de pousser les élèves à développer leur esprit critique, leur ouverture à l'autre, leur niveau de langue"* (ix).

Since I teach *Indochine* every year in my intermediate French language class, I decided that I would have a look at how the authors present this film, admirably introduced by Susan M. Myers, in order to give users a flavor of what they can expect to find in this volume. Topics are meticulously organized and presented in rapid-fire succession without any of the bells and whistles characteristic of mainstream publishers. Because this is a bare-bones soft cover, spiral-bound volume and therefore by default not very visually attractive, I imagine that it is most useful as a teacher's resource. The exercises and activities for each film are quite simply superb and cover everything from basic comprehension, vocabulary, history, and culture to class presentations and written assignments on relevant subjects as diverse as ancestor worship, indentured labor, theatre in Asia, the opium trade, the mandarin class, arranged marriage, Vietnam's wars of liberation—first against the French and then against the Americans—and,

finally, Vietnam post-reunification, which has developed into one of Asia's so-called "tiger economies." There is plenty here to keep your class occupied; however, students will have to do the research on their own and instructors develop presentation guidelines, since no information or directions are provided. Last but not least, the authors provide a most useful bibliography with up-to-date web links on all topics covered. In the opinion of this reviewer, no other volume dealing with this film has done as thorough a job.

Promoting French Through Film is an overall excellent introduction to French and Francophone film. The content-based approach to teaching language through film will enable students to improve their language skills and intercultural comprehension. In my opinion, this volume fulfills the goals it set out to accomplish and will be much appreciated by French teachers at the high school and college levels.

Tom Conner
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St. Norbert College
De Pere, WI

Publisher's Response

First of all, we would like to thank Tom Conner for taking such a detailed look at this volume. Like the first volume, it is intended as a guide for teachers wishing to incorporate more Francophone films into their classes. Spiral binding was specifically chosen to make it easy for teachers to copy materials from the manual for classroom use, whether that be vocabulary terms and activities or study questions. Each chapter is designed to provide the basic tools necessary to approach the film, helpful questions and activities to encourage discussion, as well as jumping off points for additional research or projects.

There is such a wealth of French and Francophone films that depict themes, cultures, and stories of all the many communities around the world where French is spoken. It is important for teachers at all levels to take advantage of these films to show their students that French is a vibrant, creative, global language and to show the diversity of peoples who speak French. Our aim is to create resources to help teachers do so.

Jayne Abrate
AATF Executive Director

Bissière, Michèle and Nathalie Degroult. *Séquences: Intermediate French through Film*. **3ʳᵈ edition. Boston: Cengage, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-305-10565-2. Pp. 399. $153.**

This text integrates relevant language and culture of the French-speaking world through film in a lively, multifaceted manner. Designed to inspire students to better comprehend, speak, read and write French while discussing intriguing current topics raised by the films, *Séquences* will prove appealing to students and instructors alike. The text is carefully structured to build the ability to do so, and the vocabulary, themes, realia and activities are all well chosen. The grammar appendices are clearly presented and informative. In addition to two completely revised chapters (introducing the appealing *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Intouchables*), the third edition contains numerous improvements and materials, for instance the updated *Arrêt sur images* full color photo gallery encouraging students to deepen their analysis and make thematic and cultural

connections between films. In addition, the *Le français parlé* segment in the *Pour aller plus loin* section of each textbook chapter is expanded. Web activities, realia and other resources are updated both in the textbook and the *Cahier de préparation*. One of the major assets of this work is its abundance of materials (readings, grammar activities, web activities, discussion activities and so much more). This permits the instructor to use the text for a variety of purposes while adapting it to their own teaching style, and allows for a more or less rigorous course, depending on the level of their students. That said, the depth, cohesiveness and originality of the exercises briefly introduces the film to reveal how talented as teachers the two authors must be.

Each chapter is followed by *Entrée en matière*, a pre-viewing section that provides opportunities to learn about the cultural context of the film, consider various published film reviews as well as posters of the films, and provides questions to promote discussion both of expectations and of an in-class screening of a sequence from the film. *Les mots pour le dire*--in both the text and the accompanying cahier--provides vocabulary exercises, grammatical expansions and a large variety of exercises to expand both vocabulary and cultural comprehension, as well as recognition of the distinctions between familiar and more formal French. In the *cahier, Préparation à la discussion* develops students pronunciation, expands their grammar and ability to analyze, for instance, the evolution of a character. The text's *Discussion* combines a wide variety of exercises to promote understanding of the plot through the "chronologie" activity and further discussion, including student reactions as well as listening exercises to aid in listening comprehension. *Pour aller plus loin* provides further follow-up activities designed to expand discussion and improve both the mastery of grammar and the ability to express more complex ideas in preparation of a multi-step composition. The authors' reading selections are stellar--for instance, Faïza Guène's *Kiffe Kiffe demain* provides a superb compliment to *Intouchables* by both expanding the discussion to both genders and to further understanding of the challenges of the Maghrebian immigrant experience. The workbook's presentation of preparing to write an essay for each chapter provides a model for any student or instructor to emulate--from choosing the topic, reflecting on what to include and exclude, as well as the vocabulary, grammar and organization of the essay, culminating in the *Perfectionnez votre travail* which guides the student through the proofreading stage of writing. The accompanying website provides the complete audio program and supplementary grammar, vocabulary, film-related and other authentic content and additional review exercises. Everything is correlated closely to the text and workbook.

While some might find *Séquences* useful as an intermediate French course to shore their students' grammar abilities, others such as myself might envisage it as a delightful means to invigorate the students' speaking and writing skills at the all-important fifth semester level and entice students into considering a French major. The authors provide a plethora of ways to analyze, expand and express cultural content relevant to the films and to students' lives. Any instructor will appreciate the variety as well as the ancillary online materials, especially the Instructor's Resource Manual which provides answer keys and tape scripts, as well as further realia and ancillary materials. *Séquences'* excellent coverage of the Francophone world and the complex issues within would make it an excellent resource for Francophone courses as well. The combination of compelling

chapter themes, well-chosen films representing the diverse French-speaking world and questions of great import to our own lives makes this a superb addition to French programs

E. Nicole Meyer
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Publisher's Response

We at Cengage thank Professor E. Nicole Meyer for her detailed review of *Séquences: Intermediate French through Film*. Her input is integral to the development of this product.

Séquences provides students and instructors with opportunities to dig deep into French language and culture though film. As mentioned, the dynamic content is carefully and thoughtfully presented in a way that deeply engages students' French speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. One of *Séquences* strengths lies in its variety and volume of content for different modes of learning. The diversity of movies, texts, and vocabulary chosen, and the richness of the themes, activities and discussion questions provide a lot of room for flexibility in class structure. Enhancements to the third edition of *Séquences*, including two revised chapters that introduce the movies *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Intouchables*; an expansion of *Le francais parlé*, a segment examining differences between spoken and written French; and updates to the *Cahier de préparation*, the supplementary Student Activities Manual that closely follows the textbook, all truly highlight the authors' dedication to creating a quality product.

The general organization of each chapter creates space for analysis and drawing connections between students' lives and film content, while encouraging practice of more challenging French grammar concepts and advanced conversation. *Séquences* presents *Entrée en matiere,* a pre-viewing feature that introduces students to each film's cultural context, film poster(s), a film review, and a chance to consider their expectations of the film before viewing its introductory sequence. Next, students can work their way through *Les mots pour le dire* (in both the textbook and *Cahier*) for exercises in vocabulary, grammar, listening, and discussion. In the *Discussion* section, students can engage in activities that focus more on the plot and other main elements of the film, and reflect on how its themes may speak to their own life experiences. *Pour aller plus loin* challenges students' thinking with more complex grammar and discussion follow-up activities, plus insight into the differences between oral and written French. *Lecture* further expands theme exploration by including complimentary outside readings. As indicated in the review, the excerpt from *Kiffe Kiffe demain* by *Faïza Guène* goes hand in hand with *Intouchables* since they both recognize perspectives of the Maghrebian immigrant experience.

Additionally, instructors can reinforce *Séquences'* vocabulary, pronunciation, comprehension, grammar, and cultural concepts through the supplementary workbook, *Cahier de preparation,* and through the Premium Website. A key feature of the *Cahier*, which the review referenced, breaks down the essay preparation process, from brainstorming ideas to proofreading, and can be used to cultivate bold writers.

If instructors want to learn more about Sequences or have access to the additional Instructor resources for the program, they can visit **Cengage.com** or inquire with their local Cengage Learning Consultant.

Jelyn Masa, Product Assistant
Lara Semones, Senior Product Manager
Cengage Learning

Dansereau, Diane M. *Variations stylistiques: Cours de grammaire avancé*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-300-19846-1. Pp. 491. $75.

If you are looking for a new text, I can state unequivocally that this advanced grammar textbook, written entirely in French and intended for third- and fourth-year students, has many qualities and deserves serious consideration for adoption in an advanced-level French language course. *Variations stylistiques* is the result of a thoughtful, well-planned and generally well-executed approach based on much market research. Used well, it could be highly effective. However, it is not, in my view, appropriate for every program. Nor does it (and the accompanying website) align itself particularly well with what are known to be the most cognitively effective practices for learning in general.

The textbook, which is written entirely in French, comprises thirteen principal chapters, each between 20 and 42 pages long and focusing on a significant "advanced" grammatical structure (or constellation of interrelated structures or features). The book also has 23 one- to nine-page appendices offering sparser coverage of grammatical structures that the target audience ought to know but might need to review. The appendices also include additional exercises and comments. The major grammatical features covered in the thirteen chapters of the textbook are as follows: articles, adjectives, object pronouns, relative pronouns, adverbs, interrogative forms, the past indicative, indirect discourse, the subjunctive, the conditional, passive voice, infinitives and the present participle. The appendices address features like the formation of verbs in various tenses and moods, lists of regular and irregular verbs that proficient language users ought to know well, demonstrative adjectives. They also include some additional exercises keyed to certain chapters, a table of measurement conversions used in cooking (e.g., cups to liters, ounces to grams and temperatures from Fahrenheit to Celsius) and comments on "difficulties of translation," which call attention to significant differences between the two languages that are known to provoke errors of expression or understanding among American native speakers of English learning French.

The book is supplemented by two websites, one which is accessed by password only. Students have access to a website with mostly fill-in-the-blank machine-corrected exercises. This allows for extensive "mechanical" practice with grammatical structures, where learners may check their mastery of forms and understanding of functions. The publisher can grant instructors password-protected access to a site that includes a number of supplementary documents and web pages in English (suggestions for use, explanations of features, concise sample syllabi, a bibliography, sample quizzes, tests, and translation activities, along with an answer key to selected exercises).

The approach that Dansereau claims undergirds this textbook can be summarized by the following principles: Using L2 almost exclusively, teaching grammar explicitly,

contextualizing grammar to a large extent, and representing significant variation across different communities and functional uses of French. Generally speaking, the book's treatment of grammar is descriptive, not prescriptive. Dansereau provides a variety of authentic texts (literary and non-literary texts and transcriptions of film dialogue or authentic speech), so that students may view linguistic variation and authentic usage of grammatical features for themselves. The exercises in the book include both oral exercises (pair or small-group work in class) and written ones (individual, pair or small-group work that may be done in class or, in some cases, may be assigned outside of class). The organization of each chapter's exercises tends to move from more mechanical practice (manipulating structures or choosing proper forms), toward more open-ended exercises, with one or more final written exercise(s) calling for open-ended, personalized and meaningful writing guided by prompts that require use of particular grammatical features.

In principle, most of what Dansereau proposes seems apt, cogent and well-informed by scholarly research. Certainly, there is evidence that explicit grammar instruction can be helpful for developing proficiency in a second language. What is more, her focus on *variation* in French can help students understand the complexity and diversity of the Francophone language community and its use of "French grammar" as a set of somewhat flexible and evolving guidelines. In some cases, though, the book's strength may also morph into weakness or drawback, depending on the context and needs of the academic programs to which the book is targeted. To facilitate long-term learning, it is generally known that learning activities ought to be meaningful and must connect in significant ways to previous learning. The choice of language in this textbook--French--and the focus on explicit grammar instruction using grammatical terms in French probably undermines both connection to previous learning and the likelihood of students finding meaning in the explanations and sample texts. Unless a French program has previously focused on teaching grammatical features per se, labeling them in French, it is possible that this text will have little resonance for its students. To this, I might add that a few of the exercises in the book and virtually all of the exercises online strike me as *inauthentic*. They comprise artificial and relatively decontextualized manipulations of French created expressly for testing or quizzing purposes. Even within the rich variety of the authentic texts provided, many are likely to be less than richly meaningful for some third-year or fourth-year students of French.

My final quibble regards typographical errors. To be fair, I spotted relatively few of them, mostly noun-adjective agreement problems (e.g. "*expressions pronominaux*," p. 32, "*action commencé*," p. 199). As far as I can tell, no errors fall in the answer keys or the textual examples.

There are myriad ways in which this textbook and website might be employed in French programs (over one or two semesters, as a reference or supplementary textbook across multiple courses, etc.). However, I cannot make a blanket recommendation for its adoption. If you need an advanced grammar book in French and if your third- and fourth-year students possess sufficient knowledge of grammar, this book may be worth considering. Review it carefully with your students' needs in mind and you might find it helpful. Furthermore, I advise careful planning and creating supplementary audio and/or visual materials if you choose to adopt it. (The book is densely textual, with only *transcribed* oral French among the examples; students may benefit from hearing spoken

1. *¿Cómo se escriben los sonidos?/Comment s' écrivent les sons?* (Stress and Accent Marks; Consonants; Vowels).
2. *¿Cómo se clasifican y se describen los sustantivos?/Comment se classifient et se décrivent les noms?* (Articles; Gender; Number; Demonstrative and Possessive Adjectives).
3. *¿Cómo funcionan los pronombres?/Comment s' emploient les pronoms?* (Subjects and Subject Pronouns; Direct Objects and Direct-Object Pronouns; Indirect Objects and Indirect-Object Pronouns; Reflexive Pronouns; Pronoun Order; Relative Pronouns; Demonstrative Pronouns; Forms of Address).
4. *¿Cómo se conjugan y se interpretan los verbos?/Comment se conjuguent et s' interprètent les verbes?* (Conjugation; Tense: Timeframe of Events; Aspect: Perspective on Events; Mood: Evaluation of Events; Voice: Causation of Events: *Ser* and *Estar* in Spanish).
5. *¿Cómo se estructuran las frases?/Comment se structurent les phrases?* (Questions; Negations; Commands; Word Order).
6. *¿Cómo se clasifican las palabras?/Comment se classifient les mots?* (Adverbs; Prepositions; Cognates and False Cognates; Loanwords; Derived Words).
7. *¿Cuál es la lengua más difícil?/Quelle langue est la plus difficile?*

Most impressive are the clearly and concisely written grammar explanations with spot-on examples from each language (red for Spanish and blue for French) and appropriately challenging exercises. Rounding out the text are the answer key for the exercises, three parallel reading texts (with notes specific to each language version of the text), sixteen pages of verb conjugation charts, and a two-page glossary of grammar terminology. As one who teaches both French and Spanish and who often has students who study both languages, this slim volume is a true treasure. Oftentimes a student will ask a question related to both languages and now I have supplemental exercises and an alternate explanation to provide them. And one can never underestimate the merit of Chapter 7 — *¿Cuál es la lengua más difícil?/Quelle langue est la plus difficile?* Lunn and Alkhas state beautifully:

> There is no language that is maximally complex in every possible way; if there were, the speakers of that "hard" language would have to be more intelligent than those of every other language. Rather, languages are relatively complex or simple in different ways.
>
> If asked which language – French or Spanish – is more difficult, many speakers of English would choose French. If this is your choice, you will be surprised to know that French speakers who have studied Spanish often say that Spanish is a hard language.
>
> In fact, what is difficult about any language depends on the language(s) that you already know (101).

My response has always been that French is more difficult in the beginning for native speakers of English because of all the pronunciation rules, but the grammar of Spanish becomes quite complex, especially with the multiple uses of the subjunctive. However, never to be forgotten is the fact that both French and Spanish are beautiful languages

with rich and varied cultures. We are able to appreciate them both, as well as our native language, more fully when we recognize the similarities and differences among them.

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German

Barske, Tobias, Megan McKinstry, Karin Schestokat, and Jane Sokolosky. *Denk Mal! Deutsch Ohne Grenzen,* **2ⁿᵈ Edition. Boston, Massachusetts: Vista Higher Learning, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-62680-915-4.**

Denk Mal! Deutsch ohne Grenzen is an intermediate, skills-integrated German course designed around communicative language practice and authentic cultural materials. The pedagogy is based on and ties in closely with both ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the 5C Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21ˢᵗ Century (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities). *Denk Mal!* uses a magazine-like design consisting heavily of photos, literary selections, poems, short stories, and excerpts from novels and plays to engage learners at an appropriate textual level. These are presented in ten theme-based units including: feeling and experiencing; daily living; media influence; travel and recreation; art treasures; traditions and regional specialties; science and technology; law and environment; business and professional prospects; and history and society. Each unit contains: authentic photos; a reading with a geographic regional focus, relevant vocabulary and practice exercises; a short film excerpt with pre- during- and post-viewing exercises and cultural contextualization (listening input); application exercises requiring language production; synthesis activities that require skill integration and contextualized grammar use; culture readings; and an authentic canonical literary excerpt.

The *Denk Mal!* program contains a robust amount of authentic and up-to-date selections from a variety of media sources and provides adequate materials for several semesters of German language and culture at the intermediate level. Of particular note is the use of film excerpts. The authentic materials in the film series expose students to both "big C and little c" products and practices within a wide range of contexts from personal ethics (Roentgen) to romantic relationships (*Nashorn im Galopp*) to family practices (Outsourcing), history (*Spielzeugland*), and social mores (*Die Klärung eines Sachverhalts*). Film clips are of appropriate length and difficulty for intermediate German learners and extensive pre-activities, glossing, and post-input analysis assist learner understanding by providing pedagogically sound and level-appropriate scaffolding. Photos are engaging and cover a wide variety of daily life situations, although they could be more representative of ethnic demographics. The literary excerpts include pieces from classical (Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*) to modern (Kafka's *Vor dem Gesetz*) to post-Wende (Hensel's *Zonenkinder*) to poetry (Görres' *Der Pilger*).

In terms of pedagogical text input, the *Stellen Sie Sich Vor* geographic region readings and the *Kultur* texts contain compound and complex sentences that are not overly embedded and lack glossing, and cultural annotations to promote comprehension. Text analysis exercises check comprehension, contextualize grammar points and exercises,

and provide controlled discussion topics. The vocabulary is presented in semantic groups instead of as lists of nouns, verbs and adjectives as is often the case in language textbooks, which aligns well with cognitive principals of word learning. Each language practice section contains a specific practice focus on writing conventions such as citation, parts of essays, and parallelism. Overall, in both content and progression, the pedagogical framework is sound and aligns correctly with ACTFL levels. Furthermore, the layout is fresh, colorful and appealing to young adults.

While the grammar is contextualized, there is still a surprising amount of it in each unit and sometimes the explanations and exercises don't relate as well to their textual origins as they could. On this particular front, I as an instructor would like to see that tie be made more explicit and the grammar to be more dispersed in smaller inputs throughout the text inputs in each unit instead of chunked together toward the middle. In places, *Denk Mal!* can look like a grammar book instead of the skills-integrated program that it is intended to be, and this can, at times, detract a bit from the face validity of the pedagogical approach. However, this is not enough of an issue to discourage using the textbook for a skills-integrated course as other aspects of the total package provide enough variety and breadth of coverage to make this a worthwhile choice.

In addition to the textbook materials, the program also makes extensive use of its "Supersite," which is an online support tool for both instructors and students supported on both Windows and Mac (i-Pad) platforms. The Supersite gives students access to online conversation practice in the form of virtual chats as well as connections with (presumably native speaking) partners via video chat. The Supersite also provides additional disability accessibility, learning style support and language reinforcement thanks to its ability to interface with written text to provide audio-sync of readings, vocabulary lists, grammar explanations, etc. It provides additional asynchronous grammar practice, a space for making customizable vocabulary lists, a *Schreibwerkstatt* where students can practice writing skills, access all MP3 files for additional listening practice and online quizzes and exams with immediate feedback for students.

Denk Mal! also provides an abundance of instructor support on the Supersite through a learning management tool that includes a comprehensive grade book, calendar, announcement center and student data reporting. A formative and summative testing and feedback program can be administered and graded online, and it can also be modified for more specific instructor needs via editable formats. Dedicated Web 2.0 interactive features are also included which allow instructors to create spaces for live chats, instant messaging, voice boards, group discussions, projects etc. This feature is iPad compatible and all tools are able to interface with existing learning management systems that may be in place at various universities or school districts. There is an excellent balance between web- and text-based materials, making *Denk Mal!* a good choice for blended and flipped classroom formats. The additional learning management support is helpful to instructors and the synchronous and asynchronous communication tools enable a learning community beyond the brick and mortar walls of the classroom. Overall, I would welcome the use of this tool in my intermediate language classroom—particularly if I were looking for effective and engaging pedagogical solutions in a blended environment.

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Moeller, Jack, Simone Berger, Anja Wieden, Barbara Mabee, and Winnifred R. Adolph. *Kaleidoskop. Kultur, Literatur, Grammatik*. **9th edition. New York: Cengage Learning, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-1-305-66401-2. Accompanied by auxiliary CD, companion eSAM website and hard copy workbook/lab manual (optional).**

As its subtitle suggests, this second-year intermediate college-level text emphasizes culture, literature, and grammar. *Kaleidoskop* is a complete program and as user-friendly as any I have seen on the market. Here, I will review its methodology, briefly summarize content, including the accompanying website, before sampling a chapter in more detail to provide a better understanding of how all the different parts fit together.

The changes in the ninth edition are quite noticeable and can be summarized as follows.

Design
- Ninth Edition uses color as an organizing element.
- *Kurzfilm* and *Reiseführer* sections have been redesigned with larger, more engaging photos that will catch the eye of students.
- New photos on the first page of each chapter provide students with a variety of current images of the German-speaking countries.

Content
- Two new short stories and several new cultural readings appear in the *Themen*.
- All cultural readings and information provided in the *Vermischtes* in the *Themen* have been updated.
- Vocabulary lists and pre- and post-reading exercises have been revised to reflect the new cultural and literary texts.
- *Kurzfilm* scripts added to Appendix C to make the films more accessible to students and to aid comprehension.
- In the *Kapitel* (grammar), several new charts provide a visual anchor to help students grasp grammatical structures.
- The English-German glossary has moved online.

The introduction in the Instructor's Edition is most thorough. This program emphasizes flexibility, which is only appropriate in the second year of study, since students will already have been exposed to most, if not all of the grammar topics and a lot of the vocabulary featured in *Kaleidoskop*. Therefore, teachers can decide on what order to follow. However, they should be forewarned that they cannot possibly cover every chapter in its entirety in just one semester. Personally, I can see using the text for an entire year but maybe throwing in a few feature-length films for good measure. Certainly the level of complexity of the grammar justifies a two-semester approach, moving from the simple to the complex, from the idiosyncrasies of the present tense in Chapter 1 to

the rigor of the subjunctive in Chapter 10. Grammar is explained in context in every chapter, as well as in the second half of the book, which is all grammar and where every chapter has its own grammar follow-up. Grammar has always figured prominently in *Kaleidoskop*; however, thanks to the dynamic eSAM website students will discover that reviewing grammar can actually be fun: eSAM is quite simply "awesome" in the way it not only presents but also explains and tests grammar and vocabulary.

Kaleidoskop has refined a traditional four-skills, communicative, learner-centered approach by continuously updating content with every edition. There is nothing revolutionary about the text's methodology or pedagogy; however, *Kaleidoskop* stands out in today's market thanks to the quality of its design and the interactive and easy-to-navigate eSam website.

Kaleidoskop consists of ten lengthy chapters or *Themen* covering what might be expected in a second-year language class: leisure, communication, Germany today, family, music, the workplace, multicultural society, young adults, cultural differences, and the environment. Each chapter is organized in much the same way. Let's take Chapter I as an example. A short and succinct table of contents is followed by an introduction to the chapter theme, leisure. A handful of progressively more challenging comprehension exercises follow, trying to make students use their language skills to discuss the theme in a meaningful, that is to say, substantive yet personal way. I particularly like the way students are invited to work together in small groups to present on the topic of leisure. Hopefully, in the process, students will become aware of just how much they have in common with their peers in Germany and maybe also realize how precious a commodity leisure is and not squander it on trivial pursuits. Alas, according to the statistics provided here, Germans teens are just as likely as their American peers to play compulsively with their cell phones at waking moment. Teachers on both sides of the Atlantic have their work cut for them, but they should find comfort in the fact that the activities in this text encourage loftier pursuits involving critical thinking and cultural comparisons. The five mini-portraits of young Germans prove somewhat helpful in this regard but do not probe very deep. The language barrier, of course, creates further obstacles to communication. Therefore, the vocabulary exercises that follow are especially well designed. A thorough list of useful words is provided up front and followed by a variety of fill-in-the-blank exercises. Now, there are those who do not approve of the study of vocabulary upfront, as it were; however, there is no denying that this approach seems to work. Activities are educational yet, like any game, fun to do. Moreover, the context of each exercise is admirably tailored to reinforce the chapter theme.

The cultural reading of Chapter 1 focuses on Munich and consists of a short presentation, followed by a reading comprehension exercise and a classroom assignment calling for some modest outside research. The chapter theme justifies the focus on surfing in Munich (in the English Garden) but is hardly in keeping with the much more traditional focus on the presentation of the city and probably does not appeal too much to students. Catering to a perceived student interest in so-called "cool stuff" like surfing usually backfires and, quite frankly, I think that Munich could have been the subject of a more stimulating approach. Wouldn't most students be more interested in Oktoberfest?

Fortunately, the literary readings of Chapter 1 are more serious. The first is a poem by Bertolt Brecht, "*Vergnügungen*," which does reference leisure but only obliquely like

most of the readings, which seldom are tied in with the chapter theme. The poem is not at all about typical leisure activities but thanks to its ambivalence calls up associations that the teacher must elucidate without going into too much historical detail. The comprehension questions and activities are highly intelligent and ought to elicit some good learning and a better general understanding of the DDR. But I wonder if some questions are a little bit too advanced for the average second-year student.

The second text is a prose excerpt from another DDR author, Helga Novak, whose cosmopolitan background, relentless questioning, and overall open mindset eventually forced her to leave the DDR for a time. The excerpt selected is not great for an audience of American undergraduates *anno* 2017 because it is too trivial and mundane (nothing much "happens"), but the authors nevertheless try hard to make the text palatable to students. Perhaps Brecht is a better choice, not only because of his importance as a writer but also because he provides a smooth transition to a discussion of life in the DDR, should the instructor decide to move in that direction already at this point. The DDR is covered rather extensively in later chapters, though.

Kaleidoskop also features several prominent authors from neighboring Austria and Switzerland, for example, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Erich Fried, and Arthur Schnitzler, and Chapters 5 and 8 present the cities of Vienna and Zürich, respectively. Needless to say, as the authors remind us, "an understanding of the cultures of German-speaking countries should enhance career opportunities for students" (AIE-7) and make students realize that German is also spoken in Austria and Switzerland.

The chapter content is never overwhelming, so I imagine that with some careful tweaking each *Thema* can be covered in two weeks or so in a typical three-classes-per-week sequence. Students will have a fair amount of preparation to do outside class as well, which brings me to the auxiliary CD and companion eSAM website. The first is very short since it only contains the five *Kurzfilme* (short films)—subtitles optional—featured at the end of every two chapters. A few of these films are rather bizarre, to say the least, and very seventies. Germans have a reputation for a quirky sense of humor, but these takes the cake. In point of fact, the five films, all of them professionally made, reveal a lot about German humor and, if taught properly, contain a cultural lesson. The second film, *Dufte*, is the best of the lot, in my opinion. It is set against the backdrop of the difficult years leading up to the construction of the Berlin Wall and features a couple of coffee smugglers on a train bound for what was then the Soviet-occupied zone in the east. It too has a deeply ironic but very human twist and is sure to elicit some good discussion in order to explain just what was going on in Germany in these dire times as the Iron Curtain slowly but surely was beginning to take form.

Kaleidoskop is accompanied by a complete and easy-to-navigate Online Student Activities manual (eSAM), containing written and oral exercises. For those instructors who like to assign written homework there is also a hard copy workbook/lab manual that reinforces the content and vocabulary of each *Thema* or chapter, in addition to many independent-type writing assignments that require students to compose on their own with a minimum of cues.

The Instructor's edition also contains sample syllabi, chapter tests, grammar power points, audio scripts, and a variety of helpful suggestions on how to best use the resources of the program. I "surfed" the entire program and was much impressed. I have seldom

seen a more complete and easy-to-use and fun collection of activities. Moreover, each answer is automatically corrected so students can see where they went wrong and try again until they get it right. They can work at home at their own pace and learn a lot on their own. Instructors meanwhile can set up a comprehensive class management system, recording students' results but also supervising their progress and intervening as needed.

Overall, *Kaleidoskop* offers a very credible alternative to the half dozen or so second-year programs currently on the market. It sets realistic learning objectives that can be achieved in a one- or two-semester sequence; it engages students with its visually attractive design and eSAM interactive website; and above all it presents for the most part stimulating material intelligently. Students will acquire intermediate to advanced competency in German, fulfilling both the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and the 5C *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21ˢᵗ Century* (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. After completing *Kaleidoskop* students will be ready to continue their study of German literature, culture, and civilization at the junior and senior levels. Finally, they will develop a better understanding not only of contemporary German society but also of everyday life in Germany's German-speaking neighbors Switzerland and Austria.

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Publisher's Response

We must thank Tom Conner for such a thorough and balanced review and explanation of our textbook. We greatly appreciate that NECTFL reviewers work hard to identify the most salient characteristics of our programs and this review is no different. I would like to respond to three points in particular: comments on the design/updates, comments on the readings and videos, and comments on the balance of activities between the text and online eSAM.

The reviewer notes early that the 9ᵗʰ edition changes are noticeable, and that was certainly the goal. The authors wanted to be sure that the materials were engaging for both students and instructors and would serve less as an "end to the language requirement" experience and more as a "launch into lifelong study of German" experience. The reviewer's reactions to the design and content updates indicate that we achieved our goal to make the materials both more visually and experientially engaging.

The reviewer also comments on the choices of reading and *Kurzfilms* specifically. All reading and film choices are reviewed with current users of the program and other members of the market to ensure their appropriateness and appeal. The goal with having some less serious and some more serious representatives of all media types reflects the authors' desire to increase flexibility of the program, a characteristic that the reviewer notes as a hallmark. As with any set of materials, not every reading or video will appeal to every teacher, but we hope that within the breadth of offerings every instructor will find more than ample material for his/her course.

Finally, the reviewer discusses the eSAM and activities in the textbook. We couldn't be more thrilled with the fact that the integration between the two, and how the online

activities effectively prepare students for classroom activities, is so clear to the reviewer. We aspire to create a whole program that serves students' learning needs outside the classroom and communication practice needs inside the classroom. The reviewer's comments give us confidence that we have achieved that with *Kaleidoskop* 9th edition.

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Italian

Cummings, Anne, Chiara Frenquellucci, and Gloria Pastorino. *Immagina***, *2nd Edition***.** *L'italiano senza confini.* **Soft cover, Student Edition with Supersite PLUS (Supersite and vText) and WebSAM Code. Boston, Massachusetts: Vista Higher Learning Inc, 2016. Online vText available, 10 lessons, 2 semesters, 498 pages. ISBN-10: 1626808961. ISBN-13: 978-1626808966. Teachers' Edition soft cover. ISBN: 978-1-62680-866-9. For more information, orders and pricing information visit:** http://vistahigherlearning.com

A team of researchers on Italian language manuals, Anne Cummings, Chiara Frenquellucci, and Gloria Pastorino, have made an interesting contribution to Italian language learning with *Immagina*, an intermediate-level Italian program. This program targets more than the basic needs of intermediate learners of Italian, elevating the beginning-level language terms through advanced and thoughtful practice and cultural competency. Interestingly, this textbook can be suitable to most advanced levels of learners by customizing the course setting and creating different types of activities tailored for each student. This pedagogical approach is useful to target students' needs; however, on the other hand, it also makes the teacher's work more challenging. *Immagina second edition* offers robust integration of technology, and an array of cultural exposure, including short films, such as *L'amore non esiste* (Lesson 2), and *Il numero di Sharon* (Lesson 9). To promote in-depth cultural awareness, these videos are combined with important selected readings from two famous books: *Il viaggiatore dalla voce profonda* by Dacia Maraini, and *Lui e io* by Natalia Ginzburg. The authors have carefully selected contexts in which students are expected to communicate using original tools, like Italian materials extrapolated from the Italian society activities. Equally important is the magazine-like design chosen by the authors, which engages students while teaching grammatical concepts and cultural themes.

Immagina is comprised of ten lessons (*lezioni*), which are recommended for programs taught in two or three intense semesters. Each *lezione* is divided into eight parts, which are not always easy to distinguish: *Per cominciare, Cortometraggio, Immagina, Strutture, Cultura, Letteratura, Laboratorio di scrittura,* and, finally, *Vocabolario.*

Each lesson starts with a *Sommario* which provides the section summary and introduces students to the lesson themes, including photos, brief descriptions, and maps to locate the geographical areas studied in the lesson. Then, *Per cominciare* offers a long list of expressions with basic exercises to facilitate the comprehension of the following sections. One of the hallmarks of *Immagina* is the short-film selections, which are thematically tied to the lesson and introduce students to real-world language expressions.

To engage students, this activity provides a pre- and post- viewing support (*Preparazione,* and *Analisi*). While the first lesson opens the *Immagina* part with a general article on "Gli Italiani nel mondo. Italiani: un popolo in movimento" (Italians in the world), the other nine lessons provide photos and information about one or more Italian region without any connections to the rest of the lesson activities. *Immagina* curates the Italian geography arbitrarily, dividing it into different areas: Roma and the central Italy regions (second lesson); *Firenze* and *Toscana* (Lesson three); *Milano* and *Lombardia* (Lesson four); the two big islands, *Sicilia* and *Sardegna* (Lesson five); all the Italian southern regions, *L'Italia Meridionale* (Lesson six); the north-east Italy, *Il Triveneto* (Lesson seven); *Emilia-Romagna* (Lesson eight); *La Liguria* (Lesson nine); the north-west Italy, *Le Alpi* (Lesson ten).

Strutture is divided into different sections, each of them with references to the previous sections, creating a long part dedicated only to grammar structures and exercises. Furthermore, each *Strutture* section includes several subparts: *Pratica*, *Comunicazione*, and *Sintesi.* In the *Pratica*, there are numerous exercises to guide the students into the learning mechanism. *Comunicazione* encourages students in their oral expression, and *Sintesi* reviews the four grammar points highlighting the link between the previous sections. Subsequently, each lesson provides a cultural reading, *Cultura*, which helps to strengthen the themes and the language structure of each lesson. Finally, each lesson ends with one more reading, but from an Italian literary source, *Letteratura*. This closing section is important but also overwhelming after the *Cultura* part.

A principal component of the book is the Student Activities Manual (WebSAM), accessible in *Vista High Learning* at **http://www.vhlcentral.com**. These activities assist students with their oral conversation and pronunciation skills, helping to increase students' awareness of intonation, differences in pronunciation with the double forms, stressing accents, and different pitches regarding questions and affirmation.

In conclusion, *Immagina, 2nd Edition. L'italiano senza confini,* is a complex and rich intermediate-level Italian textbook. *Immagina* provides teachers with good suggestions and study plans to teach the Italian language. Furthermore, it encourages an ample understanding of the rich Italian culture.

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Publisher's Response

I am pleased to respond to Barbara Ottaviani Jones's review of Vista Higher Learning's Intermediate Italian program *Immagina: l'italiano senza confini*, Second Edition. I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Ottaviani Jones for writing about *Immagina* in such favorable terms. She accurately describes how the program progresses from the introductory to the intermediate level via thoughtful practice and cultural coverage. As Ms. Ottaviani points out, *Immagina* offers a wealth of cultural content via authentic short films and literary texts which encourage students to use Italian for communication. Indeed, one of the program's hallmarks are its short

films, which are thematically tied to the lesson and introduce real-world language. Ms. Ottaviani Jones also recognizes how well the *Immagina* program and its rich digital offerings lend themselves to customization. However, contrary to Ms. Ottaviani Jones, I would argue that this flexibility makes the instructor's work easier and more straightforward, not more complicated, thanks to the array of content and activities from which to choose.

Finally, I am also grateful to Ms. Ottaviani Jones for describing *Immagina* as a rich and complex Intermediate Italian program with robust integration of language content and technology that provides instructors with valuable tools for teaching Italian.

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Japanese

Michael L. Kkuemper, Lisa Berkson, Nathan Patton, and Nobuko Patton. *Beginning Japanese: An Integrated Approach to Language and Culture* **(revised edition)***.* **Tokyo, Rutland, Vermont, Singapore: Tuttle Publishing, 2016. Paperback. Includes a CD-ROM. ISBN: 978-0804845281. $29.95**

Beginning Japanese is a comprehensive textbook for beginners of Japanese. It promotes the four skills of language and the 5Cs (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) of ACTFL's National Standards. It includes a CD-ROM, a workbook and a website: **http://www.timeforjapanese.com/** as well as the textbook and workbook for the next level, *Intermediate Japanese.*

Beginning Japanese is organized into ten chapters: "Introductions and Getting Started" (Chapter 1), "Family and Friends in Tokyo" (Chapter 2), "The Ins and Outs of Schools in Japan" (Chapter 3), "People and Places of Nagasaki" (Chapter 4), "Time in Nara" (Chapter 5), "Body Parts and Clothing in Hiraizumi" (Chapter 6), "Hobbies in the Ancient City of Heian-kyou" (Chapter 7), "Adjectives in Amanohashidate" (Chapter 8), "Purchasing and Giving Gifts in Edo" (Chapter 9), and "Meeting Basho in Kanazawa" (Chapter 10).

The entire book follows the fictional story of Kiara, an American exchange student who is a second language learner of Japanese and visits famous people and places in Japanese history, such as the poet Basho in the Edo Period. Each chapter has a clear situational or functional theme, and starts with a list of objectives and a photo that depicts the theme of the chapter, and then presents five lessons, each of which includes a dialogue presented as a text and as a manga strip, a list of new words with many small illustrations, a list of required *kanji* with detailed information including mnemonic, grammar and usage notes, drills, pair work and group work, culture notes, and a reading passage, named "Kiara's Journal." Appendices include lists of grammar references, Japanese proper names, foods and drinks, classroom objects, Japanese-English glossary and English-Japanese glossary.

Beginning Japanese has a number of unique features.

First, the way the book delivers its content is friendly to teens and young adults: (i) each dialog is presented as a manga strip and most vocabulary words are depicted by illustrations; (ii) all dialogues and Kiara's journals together form an exciting story,

Kiara's unrealistic adventure across time and space; and (iii) digital interactive learning materials are provided through the CD-ROM and the website; (iv) the price of the textbook ($29.95) is significantly lower than most other textbooks with comparable digital materials.

Second, this textbook uses *kana* and *kanji* from the very first chapter while Romanization is extremely limited. Whether Romanization should be used for Japanese textbooks has been debated for many years. Some learners just want to gain oral communicative skills in Japanese and want to learn Japanese using Romanization without going through the pain of memorizing Japanese scripts. On the other hand, other learners do not want to see Romanization at all because they want to become able to read authentic Japanese texts and are afraid that they will become dependent on Romanization if they see it. In addition, students learning Romanization tend to form habits of wrongly pronouncing Japanese syllables and words. Those who wish not to see Romanization will appreciate this textbook while they still have the option of seeing some Romanization used as *furigana* on the website. This volume introduces a total of 151 *kanji* characters. The *kanji* introduced in the first chapter includes 東 and 京, which form a compound 東京 (Tokyo). These *kanji* characters seem to be too advanced to be introduced in the very first chapter, but the authors think that these two *kanji* characters effectively reveal the holistic characteristics of *kanji*. I believe that the users of this textbook would benefit from acquiring additional self-study materials for kana and kanji and concurrently self-study them as they use *Beginning Japanese*.

Third**,** English translations are quite limited in *Beginning Japanese*. For example, most words and phrases listed in the new vocabulary section are represented by *kana* and *kanji* with the specification of their category (for example, noun, suffix, and particle) and compact illustrations. Only some words are accompanied by English translations. Although this will make it harder for self-study learners, they will be encouraged to guess the meaning of words based on the context provided by the dialog first. It is important because these learners will have to constantly guess the meanings of words based on the context if they go to Japan for the first time. Besides, if they need to see translations of words, they can always look at a dictionary. *Beginning Japanese* provides English-Japanese and Japanese-English glossaries at the end of the book, so the users can also refer to them, after giving a good guess on word meanings.

Fourth, *Beginning Japanese* presents many conversations and texts that freely mix English and Japanese. For example, the following is the first dialog in Chapter one (p. 26-27):

Male agent:　日本語がわかりますか。(Do you understand Japanese?)
Kiara: はい、わかります。(Yes, I understand it.)
Female agent: いいですね。(Oh, good.)

Can you introduce yourself?

Kiara: 初めまして。　(How do you do.)
　　　私はキアラです。(I'm Kiara.)
　　　どうぞよろしく。(Nice to meet you.)

As one can see, the female agent first responds to Kiara in Japanese, and then asks her, in English, "Can you introduce yourself?" She mixes English and Japanese. Similarly,

Kiara's journal in Chapter five (p. 175) includes a sentence such as:

この experienceは毎日surprisingです。(This experience surprises me every day.)

Here, Japanese and English words are included in the same sentence. Some teachers of Japanese might frown at this practice, but bilinguals do naturally mix two languages in order to effectively communicate with others or freely write down their thoughts in their daily lives. Learners of Japanese can express their ideas more easily if they are not inhibited to use only the target language. This textbook is opening the door to a new approach for teaching languages, which is called "translanguaging," which is a new pedagogical concept to bilingual education.

Overall, this textbook includes many useful cultural and linguistic notes as well as helpful hints for developing proficiency. It is well organized and easy to navigate. The quality of printing and binding is superb. Most importantly, it is filled with numerous creative ideas of the passionate authors who have rich experience of teaching Japanese. *Beginning Japanese* is a very unique, exciting and excellent textbook especially for young learners of Japanese.

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Language Teaching

Deters, Ping, Xuesong Gao, Elizabeth R. Miller, and Gergana Vitanova. *Theorizing and Analyzing Agency in Second Language Learning: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Multilingual Matters, 2015. Pp. ix + 281. ISBN: 9781783092888

To experienced second-language educators, teachers, researchers, and textbook designers aspiring to expand the purpose of language learning from parroting to true empowerment, *Theorizing and Analyzing Agency in Second Language Learning* offers a mother lode of theories and practices that will promote a better understanding of and foster second-language agency. This multi-author book is a reservoir of 14 agency-focused articles, written by notable and culturally diverse authors.

The editors first lay the foundation for the essays selected with a comprehensive introduction and then take readers on a tripartite journey of discovery of second-language agency *de jure* and develop it *de facto* by dividing it into the following three subsections: (1) *Theoretical Approaches to Agency,* (2) *Analytical Approaches to Investigating Agency, and* (3) *Pedagogical Practices and Learner Agency.* The backbone of diversity that supports this volume is further reflected on a micro level: the academic materials in the chapters are thoroughly tested through varying research methods, ranging from case studies and auto-ethnography, to critical studies of specific topics.

In the *Introduction*, the editors prime readers for the rest of the volume. In chronological order they review the development of the perception of and research on agency throughout different intellectual movements, from traditional mythology to modernism, postmodernism, and socioculturalism. In the process, the editors touch on intersections and contradistinctions between agency and possibly homologous terms,

such as "self," "reflexivity," and "subjectivity." Agency as the "socioculturally mediated capacity to act," "language as a type of social action" (4), and several other points in this preview of this trajectory of agency conceptualization help readers understand the upcoming chapters, making the editor's introduction an indispensable point of entry to the book as a whole.

Moreover, in the *Introduction*, the editors zero in on the subject matter more specifically and give us a rundown of the history of research on second-language agency. The timeline starts with the simplistic, essentialist perspective on language, moves to language learning as a process merely propelled by individual learner's autonomic motivation, and concludes with Norton's concept of investment and learner's dependence on their environment in the choices they do or do not make (i.e., even resistance is a response to context). The authors also cover other concepts and issues that enrich the conversation on agency in today's research circles, including Activity Theory, performativity, Vygotsky's semiotic mediation, Bakhtin's dialogism, and the interaction of identity and agency. Indeed, the chapters compiled in this book pick at where recent perspectives have led the conversation, transcending the restrictions set by previous perceptions of agency, drawing on the best of interdisciplinarity, and giving much attention to the demonstration of agency in discourse as a "creative, responsive and even ethical understanding of one's sociocultural realities" (6).

The authors in Part One give us a good idea of what to expect in the following parts of the book. As suggested by its title, "*Theoretical Approaches to Agency*," Part I details recent theories related to agency in second-language acquisition. It includes the following chapters: *Structure, Agency, individualization, and the Critical Realist Change; Dialogical/View on Language Learner's Agency: Connecting Intrapersonal with Interpersonal; Examining Agency in (Second) Language Socialization Research; Theorizing Young Language Learner Agency through the Lens of Multilingual Repertoire: A Sociocultural Perspective; and Sociological Approaches to Second Language Learning and Agency*. In this section, especially in Chapters 3 and 4, agency is viewed as a framework in second language acquisition but can also be seen as dynamic and multifaceted factor across time and space. However, in Chapter 2, one of the most important chapters in this section, I believe, Block critically calls for a deeper investigation of how the larger political and social structure can, in some ways, constrain learners to practice agency. His intention is not to look at identity and agency for an individual performance, but to show how the larger social and political structure shapes these realities and agencies.

Thanks to several empirical studies examining the dynamics of language learners' agency in real life, Part Two, "*Analytical Approaches to Investigating Agency*," reifies the abstraction of some agency-related concepts. This part of the book includes the following chapters: "*Performing and Accounting Language and Identity: Agency as Actors-in-(inter) Action-with tools; "He's the Star!': Positioning as a Tool of Analysis to Investigate Agency and Access to Learning Opportunities in a Classroom Environment"; "Crossing' into the L2 and Back: Agency and Native-like Ultimate Attainment by a Post-Critical-Period Learner"; and Analyzing Learner Agency in Second Language Learning; a Place-based Approach*. One of the crucial chapters in this part, in my opinion, is Chapter 8. Drawing on positioning theory to analyze and dissect agency, Hayriye Kayi-Aydar explores how agency can emerge and evolve through the discourses in which learners shape and

reshaped by discourses they utilize to construct their agency and identity. The discussion in this chapter is informative for teachers because it can tell us as teachers and educators why some students are actively talking and performing in a deliberate act of agency in the classroom while other students are not. Indeed, this chapter thoroughly explains, through detailed examples, how power and agency in the classroom can be seen as vital factors mediated through classroom discourse.

Finally, for an even fuller concretization of the previous two parts, *Part 3*, "*Pedagogical Practices for Agency*," can be the muse for on-the-field second-language professionals, whether teachers of adults or children, curriculum designers, or the like. The five chapters that comprise this part are: *Agency. Anxiety, and Activity: Understanding the Classroom Behavior of EFL Learners; Verbalizing in the/ Second Language Classroom: Exploring the Role of Agency in the Internalization of Grammatical Categories; Critical Discourse Analysis in a Medical English Course Examining Learner Agency through Student Written Reflections; and Toward a Relationship-oriented Framework: Revisiting Agency by Listening to the Voices of Children*. For example, Chapters 12, 13, and 14 illustrate how students can take an active agentive stance in their discourse and overcome the essentialist view of perceiving L2 students as passive learners and users of English in their context of learning. Authors in this section assert that once learners internalize the concept and consciously understand it, they are most likely to take an initiative to produce an independent meaning on their own.

Diversity, as mirrored in different aspects, is what makes this book a panoramic window into second-language agency and a future staple in the library of researchers in the field. The book stands out not only thanks to the heterogeneity of its authors, but also to its interdisciplinary perspectives on agency and the theories, analyses, and pedagogies it brings together into a single volume. The volume also sheds light on how power dynamics and power relations in human interaction, especially in the classroom, can play a vital role in shaping and promoting a student's agency. A fascinating part of this edited volume is that several chapters raise the question of how the macro level can affect the micro level in relation to agency and language learning.

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Paesani, Kate, Heather W. Allen, and Beatrice Dupuy. *A Multiliteracies Framework for Collegiate Foreign Language Teaching.* **Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-205-95404-09.**

In *A Multiliteracies Framework for Collegiate Foreign Language Teaching*, the authors outline a bold approach for reconsidering foreign language curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The target audience for this book includes methods instructors, foreign language education majors, foreign language instructors and researchers interested in multiliteracies instruction, and graduate students enrolled in applied linguistics and foreign language education courses.

This book consists of an introduction and eight chapters. Each chapter begins with an overview of the topic and an outline of its contents. In a section titled "Conceptual Background" research findings and key concepts are discussed. In "Pedagogical Applications," the authors unite theoretical and conceptual knowledge and practice, providing instructional models and examples. "Final Considerations" reviews the main points of the chapter. The reader is then given two application activities in "Transforming Knowledge." The first is a reflective journaling assignment, while the second is a research-based task. Each chapter concludes with "Key Resources" and "For Further Reading" sections. Another feature of the book is the series of "Learning Activities" included throughout chapters, which are intended to encourage the reader to engage with the chapter's content.

In Chapter 1, "Understanding the Multiliteracies Framework," the authors challenge readers to reconsider their views on foreign language teaching and learning by proposing a literacy-based approach as an alternative to communicative language teaching. Their literacy-based approach is a response to the professions' calls for curricular and pedagogical change outlined in the book's introduction (e.g., Byrnes, 2001; Maxim, 2009; MLA, 2007; Swaffar & Arens, 2005). According to the authors of the book under review here, this approach to foreign language teaching and learning has the potential to increase the intellectual viability of foreign language study, combine both the language and content aspects of the curriculum, develop language competence, and prioritize learners' interaction with target language texts. Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of meaning design in interpreting and transforming texts, and then transitions to the "what and how" of this approach, and to Kern's (2000) learning processes. The four pedagogical acts of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice are also introduced.

In Chapter 2, "Reconsidering Goals, Objectives, and Assessment from a Multiliteracies Perspective," the authors discuss coherent learning objectives and goals as a core aspect of multiliteracies-based foreign language teaching. Goals and objectives are defined and explained in relationship to instruction and assessment. The chapter concludes with a discussion of strategies for creating goals and objectives for foreign language learning consistent with a multiliteracies approach. Sample assessment activities are also given. Chapter 3, "Reconceptualizing Grammar and Vocabulary as Meaning-Making Resources," asks the reader to reconsider the teaching and assessment of grammar and vocabulary from a multiliteracies perspective. The authors discuss central issues in language teaching such as implicit and explicit instruction, form-focused and meaning-focused instruction, and text-based models of form-focused instruction and assessment. Particular attention is given to Adair-Hauck and Donato's (2010) PACE model, a guided inductive approach to grammar instruction in which learners' attention is drawn to target language forms in context. The chapter concludes with an interesting sample form-focused lesson plan designed for third- or fourth-semester intermediate Spanish. The lesson objective is past-tense narration using the short story *Apocalipsis* as the focused feature. Chapter 4, "Scaffolding Oral Language Use in the Classroom," reexamines the role of speaking in classroom learning and assessment. The chapter begins with a discussion of SLA research on input, output, and interaction. The nature of classroom discourse patterns is then considered. Strategies are given for how to maximize student participation in

teacher-student exchanges and student-student interactions. The chapter concludes with a four-step lesson plan template that promotes extended oral discourse in interpersonal and presentational models, participation in collaborative speaking tasks, and engagement with authentic target language texts.

Chapter 5, "Teaching Reading as Constructing Meaning from Texts," addresses the role of reading in foreign language instruction. The authors guide the reader in reconsidering the purposes and goals of reading instruction and assessment within the multiliteracies framework to organize activities based on the four pedagogical acts of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice. An overview of existing literacy-based approaches to teaching and assessing textual interpretation is then provided. The chapter concludes with a model for designing text-based lesson plans and assessment. In Chapter 6, "Teaching Writing as Designing Meaning through Texts," the authors explore foreign language writing instruction. Writing is understood as act of meaning design with linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural dimensions. The authors outline approaches to foreign language writing instruction and writing assessment. Three literacy-oriented models of writing instruction are discussed. The authors then propose a four-stage writing model and assessment. The chapter concludes with a sample writing-focused lesson plan. Chapter 7, "Teaching Video-Mediated Listening as Constructing Meaning," introduces the reader to an expanded view of foreign language listening and viewing. Factors affecting video-mediated listening processes, cognitive video-mediated listening processes, and differences between reading and video-mediated listening are discussed. The authors propose a six-stage model for designing multiliteracies-oriented video-mediated listening lessons that combines communication and textual analysis, and where learners are engaged in designing meaning from video texts. Sample learning activities and a sample video-mediated lesson plan are given.

Chapter 8, "Teaching New Literacies: Constructing Meaning in Web 2.0 and Beyond" reconsiders the role of technology in foreign language instruction and assessment. The authors define Web 2.0 and new literacies, and then discuss the potential of Web 2.0 for developing authentic, interactive reading and authoring of texts. Sample learning activities and a sample lesson plan based on the digital novel *Alice Inanimata* are given.

This is an outstanding book for those current and future foreign language educators who are interested in transforming foreign language curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Learning activities, reflection questions, and sample lesson plans make this a particularly valuable text for methods instructors. The authors should be commended for having created a well-written, accessible, and informative book on multiliteracies-based pedagogy.

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Spanish

García Serrano, M. Victoria, et. al. *¡A que sí!*. 4ᵗʰ edition. New York: Cengage Learning, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-285-84925-6 (Student Text).

¡A que sí!, an intermediate/advanced Spanish conversation textbook now in its enhanced fourth edition, offers an engaging exploration of Hispanic culture and language. The textbook features student ancillary materials that include: *iLrnAdvance*, an online digital solution program and *Cuaderno*, a student activities manual with an answer key. Additionally, instructors receive an annotated textbook and manual that provides detailed teaching guidelines and support. The textbook is designed to be used in a quarter- or semester system and may be adapted to a one- year-long course when used with supplementary materials. ¡A que sí! is divided into four thematic units, each with three chapters. The thematic organization is centered around the following four contemporary topics: (I) *Espacios: Públicos y privados* (spaces: public and private); (II) *Encuentros y desencuentros* (dis/agreements); (III) *Patria/Nación: Acercamientos* (motherland/nation: approaches); and (IV) *De acá para allá* (from here to there). The first unit explores different spaces of the Spanish-speaking world (first impressions), familiarizes students with different traditions (celebrations) and examines the development of art in different cities (city tours). Additionally, the second unit studies cultural and national stereotypes and their effect on interpersonal and international relations (us and them), focuses on gender disagreements (her and him) and analyzes personal human relations (in the family). In the third unit, there is an emphasis on the diverse relationships of Spanish-speaking cultures with their nation (geography and history), an exposure to physical and ideological oppressions by dictatorships (repressions) and subsequent reactions against human crimes (denunciations). Lastly, the fourth unit reflects on massive diaspora communities in the 20th century (displacements), reviews narratives of exile (estrangement) and incorporates autobiographies of migrant writers in the U.S. (first person).

Each unit begins with a general summary that presents the overarching theme and content. Furthermore, the units are supported with a *Que yo sepa* section that features inquiries about students' knowledge and personal experiences in correlation to the central theme. Each chapter features an array of genres, such as: "literature, newspapers, magazines, comic strips, advertisements, songs, blogs, and films," as mentioned by the authors, in order to further enhance language learning through culture. Chapters integrate grammar tutorials, reading selections, authors' biographies and vocabulary sections, as well as films. The following is an elaboration of the sections covered in each chapter:

Grammar

Cuaderno is a useful resource that includes *Repaso grammatical*, *Práctica escrita* and *Práctica oral,* as well as sections with grammar explanations, writing exercises and oral practice activities. The written assignments can be self-corrected thanks to an answer key. Grammar presentations follow a logical order, beginning with the present indicative tense and concluding with the subjunctive vs. the indicative in adjective clauses. *iLrnAdvance*, the online version of *Cuaderno*, provides grammar tutorial videos, web-based activities, access to films, pronunciation podcasts, quizzes, exams and syllabi.

Reading Selections

Each reading selection is preceded by a short introductory paragraph that presents the author and provides a valuable framework for analyzing the text. The introduction sets the context for a sociopolitical, economic and historical exploration of the readings. The ¡*Alto! Antes de leer* activity offers reading strategies and pre-reading questions that reflect on students' knowledge on specific topics and serves as preparation for the reading. Similarly, the *Práctica* activities before every reading selection encourage students to use theme-related vocabulary to discuss the reading.

Reading selections are organized by genre, exposing students to rich and diverse sources and perspectives. The fourth edition has changed approximately a third of the texts in order to include contemporary authors and expose students to new writers and their writing techniques. Works introduce a variety of authors from Spain and Latin America, presenting different cultures and histories. Although the textbook incorporates a diverse group of authors, there is a strong emphasis on literary works from Spain. However, the textbook introduces an admirable array of genres that include short stories, poems, novel excerpts, essays and newspaper articles, among others. Reading selections are accompanied by footnotes that offer useful commentary, translations and synonyms. At the end of each reading there is a *Después de leer* section that includes three activities: ¿*Entendido?*, *En mi opinión* and *En (inter)acción*—all of them written—and communicative assignments designed to engage students in critical thinking. The "after reading" sections can be given as homework and also as pair/group activities.

Vocabulary

There are two vocabulary sections in each chapter: *Palabra por palabra* and *Mejor dicho*; the former gives translations or synonyms of less common words in Spanish, and the latter features false cognates and their correct use. These sections serve to broaden vocabulary and enhance student comprehension. Vocabulary is limited to about twelve words per section, and also theme-related. The vocabulary sections prove to be essential in helping students develop a close reading. Additionally, the *Estrategias comunicativas* activity translates common colloquial expressions found in readings.

Films

An innovated feature of the fourth edition is the inclusion of film in the textbook. Each film is preceded by a brief introductory summary. However, future versions of the text might consider also including a short biography of the director. The activities that accompany films include *Antes de ver la película*, *Durante la película* and *Después de ver la película*, sections that can be assigned as homework or in-class pair and group activities. The activities encourage students to reflect on the theme of each unit and to do research on social and historical aspects of culture. Through film, students are able to perceive geographical linguistic variations, and enrich their learning of culture by examining authentic materials. Additionally, the textbook offers recommendations for twelve thematically organized films. Each chapter ends with a film section, helping students develop their listening skills through an exciting visual component that nicely complements readings.

In conclusion, *¡A que sí!* is a well-organized textbook that considers theoretical and practical sources, especially the National Standards for Foreign Language Education, the 2007 MLA Report (*Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*), and the most recent edition of *Teacher's Handbook: Contextualized Language Instruction*. Each chapter carefully integrates grammar, literature, film and cultural activities to develop language skills through engaging assignments. ¡A que sí! is a remarkably designed platform for language and culture learning, through creative and communicative activities. The topics selected for the textbook are intriguing and contemporary. Each unit covers a provocative topic and contains interesting sources that reflect on social realities of Spanish-speaking countries. Also, student analysis and discussions are facilitated through well-conceived questions and activities. The multiplicity of visual elements, such as cartoons, photographs, paintings, maps and charts, make *¡A que sí!* an exciting interactive textbook that challenges students to think critically. Illustrations successfully represent specific aspects of Hispanic culture and immerse audiences in dialogues of social issues. Additionally, a functional glossary assists students in their language learning. Moreover, the textbook is as an exceptional preparation for students who will go on to take advanced Spanish courses.

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Publisher's response

Thank you to Professor Judy Cervantes for her very detailed and thoughtful review of *¡A que sí!*, one of our advanced Spanish literature texts. Feedback like this is essential as we prepare to revise *¡A que sí!* for future print and digital iterations.

As the reviewer noted, *¡A que sí!* is organized into four units of literature: *Espacios, Encuentros y desencuentros, Patria/Nación,* and *De acá para allá*. As students enter their fifth semester of Spanish and beyond, the pieces found in these units are meant to connect students with a wide variety of Spanish and Latin American authors. They also reveal the breadth of perspectives and opinions within the Spanish-speaking world. The *Después de leer* section at the end of each reading allows students to improve their written or spoken responses in Spanish while connecting more deeply with the themes in the text.

Though *¡A que sí!* emphasizes reading comprehension and conversation, grammar and vocabulary are not forgotten in this advanced text. However, as Professor Cervantes wrote, the vocabulary sections of *¡A que sí!* go beyond simple lists of words to memorize. *Palabra por palabra* and *Mejor dicho* teach students phrases and expressions commonly used in everyday Spanish, while helping them steer clear of common false cognate errors. This nuanced approach to vocabulary will help students communicate like native speakers as they mature in their study of the language.

We are glad that the reviewer found *Cuaderno* and its online counterpart on iLrnAdvance to be helpful resources for students. In addition to housing the online *Cuaderno* activities, iLrnAdvance is a digital learning platform that contains text audio, grammar podcasts and tutorials, and other resources. Combined with the print text,

iLrnAdvance is meant to further students' understanding of the rich pieces of literature they are reading.

As students embark on their advanced Spanish studies, *¡A que sí!* offers them the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of Spanish and Latin American culture while sharpening their grammar and vocabulary. Used in tandem with the digital support of iLrnAdvance, *¡A que sí!* ensures that students can read and write about challenging texts with ease. If instructors would like to review a chapter of *¡A que sí!* or sign up for a 30-day trial, they can visit **Cengage.com/iLrn** to get started or inquire with their local Cengage Learning Consultant.

Catherine Bradley, Product Assistant
Lara Semones, Senior Product Manager
Cengage Learning

Hershberger, Bob, Susan Navy-Davis, and Guiomar Borrás Alverez. *Plazas: Lugar de encuentros.* **5ᵗʰ edition. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning/National Geographic Learning, 2017. Includes: Textbook, Online ilearn, Student Activities Manual. ISBN-13: 978-1-305-49962-1, ISBN-10: 1-305-49962-X (student edition); ISBN-13: 978-1-305-66214-8, ISBN-10: 1-305-66214-8 (Student loose-leaf edition); and ISBN-13: 987-1-305-50378-6, ISBN-10: 1-305- 50378-3 (Instructor's edition).**

This new edition states in the introduction that the mission of *Plazas* is to "invite students to connect with the Spanish-speaking world in new and exciting ways (IAE-1)." The authors further address their adherence to rigorous standards while achieving "complete in-depth coverage of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Spanish-speaking world (IAE-i)."

The instructor's package consists of a teacher's annotated text (3 Text Audio CDs included), a two-volume workbook which is really an activities-, video-, and lab manual, and an online learning site, iLrn, Heinle Learning Center powered by Quia. On the site one finds a very user-friendly home page with tabs for: eBook access, a calendar for assignments, homework activities, self-tests, a media library with audio and videos that correspond to each lesson, self-tests (pre and post), and a practice section. The site is also equipped with a voice board for group, partner, or instructor chats. *Share it!* allows students to discuss, rate, and review uploaded files. There is also a *Mindtap Mobile app* to allow students to work from an iPhone or tablet. The entire program is suited for customization for hybrid or complete online formats.

The text is divided into fifteen chapters which cover the complete spectrum of Spanish grammar and is sufficient to meet requirements for Intermediate level Spanish based on general post-secondary requirements and ACTFL standards.

The language learning is presented in a scaffold structure similar to standard textbooks but with innovative stylistic variations that sets *Plazas* apart from some texts which only rearrange a few pictures and alter some language in order to create a new edition. The fifth edition, as promised in its introduction, offers new and uniquely exciting components which will be highlighted as the chapter structure is presented.

Each chapter opens with a theme for language structure acquisition and a focus on one of the world's Spanish-speaking countries. Cengage formed a partnership with

National Geographic Magazine, which enhances each chapter at the beginning and end with outstanding photography, accompanying videos, and contemporary news of explorations in the country presented in each chapter.

Each lesson begins with an introductory page to introduce the theme and learning goals of the lesson with photography to capture the student's attention and set learning goals for the lesson. In the beginning section this fifth addition provides *A Explorar!*, a vignette from National Geographic magazine which features a contemporary explorer from the country of focus. The integrative section allows students to compare cultures and make connections to other disciplines. The section is embedded in the superior quality photography unique to National Geographic magazine and designed with attention to ACTFL standards.

The next section introduces the vocabulary relevant to the theme of the lesson, followed by well-designed ancillaries and opportunities for interaction and authentic practice and production on the pair, small group, or classroom presentation level.

The next section begins grammar explanation presented through a basic dialog and assimilated by culture-infused exercises that remain true to the lesson theme and the culture of the target country. It is a friendly approach to grammar which leaves the student with models of structure embedded in cultural and thematic knowledge. This section is repeated several times throughout the lesson, as is the vocabulary presentation so vocabulary and grammar are not given at once but rather at intervals throughout the lesson. Hence, grammar and vocabulary are "layered on" as the chapter themes develop.

The next section, *Encuentro Cultural*, is not simply a cultural paragraph or two with statistics on populations. It begins with a video to pique interest in the focus country. The section continues with readings coupled and covers history, important persons, authentic music and art. The activities connect with contemporary themes, such as the role of women in the culture and musical tastes.

Following *Encuentro Cultural* is a *National Geographic* video which leaves a final impression of the target country/culture. Again, the quality and skilled presentation of the theme sets this edition apart as a truly innovative and timely work.

The last two sections end the chapter with a reading from an authentic contemporary source. The reading is followed by questions and an opportunity for discussion of the topic, which recursively draws on structure, vocabulary, and themes of the lesson. The guided writing gives another opportunity for students to draw on the various parts of the lesson. Each of these sections is expanded by the Quia online supplement. The homework assigned on Quia gives practice of the newly acquired knowledge in individual responses and opportunities to collaborate with one or more students to produce original exchanges based on the cultural context of the lesson. Students finish the chapter with knowledge of a specific Spanish-speaking country. They have been exposed to its history, people, and customs through a variety of sight and sound enhanced by technology and activity interspersed with outstanding photography. This program is suitable for veteran teachers who desire to customize *Plazas* to fit their unique teaching styles as well as for those new to the teaching profession that would best benefit from a structured step-by-step program.

In summary, Cengage has created a complete learning program. The authors have succeeded in offering a new edition with genuine innovations. *Plazas* is a modern educational program that covers it all. Chapter themes and cultural underpinnings are

consistently and innovatively maintained through every page and exercise. Each chapter flows as a well-integrated mix of grammar, theme, and culture linking the five Cs through timely and contemporary context while the instructor, well-equipped with the online Quia component, can provide a variety of opportunities to facilitate and enhance the learning process. It is the opinion of this reviewer that *Plazas* stays true to the mission stated at the beginning of this review.

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Publisher's Response

Thank you to Professor La Valle for taking the time to write such a detailed review of *Plazas*. His feedback is much appreciated and will prove to be particularly valuable as we prepare to revise *Plazas* for our new digital platform, MindTap.

As the reviewer writes, *Plazas* is meant to provide an ideal blend of grammar and vocabulary lessons that complement our ¡A explorar! sections. This unique partnership with National Geographic allows students to further develop their reading skills while learning more about the exciting applications of Spanish around the globe.

To continue the theme of making Spanish come alive for students, the *Encuentro cultural* section exposes users to all parts of the Spanish-speaking world. As the review notes, this section goes beyond mere statistics and facts. The selected videos, audio recordings, and readings are intended to broaden students' cultural perspectives while strengthening their listening abilities in the language. This combination of vocabulary, grammar, and culture is vital to students' success and growth in their introductory Spanish studies.

We are pleased to read that iLrn, our current digital platform, earned high marks. We particularly value the *Share It*! feature which allows students to collaborate with one another and learn from each other's observations and experiences. If instructors would like to review a chapter of *Plazas* or sign up for a 30-day trial of iLrn, they can visit **Cengage.com/iLrn** to get started or inquire with their local Cengage Learning Consultant.

Furthering our digital innovation, the MindTap Mobile App provides students with the opportunity to broaden their vocabulary and improve their pronunciation while on the go, and offers a sneak of our new digital experience, MindTap.

Available for fall 2018, *Plazas Enhanced* with MindTap will present instructional text, audio, and video alongside learning activities to ensure that students are constantly practicing and refining their Spanish knowledge. This will enhance the already integrative experience of *Plazas* that you have described. To build upon the collaborative spirit of iLrn and the *Share It!* feature, MindTap will also feature A/V boards and forums to which all students can contribute.

Plazas encourages students to dive into their Spanish studies and ensures that vocabulary and grammar lessons are never separated from their real-world cultural context. Combined with new and evolving technologies, *Plazas* makes learning even more meaningful and memorable.

Catherine Bradley, Product Assistant
Lara Semones, Senior Product Manager
Cengage Learning

Sánchez, Margarita M. and Katica Urbanc. *Retratos. Arte y sociedad en Latinoamérica y España*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-58510-714-8. $49.95.

Retratos. Arte y sociedad en Latinoamérica y España is an intermediate/advanced-level textbook that focuses on reading and writing but also introduces students to the Spanish-speaking world, its artistic production, literature, and cinema. In the foreword, the authors explain that students will discover elements that are unique to Spain and Latin America without making use of generalizations or stereotypes. They also explain that the goals of the book are to establish a human bridge between "them" and "us," to discover the beauty of the Spanish language, and to gain a better understanding of other cultures and ways of thinking and seeing the world. The authors' ultimate goal is to make the process of writing easier and more enjoyable for students. At the core of the book is the authors' belief that great writers are also great readers.

Retratos can best be used in intermediate or upper-level courses. It is best used with students who have mastered the basics of Spanish grammar and can read and write at a fairly advanced level. Given the broad themes and the scope of *Retratos*, it can be used in different classes: from composition and reading courses to courses focusing on cultural and artistic aspects of the Spanish-speaking world. Moreover, the book can be a valuable asset in culture and civilization courses. *Retratos* introduces students to relevant and challenging topics by means of examining the works of an artist, the writings of an author, and a recent short movie. The long-term goal is to have students write several pieces of varying lengths that are linked to the topics discussed. *Retratos* offers a great degree of flexibility in terms of how to use the textbook and the remarkable breadth of materials makes it possible for instructors to easily adapt the textbook to the needs of their students.

Retratos is divided into seven chapters and a conclusion. Before the opening chapter, students are presented with a *Guía del escritor*, or guide to good writing. In it, writing is presented as a process and students are provided with useful tips on choosing and researching a topic, structuring a text, finding a good title, and editing, correcting, and rewriting a text. Students are encouraged to refer to this guide throughout the course. Each chapter focuses on a broad topic that is explored through the arts, literature, and the movies. The seven topics are perceptions of the other; childhood; motherhood; beyond reality: the dreamer and the mad one; exploring new paths: the rebel; border crossing: the immigrant, the exile, and the displaced; and the art of the game: the ingenious one. The concluding chapter focuses on men and women in the 21st century. Besides the three main sections, one or two grammatical sections are interspersed throughout and each chapter concludes with a series of creative activities.

Although there are minor variations, each chapter follows a very similar structure. The chapter opens with a broad introduction to the topic followed by a set of comprehension questions. Next, the focus shifts to the visual arts. Some chapters focus on just one

artist while other chapters look at two artists. Students first learn about the artist's biography and are then introduced to a specific work of art. Each of these sections is followed by a set of comprehension and discussion questions. In the middle of the chapter, there is a section entitled "*expresiones escritas*" (written expressions), where students learn about different types of writing: autobiography, creative writing, letters, review, argumentative essay, interview, dialogue, and diary. These sections are mainly informative and are followed by some questions about the style discussed. The next section focuses on literature. Depending on the length of the readings, one or two authors may be considered. *Retratos* does a good job representing the richness and diversity of the Spanish-speaking world since it includes authors from different eras and countries. Also, students are given a chance to read pieces from different literary genre: short stories, poems, letters, diaries, interviews, and a theatre play. The third section of the chapter discusses a short movie or documentary. These short movies are by young filmmakers and have been internationally recognized. Five of the movies come from Spain, two were produced in Mexico and one was made in Peru. All these films are available on line free of charge, which makes them easily accessible to both instructors and students. This easy access allows students to watch them out of class, which could free more time for in-class discussion and collaboration. The chapter concludes with a section entitled "*actividades creativas*" (creative activities). These activities include oral and written activities as well as group projects. Written activities are at the core of this section since they provide students with an opportunity to put into practice what they learned in the *expresión escrita* section. For example, in Chapter 1, which focuses on autobiography, students are asked to write an autobiography for one of the characters they encountered in the literature section, to write a two-page biographic text, and to write a two-page autobiography for one of the movie characters. These activities bring together what students have learned in the chapter.

Knowing the intricacies of the language is a requirement for any good writer. Although grammar is not one of the core components of *Retratos*, each chapter quickly reviews important aspects of Spanish grammar such as *ser* and *estar*, agreement, the preterite and imperfect tenses, the subjunctive mood, transition words and expressions, and the future and conditional moods. Grammar explanations are provided entirely in Spanish. After a brief presentation of the topic under consideration, students can engage in some practice. Exercises range from fill-in-the-blanks and multiple choice exercises to translations and sentence completion.

Vocabulary is also an important component of the language-learning process. *Retratos* presents new vocabulary in two different ways: words related to the arts are marked with an asterisk and definitions and explanations for them are found in an annex at the end of the book. Useful and new vocabulary is highlighted in bold and there is a box on the side that provides definitions for these words. Vocabulary is presented entirely in Spanish and no English translations or equivalencies are provided.

Retratos is a unique and versatile textbook that combines a focus on the arts with the art of writing. The authors' choice of organizing the materials around topics allows them to present a wide array of visual artists, writers, and filmmakers. *Retratos* can be described as a window that allows students to look into art and society in Latin America and Spain.

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Publisher's response

We are grateful to Dr. Isabel Álvarez for her thoughtful, detailed, and positive review of *Retratos: Arte y sociedad en Latinoamérica y España.* Dr. Álvarez rightly identifies the key pedagogical values of the book--namely, its flexible nature and the wide array of Spanish-speaking authors, artists, and film directors represented in it. Authors Urbanc and Sanchez have used *Retratos* in their own courses and find that students are highly receptive to the materials. Students' ability to relate, at a personal level, to the topics addressed in the book, leads to productive and sophisticated discussions in the classroom. We also thank the founding and visionary Publisher of Focus, Ron Pullins, for having developed this book. If instructors would like to request an examination copy of this or any other Focus title, they may do so at **Focusbookstore.com**.

Rick Todhunter
Hackett Publishing

Spaine Long, Sheri, Maria Carreira, Sylvia Madrigal Velasco, and Kristin Swanson. *Nexos*. 4th Edition. Boston: Cengage Learning, 2017. Instructor's Annotated Edition ISBN-13: 978-1-305-58666-6. Pp. 546 + 22 pp. of Instructor's Guide, 17 pp. of Student Introduction to the text, 26 pp. of appendices [KWL Chart (*Lo que sé. Lo que quiere aprender, Lo que aprendí*), *Repaso y preparación* Answer Keys, Spanish verbs, and maps], 22 pp. of Spanish-English and English-Spanish glossary, and 4 pp. ofindex. To learn more about Cengage Learning, visit www.cengage.com. For pricing options, visit www. cengagebrain.com.

When the first edition of the introductory Spanish-language program *Nexos* was published in 2005, it established the norm for providing guidance to the instructor on how to incorporate the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) into the classroom. Now in its fourth edition, *Nexos* has once again proven to be an exemplar in the field of Spanish-language instruction by this time including a focus on 21st Century skills:

> *Nexos* integrates the twelve 21st Century skills (e.g., Leadership & Responsibility, Collaboration, Social & Cross-Cultural Skills, Information Literacy) into the Spanish classroom. Each chapter has both student and instructor annotations that provide specific strategies to develop these skills. Savvy instructors will notice that these workplace and lifelong skills build on the "5Cs." The 21st Century skills focus on the development of good global citizens and pre-professional education (ii).

Thus, students will come to appreciate and understand the differences among the uses of Spanish as a classroom language vs. a world language, vs. a career language and vs. a life language, and thereby develop value-added skills. For example, when learning

the various past tenses or the subjunctive in Spanish, students will learn not only how to form these tenses but also how to employ them in meaningful ways. Learning objectives are further supported by each chapter's *¡Explora y exprésate!* where students are encouraged to establish connections between what they have studied and practiced with further cultural explorations. *Repaso y preparación* prompts students to check what they have learned while preparing them for the new material to be presented in the following chapter.

Also new to the 4th Edition of *Nexos* are detailed annotations to support differentiated instruction for heritage learners and appropriate instruction for the general student population. This is particularly significant given that students represent a wide range of backgrounds and learning styles. Specifically, with heritage learners, who are not to be confused with false beginners and are very different from true beginners, the instructor must contend with those who speak or spoke Spanish to some degree at home but who may or may not have developed all four language skills in Spanish since they were schooled in English and, as a result, do not constitute a homogeneous group. Furthermore, to serve the needs of all students as well as to address the issues of learner diversity and critical thinking, KWL charts are provided: K = What do you already know? (background knowledge); W = What do you want to learn? (individual student goals); and, L = What did you learn? (assessment). The plethora of instructor annotations provide practical suggestions for checking student progress and the integration of Bloom's taxonomy shows how to correlate learning objectives with Cognitive and Knowledge categories.

The combination of print and digital components of the *Nexos* program foster individual learning styles and preferences. A four-tiered storyline video program provides context for grammar and vocabulary. Particularly creative is the storyline of the main character Beto, a professor who shows his students videos of himself as a university student. Much like the previously popular CBS situation comedy *How I Met Your Mother*, the Beto storyline allows present-day students to observe and comment on what technology was like in the "old days" (that is to say, for the older generation to which their professor may belong) and contrast it with present-day technology. When exploring the media-rich iLrn Language Learning Center for *Nexos*, this reviewer was able to experiment with the available resources and note how cultural themes and activities facilitate communication via multi-modal connections. Example resources include an "Assignment Calendar," where students click to see upcoming assignments. "EBook" leads to the link to the ADA-compliant ebook, which allows, among other functions, highlighting, notetaking, and sharing of comments among users; "Activities" is a link to all available activities (e.g., task-based), whether assigned or not; "Self-tests" lead to student self-assessments (when students complete a self-test, an individualized study plan with links to all applicable resources is generated, encouraging students to be effective autonomous learners capable of track their own progress); "Media Library" contains all of the videos associated with the program (e.g., *Voces de la comunidad*, a series of videos of native speakers answering short questions, and *Nivel Elemental*, which are available through *National Geographic*, a Cengage partner); and the "Practice" tab encompasses all of the resources associated with the book, including vocabulary audio flashcards, two different sets of grammar tutorials, concentration games and crossword

puzzles. In sum, *Nexos* does a fine job of straddling both the needs of the teaching style of the professor and the learning styles of an increasingly diverse student population.

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Publisher's Response

Thank you very much to Dr. Eileen Angelini for taking the time to write such a detailed review of *Nexos 4th Edition*. Her feedback is appreciated and crucial to the development and revision process. One of Nexos' greatest strengths, as you mentioned, lies in its focus on 21st Century skills and the incorporation of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities). With these "5C" values at the heart of *Nexos*, we see a celebration and recognition of diversity in the world of the Spanish language through the textbook's many rich and thoughtful features.

There is an emphasis, as noted in the review, on presenting the nuanced applications of Spanish in terms of the classroom, career, life, and the world in general, to develop students' use of the language in meaningful ways. To reinforce the materials in each chapter's first half, *¡Explora y exprésate!* adds a lens of cultural exploration through readings, videos, and other activities. *Repaso y preparación* is a review section that connects previously learned grammar concepts to material. Soon to be presented.

In regard to the inclusion of diverse learners and learning styles, *Nexos'* annotations provide unique support for heritage learners (those with exposure to the language outside of the classroom) through differentiated instruction practices. KWL Charts, a tool that helps students organize and inspire thinking about what they already **K**now, what they **W**ant to know, and what they have **L**earned about a topic, are integrated into *Nexos* programming to challenge all students' critical thinking skills.

The combination of Nexos' print and digital components, accessed through the iLrn Learning Center,™ as the review points out, allow learners to interact with the language in various modes. The four-tiered video program contextualizes grammar and vocabulary though its storyline videos and brings authentic voices and culture directly to the students with its *Voces del mundo hispano* segments. For instructors' and students' use, iLrn also has features like the Instructor Dashboard to assign and grade work, an interactive ebook, self-tests for student assessment, audio flashcards, grammar tutorials, and activities for practice, and links to all audio and video materials as well.

If instructors would like to review a chapter of *Nexos* or sign up for a 30-day trial, they can visit **Cengage.com/iLrn** to get started or inquire with their local Cengage Learning Consultant.

Jelyn Masa, Product Assistant
Lara Semones, Senior Product Manager
Cengage Learning

Reviewers Wanted

NECTFL invites you to submit your name as a reviewer of textbooks, software, websites, programs, ancillaries, videos — in short, any product or opportunity or program that might be of interest to you and your colleagues. You can help others make their way through the wide array of materials they may see at a conference, in a catalogue, on a website, or through advertising! Share your knowledge and experience ... and see yourself in print! Don't be shy if you've never written for publication before; we are eager to work with you!

Reviewers are needed at all levels and in all languages. If you would be interested in exploring this possibility, would like to submit a review, or wish to receive materials to evaluate, please send your name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address to Tom Conner (see below). If your company produces educational materials or provides educational services, and if you would like to have them reviewed in our journal, please contact Tom.

Guidelines for reviewers can be found at **http://www.nectfl.org/software.html**

Thomas S. Conner, Review Editor

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Félicitations!

Tom Conner, Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures at St. Norbert College (Des Peres, WI) and Reviews Editor of *The NECTFL Review*, has been recognized by the government of France as a chevalier (knight) in the Ordre des Palmes Académiques (Order of Academic Palms). "I am thrilled to receive this award, which never would have been possible without the support of St. Norbert College. I made my life here and the college helped me to grow as a teacher and scholar. The award reflects on the excellence of our program in modern languages and the dedication of the faculty," says Conner.

Conner is being recognized for his more than three-decades-long service to "promote French language and culture in the United States" as well as for his pioneering work in Cambodia, a former French colony. His citation also includes mention of his extensive service to the profession and of his two most recent books on André Gide and the Dreyfus Affair. The ceremony will take place in Paris, or in New York City at the French Consulate, at a time to be announced.

Conner joined the St. Norbert College faculty in 1987 and teaches introductory and advanced-level French language courses. He was born and raised in Sweden but educated in France and the United States, receiving his M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. all from Yale University. He has also served as a visiting professor at the University of the Philippines-Diliman and at Nihon University in Japan. Conner has authored and edited books extensively, and is a frequent contributor to academic journals.

The Order of Academic Palms, originally established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, is the highest national order of France for distinguished academics and figures in the world of culture.

Guidelines for the Preparation of Manuscripts — *NECTFL Review*

Below, you will find a summary of the Guidelines for the Preparation of Manuscripts and the Checklist for Manuscript Preparation. The complete documents for both in PDF format can be downloaded at

- Guidelines for the Preparation of Manuscripts: **http://www.nectfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Review-Guidelines_2017.pdf**

- Checklist for manuscript preparation: **http://www.nectfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Review-Checklist.pdf**

All articles submitted will be evaluated by at least two, normally three, members of the Editorial Review Board. Elements to be considered in the evaluation process are the article's appropriateness for the journal's readership, its contribution to foreign language education and the originality of that contribution, the soundness of the research or theoretical base, its implications for the classroom, and finally, organization, focus, and clarity of expression.

As you prepare your manuscript for submission to the *NECTFL Review*, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. We use the most recent **APA [American Psychological Association] Guidelines** (**http://www.apastyle.org/**), and not those of the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please use the latest edition (6ᵗʰ ed., 2010) of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or the *Concise Rules of APA Style* as your guide. For models of articles and references, examine The *NECTFL Review*, recent issues of the *Modern Language Journal* or *Foreign Language Annals*. These journals follow the APA style with minor deviations (and those being primarily changes in level headings within articles). Citations within articles, bibliographic entries, punctuation, and style follow the APA format very closely.

2. In order for an article to be processed and sent to outside reviewers, please follow these guidelines carefully to expedite the review and publishing process. Submit your article electronically to NECTFL at **https://nectfl.wufoo.com/forms/authorarticle-information-form-nectfl-review/,** uploading it in the **Author/Article Information Form.**

3. Please think carefully about the title of your article. It should be brief, preferably without subtitles, and *no longer than 12 words*.

4. **We require an abstract of your article.** See pp. 25-25 [Section 2.04] in *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (2010) for clear guidelines for writing an abstract.

5. Articles will not be accepted if they appear to endorse or sell software, hardware, books, or any other products.

6. **Do not include the names of the author(s) of the article on the first page of the actual text.**

7. Include a short biographical paragraph (this will appear at the bottom of the first page of the article, should it be published). Please include this paragraph on a separate page at the *end* of the article. This paragraph should be **no longer than 4-5 lines.**
8. Please note that the typical length of manuscripts averages approximately 20-25 double-spaced pages, including notes, charts, and references. This does not mean that a slightly longer article is out of the question.
9. Authors should read the manuscript very carefully before submitting it, verifying the accuracy of the citations (including the spelling of names, page numbers, and publication dates); the accuracy of the format of the references; punctuation, according to the APA Guidelines; spelling throughout the article.
10. Please consult the **Checklist for Manuscript Publication** [**http://www.nectfl.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Review-Checklist.pdf**]**.** Promising articles have been rejected because authors did not spend enough time proofreading the manuscript. Proofreading includes not only reading for accuracy but for readability, flow, clarity.
11. Remember: In order for an article to be processed and sent to outside reviewers, authors must complete the **Author/Article Information Form**. This form is used to match the author's description of the article with the appropriate reviewers according to (1) instructional level; (2) areas of interest; (3) the type of content; (4) relevant language(s); (5) keywords that best describe the article content [no more than four should be indicated].

Checklist for Manuscript Preparation

Here are a few reminders, many of which are taken directly from the APA Guidelines:

❑ Please remember to use the spell check and grammar check on your computer before you submit your manuscript. Any portions of text in a foreign language must be followed immediately by an English translation in square brackets.
❑ Do not submit an article that includes tracking in Word.
❑ Remember that in the APA guidelines, notes (footnotes or endnotes) are discouraged.
❑ Do not use automatic footnoting or endnoting available with your word processor.
❑ Do not use automatic page numbering,
❑ Please double-space everything in your manuscript.
❑ Use left justification only; do not use full justification anywhere in the article.
❑ The required font throughout is either Times New Roman 12 pt. or Minion Pro 12 pt.
❑ There should be only one space after each period.
❑ Punctuation marks appear inside quotation marks.
❑ In listing items or in a series of words connected by *and, but, or*, use a comma [the Oxford comma] before these conjunctions.
❑ When providing a list of items, use double parentheses surrounding the numbers or letters: (1), (2), or (3) or (a), (b), and (c).
❑ All numbers above nine must appear as Arabic numerals ["nine school districts" vs. "10 textbooks"]; numbers below 10 must be written out.
❑ Page number references in parentheses are not part of the actual quotation and must be placed outside of the quotation marks following quoted material.

❑ Use standard postal abbreviations for states in all reference items [e.g., NC, IL, NY, MS], but not in the text itself.

❑ Do not set up automatic tabs at the beginning of the article (i.e., as part of a style); rather you should use the tab key (and *not* the space bar) on your computer each time you begin a new paragraph. The standard indent is only ¼ [0.25"] inch.

❑ Please reflect on the title of the article. Quite often titles do not give readers the most precise idea of what they will be reading.

❑ According to APA guidelines, the References section contains only the list of works you actually use in your article. Check all Internet addresses before submitting the manuscript.

❑ Be judicious in using text or graphic boxes or tables in your text.

❑ Please makes certain that the components you submit are in the following order:

❑ First page—with the article title, names and titles of authors, their preferred mailing addresses, home and office phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and the name of the primary contact person [also, times in the summer when regular and E-mail addresses may be inactive];

    ❑ First page of the manuscript—containing the title of the article and the abstract

    ❑ The text of the article

    ❑ Notes; References, Appendices—in this order

    ❑ A short, biographical paragraph (no more than 4-5 lines).

    ❑ Authors must complete the **Author/Article Information form,** uploading the submission via this form: **https://nectfl.wufoo.com/forms/authorarticle-information-form-nectfl-review/**

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Our mailing list of 14,000 names throughout the region and the country represents the most active, dynamic, and professional educators in the field. These are the individuals who seek out opportunities for continued growth in their teaching, administration, research, and personal knowledge. The mailing list is available for purchase to those with a demonstrated interest in and commitment to foreign language education. It will not be sold to anyone outside the field. If you wish to present information about your program, district, or materials, please contact us at 716–777–1798 or at **info@nectfl.org** for further information.