

# NECTFL Review

**A Journal for K – 16+ Foreign Language Educators**





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.

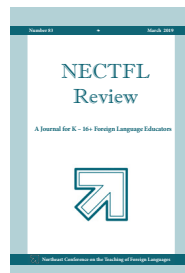
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**We serve world language teachers by**

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- **representing their diverse views**
- **bringing them together**
- **nurturing their growth as newcomers and veterans treating them as caring friends and respected professionals**



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**NECTFL phone:** 716-777-1798

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**E-mail:** [info@nectfl.org](mailto:info@nectfl.org)

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## From the 2019 Conference Chair

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On February 7-9, more than 1400 attendees at the 2019 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL) explored the topic of authenticity in language teaching and learning. This focus began with the publication of the 1996 National Standards that stated “... (W)hile grammar and vocabulary are essential tools for communication, it is the acquisition of the ability to communicate in meaningful and appropriate ways with users of other languages that is the ultimate goal of today’s foreign language classroom.” (NSCB, 1996, p. 3).

Since 1996 world language professionals have been on a journey to make our classrooms places in which learners use language in real-life situations they might encounter with native speakers of the target language and in the target culture. The focus on authenticity has brought excitement and enthusiasm among learners. They communicate with one another, their teachers, and their peers in the target countries; they use technology to examine newspapers, to watch videos, to examine/study visuals and infographics, and to share ideas and interests with native speakers; they invite native speakers to the classroom to debate world problems; and they form relationships that transcend borders. In doing so, they begin to gain an appreciation of different perspectives that make them more tolerant, informed citizens of the world. Personally, the Standards revitalized my classroom and caused my students to develop an appreciation of what is “different” yet the same among people across the globe.

The 2019 Conference continued this work guided by the tools that the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) has published these past 23 years. Through the lenses of the national standards, proficiency guidelines, performance indicators, can-do statements, and core practices, we examined our curricula, our lesson plans, our classroom practices to ensure that we are providing the best instruction possible. This issue of the *NECTFL Review* will further explicate the Conference theme. Laura Terrill, the keynote speaker, will share her address in which she drew a clear pathway from Authentic Language to Authentic Learning in an upcoming issue of the journal.

On behalf of Nathan Lutz, the 2020 Conference chair, I invite you to submit a session proposal for the 66<sup>th</sup> NECTFL Conference held from February 13-15, 2020, in New York City. The theme, *Languages for All: Envisioning Language Learning Opportunities for Every Learner*, will delve into several subthemes including students

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The National Standards Collaborative Board. (1996). *Executive Summary—Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.actfl.org/sites/default/files/publications/standards/1996%20National%20Standards%20for%20FL%20L%20Exec%20Summary.pdf>



with learning differences, those who speak a different language at home, those who learn in more than one language, students of any socio-economic status, students of any age, those who represent a range of gender expressions and identities, and those of any race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation. The deadline for submissions is May 3, 2019. You can find the link to the proposal form at <https://nectfl.wufoo.com/forms/2020-nectfl-sessionworkshop-proposal/>

In June, the NECTFL Board will welcome the class of 2023, who were recently elected by the NECTFL Advisory Council: Georges Chahwan of Connecticut, Jill Shimmel of New York, and Xiaoyan Hu, of Rhode Island. 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, volunteer to help at the conference, and serve in an advisory role on various committees. Read more about joining the Advisory Council as an individual or as part of an institutional memberships at <https://www.nectfl.org/advisory-council/>

It is because of the efforts and commitment of Robert Terry, Editor, and Thomas Connor, Materials Editor, that the *NECTFL Review* maintains a strong presence among professional journals. These gentlemen work throughout the year soliciting articles, consulting with reviewers, and editing the journal. They, along with the entire NECTFL Board, encourage you to submit an article for publication. Find submission guidelines and download past issues at <http://www.nectfl.org/nectfl-review/>

Preparations are already well underway for the 66<sup>th</sup> NECTFL Conference. We look forward to welcoming you next year in New York City.

Warmest regards and best wishes,

Rosanne Zeppieri  
2019 Conference Chair



# LANGUAGES FOR ALL

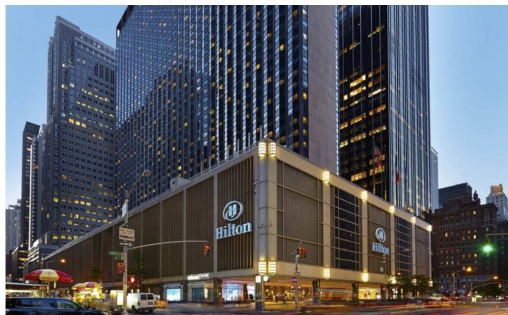
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ENVISIONING LANGUAGE  
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## A Survey of Teachers' Integration of Culture in Secondary Foreign Language Classrooms

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Danielle T. Asay, *Brigham Young University*

Rob A. Martinsen, *Brigham Young University*

Blair E. Bateman, *Brigham Young University*

Robert G. Erickson, *Brigham Young University*

### Abstract

This survey study gathered data from 63 secondary school teachers of six different foreign languages in the state of Utah. The study describes how secondary FL teachers viewed the role of culture in language teaching, the models and methods they used to teach culture, and their attention to culture in their lesson planning, instruction, and assessment. Factors associated with greater or lesser attention to culture as an element of the curriculum are also discussed.

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**Danielle T. Asay** (M.A., Brigham Young University) has taught various courses in French at the secondary level. Her teaching and research interests center on culture teaching and professional development.

**Rob A. Martinsen** (Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin) is an Associate Professor of Spanish Pedagogy at Brigham Young University. He teaches courses in foreign language pedagogy at the B.A. and M.A. levels and supervises beginning level Spanish courses. His research interests include language and culture learning in study abroad settings and the use of technology in language learning.

**Blair E. Bateman** (Ph.D., University of Minnesota) is a Professor of Spanish and Portuguese Pedagogy at Brigham Young University. He teaches courses in foreign language and immersion pedagogy at the B.A. and M.A. levels and supervises beginning and intermediate Portuguese courses. His research interests include the teaching of culture, language immersion education, and Portuguese for Spanish speakers.

**Robert G. Erickson** (Ph.D., Brigham Young University) is the Associate Director for Curriculum and Instruction of the Center for Language Studies at Brigham Young University. He has supervised the French teacher preparation program and taught pedagogy and French language and culture courses at the secondary, post-secondary, and graduate levels. His research interests include student evaluations of foreign language teachers.

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The survey found that although most teachers were comfortable teaching culture and were familiar with Cultures as one of the “five C’s” of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2015), they devoted much less time and energy to culture than to language skills; they struggled to emphasize cultural perspectives; and they tended to address cultural topics in English rather than in the target language. Possible reasons for these findings are discussed, as well as implications for preservice and inservice teacher development and for future research.

## Introduction

In recent decades it has become a truism in the literature on foreign language (FL) teaching that culture is inherent in language and vice-versa, and that languages ought not to be taught in isolation from the cultures that use them. For the better part of a century, sociolinguists, anthropologists, and language educators have examined the connections between language and culture and have concluded, among other things, that the way a given language encodes experience makes aspects of that experience more salient for users of the language (Whorf, 1940); that a given language embodies cultural realities as its users employ it to create meanings that are understandable to their group (Kramsch, 1998); and that the loss or extinction of a given language is associated with a loss of cultural identity among groups associated with the language (Fishman, 2001).

*In recent decades it has become a truism in the literature on foreign language (FL) teaching that culture is inherent in language and vice-versa, and that languages ought not to be taught in isolation from the cultures that use them.*

In the FL teaching profession, early efforts to integrate culture with language instruction by authors such as Nostrand (1967) and Seelye (1974) were strengthened by the proficiency movement of the 1980s, with a proliferation of books, chapters, and articles with titles such as “Toward Cultural Proficiency” (Allen, 1984), *Culture Learning: The Fifth Dimension in the Language Classroom* (Damen, 1987), and *Toward a New Integration of Language and Culture* (Singerman, 1988). This movement gained momentum in the 1990s with the publication of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1996), which included Cultures as one of five goal areas for instruction. Authors began to claim a place for “culture as the core” of the language curriculum (Paige, Lange, & Yerushova, 1999). In Europe, the influential work of Byram and colleagues included a monograph entitled *Teaching-and-Learning Language-and-Culture* (Byram, Morgan, & colleagues, 1994), with a hyphenated title intended to emphasize a commitment to the integration of these elements.

Paradoxically, despite persistent calls from the language teaching profession for teachers to make culture learning an integral part of language learning, studies continue to report that language teachers struggle to incorporate culture in their lessons, and that culture remains subservient to language in FL teaching classrooms (Byrd, Hlas, Watzke, & Valencia, 2011; Hadley, 2001; Klein, 2004). Researchers have advanced multiple explanations for teachers’ lack of emphasis on culture. Teachers may be unsure how to go about addressing cultural issues (Byrd et al., 2011) or how to assess culture learning (Hadley, 2001). Teachers sometimes claim that they do not have time

## A Survey of Teachers' Integration of Culture

to teach culture because they must focus on developing students' language proficiency (Byrd et al., 2011; Seelye, 1997; Social Science Education Consortium, 1999). Teachers who are L2 speakers of the target language may feel inadequate because they are not cultural insiders or have not spent time living in the target culture (Seelye, 1997; Social Science Education Consortium, 1999). In addition, teachers may have to contend with indifferent or negative student attitudes in regard to culture learning (Mantle-Bromley, 1992). Walker and Noda (2000) summarize the mismatch between the profession's goals and classroom realities by asserting that "nothing has been discussed more and with less effect than the relationship between language and culture" (p. 187).

## Evolving Conceptualizations of Culture and Culture Learning

One of the greatest challenges in integrating language and culture instruction has been the multiple and evolving conceptualizations of what culture is and what the goals for culture learning should be. In the Grammar-Translation Method of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as in the Reading Method that prevailed from the 1930s through the 1950s, the goal for culture learning was to give students access to great literary masterpieces. The equation of culture with literature gave way in the 1960s to an emphasis on anthropological and behavioral culture (Allen, 1985), which in turn led to the proposal of various systems for classifying culture and goals for culture learning. Brooks (1968) proposed dividing culture into five categories, of which he asserted that "patterns of living" was the most important for students to learn. Brooks (1975) further distinguished between what he called *formal culture* (the arts and societal institutions), and *deep culture* (behaviors and values), corresponding roughly to what came to be known as "Big C" culture and "little c" culture. Nostrand and Nostrand (1970) proposed additional goals for culture learning, divided into nine categories that comprised not only culturally correct behaviors but also the ability to explain cultural patterns. Seelye (1974, 1993) proposed his own set of goals, which he eventually refined down to six areas that included helping students to develop an interest in culture learning, to recognize the effects of social and situational variables on cultural behaviors, and to research and evaluate cultural generalizations. Although these theoretical frameworks represented significant advances in the teaching of culture, they tended to view cultures as static entities comprised of classifiable facts that were teachable (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, & Colby, 1999), reflecting the thinking of the time.

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With the advent of the proficiency movement and the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) movement of the 1980s came calls for the integration of culture with language teaching, along with proposed curricular and instructional models for accomplishing this (e.g., Allen, 1985; Crawford-Lange & Lange, 1984; Lafayette, 1988). As part of the initial development of the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines* for speaking, listening, reading, and writing, an attempt was made to

develop guidelines describing progressive levels of cultural “proficiency.” A draft of these guidelines was quickly withdrawn, however, in response to criticism that the Novice through Advanced levels focused exclusively on appropriate cultural behaviors, neglecting the cognitive and affective domains of culture learning (Allen, 1985).

The affective domain received increased attention in the late 1980s and 1990s, with authors such as Robinson (1985), Mantle-Bromley (1992), and Byram and Morgan (1994) calling for language teachers to accept the challenge of promoting positive attitudes toward members of other cultures and of guiding students to reflect on their own cultures and cultural identities. This period also saw an increased emphasis on culture learning as a developmental process. Bennett’s (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity described the stages through which culture learners progress, ranging from *ethnocentricity* (where people unconsciously experience their own cultures as central to reality) to *ethnorelativity* (where people recognize that all behavior, including their own, exists in a cultural context). Other influential models emerging in the 1990s included Byram’s (1997) Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, which proposed teaching and assessing five areas of cultural competence: *knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness*. Fantini (1999) proposed a somewhat simpler model comprised of three main components: *attitudes* (the affective domain), *skills* (the behavioral domain), and *knowledge* (the cognitive domain), circumscribed by an additional dimension, *awareness* of the self as a cultural being. To these dimensions, Paige et al. (1999) added an important distinction from the field of intercultural training: the need for both *culture-specific learning*, or the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to a specific target culture, and *culture-general learning*, or knowledge and skills that are generalizable across cultures, including an understanding of the culture learning process and coping strategies for cross-cultural adjustment.

The 1990s also saw the release of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1996, 1999, 2006), re-released in their fourth edition as the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (2015). The *Standards* emphasize three aspects of culture: the *products* a society produces; the *practices*, or patterns of social interaction of a society; and the *perspectives*, or the beliefs, attitudes, and values of a society. A number of studies in the past two decades have examined culture teaching through this lens (e.g., Byrd et al., 2011; Klein, 2004; Moore, 1996).

An additional development from the 1990s through the present has been an influx of postmodern thought on culture theory, with an emphasis on the subjective nature of culture (Meadows, 2016). Kramsch (1993) asserted that members of given cultures have subjective views of their own culture and of other cultures, and advocated for the creation of a “third space” in which learners can take both an insider’s and an outsider’s perspective on their own and other cultures. More recently, Kramsch (2014) has pointed out that globalization has called into question the notion of the link between one national language and one national culture, the concept of “native speakers,” and the notion of “foreign” in FL teaching, as individuals increasingly move between languages and cultural groups. Kramsch (2006) proposed replacing the notion of communicative competence with *symbolic competence*, a theoretical construct that views language as “not just items of vocabulary or communication strategies,

## A Survey of Teachers' Integration of Culture

but embodied experiences, emotional resonances, and moral imaginings” (p. 251). In light of the subjective nature of culture, authors such as Kramsch (2006, 2014), Sercu, Méndez García, and Castro Prieto (2005), and Garrett-Rucks (2016) have called for a constructivist approach to culture, highlighting the role of learners as meaning-makers as they participate in intercultural interactions.

Most recently, in 2017, the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages expanded on the cultural content of the Standards by jointly releasing the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication (2017). The Can-Do Statements map cultural proficiency onto language proficiency levels, ranging from Novice through Distinguished, by describing students' competencies in two broad areas: (1) investigating products and practices to understand perspectives, and (2) interacting in another culture.

Perhaps the developments of the past six decades in regard to culture teaching and learning may be summarized as evolving from a view of culture as knowledge and skills that may be objectified to a view of culture as a meaning-making process (Robinson-Stuart & Nocon, 1996). Unfortunately, theoretical advances in conceptualizing culture learning, and even professional recommendations such as those outlined in the *Standards*, have been slow to find their way into FL classrooms, as discussed below.

*Perhaps the developments of the past six decades in regard to culture teaching and learning may be summarized as evolving from a view of culture as knowledge and skills that may be objectified to a view of culture as a meaning-making process*

### Research on Culture Teaching in FL Classrooms

Especially since the release of the first edition of the *Standards* in 1996, researchers have increasingly demonstrated an interest in how FL teachers integrate culture into their courses. Moore (1996) examined how 210 Upstate New York teachers taught culture, especially in light of the “new” *Standards* and their framework of products, practices, and perspectives. Moore discovered that time constraints seemed to explain teachers' culture teaching methodologies, which led to more focus on facts, or products and practices, than on perspectives. Later studies by Hoyt and Garrett-Rucks (2014), Jernigan and Moore (1997), and Klein (2004) also found that teachers' lessons tended to lack emphasis on cultural perspectives.

The Social Science Education Consortium's (SSEC) 1999 national survey of 12,000 FL teachers investigated the amount of time high school teachers devoted to culture in their courses, the cultural content covered in those courses, and the strategies and materials used. The SSEC report concluded that although culture teaching was on the rise among language teachers, there still remained a large gap between theory and practice, and that teachers devoted less time to the relationships between cultural products, practices, and perspectives than to any other aspect of culture teaching. Nevertheless, over 80% of teachers reported that they felt well prepared to teach culture in line with the *Standards*.

Following up on whether or not teachers feel prepared to teach culture as outlined in the *Standards*, Byrd (2007) examined twenty FL teacher methods course syllabuses in his doctoral dissertation, and concluded that “pre-service teachers lack direct

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instructional strategies on cultural pedagogy” (p. vii). This finding was subsequently confirmed when Byrd et al. (2011) published the results of their survey of 415 world language teachers and 64 teacher educators concerning the role of culture in the classroom and the “motivators and barriers in maintaining culture knowledge” (p. 4). Byrd et al. additionally confirmed that of the three dimensions of culture included in the *Standards*, “perspectives” was the most difficult for teachers to incorporate into their classrooms. Teachers cited time constraints and lack of funding as the two most significant barriers to the teaching of culture.

The impact of the *Standards* was again studied in 2011 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Phillips & Abbott, 2011a, 2011b). Among their findings were three areas of greatest impact of the *Standards*: “using the three modes of communication and making communication meaningful; shifting from learning about the language into focusing on communicative teaching; and using the target language as the means of instruction and making it comprehensible” (p. 40). Three areas of “less impact than expected” were the Cultures, Comparisons, and Communities goal areas; “preparing students to use the language for real-world purposes beyond the classroom and increasing students’ interest in continuing their learning beyond the courses they take;” and teaching the goal areas of the *Standards* as “separate entities” instead of interconnected elements (p. 40).

International research on teaching culture in the classroom has yielded similar findings to those previously mentioned: a mismatch between culture teaching beliefs and classroom practice (Gonen & Saglam, 2012) and limited attention to culture (Gonen & Saglam, 2012; Young & Sachdev, 2011).

Although the body of research on culture in the foreign language classroom is growing, the call for additional research by Paige et al. (1999) is still relevant. The present study builds on previous research by expanding the scope of the research questions and by specifically targeting foreign language teachers in the state of Utah, who share a common state core curriculum for world languages based largely on the NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements.

## The Present Study

As previously stated, the focus of this study was to describe how culture is taught in secondary foreign language classrooms, including how teachers conceptualize culture and how they incorporate it into their curricula. We specifically posed the following research questions:

1. What methods or techniques do secondary foreign language teachers use for teaching culture?
2. What conceptualizations or models of culture learning do teachers use in their instruction?
3. To what extent do teachers incorporate culture into their curricula, including planning, instructional time, and assessment?
4. What factors affect teachers’ decisions regarding culture teaching?



## A Survey of Teachers' Integration of Culture

### *Participants*

Secondary-school foreign language teachers, both part- and full-time, from throughout the state of Utah were invited to participate in this study. Voluntary survey participants were recruited through an e-mail from their school district world language supervisors. Select charter and private school teachers were also invited to participate through e-mail. Finally, some foreign language teachers invited colleagues to participate. Participants were not financially motivated or compensated for their contributions to this study; however, the authors did offer to share the results of the research with them for their professional improvement and classroom implementation.

The survey, found in its entirety in the Appendix, was sent to approximately 500 potential respondents over the course of a month and a half. Ninety-four responses were received, with 69 teachers completing the entire survey, for a response rate of 13.8%. There was a fairly even distribution of junior high and high school teachers throughout the grades: 1% (one teacher) taught sixth grade, 48% seventh grade, 57% eighth grade, 59% ninth grade, 48% tenth grade, 46% eleventh grade, and 43% twelfth grade. Of the 69 participants, only two taught at charter schools and two at a private school. The distribution of languages was as follows: 37% French, 35% Spanish, 16% German, 9% American Sign Language (ASL), 4% Chinese, 3% Japanese (two teachers), and 1% Russian (one teacher).

It is likely that more French teachers responded, even though there is a higher proportion of Spanish teachers than French teachers in the state, because French is the subject taught by one of the authors and her name was likely recognized. These languages were taught on a variety of levels, but the majority of respondents (87%, or 59 participants) taught Levels 1 and 2. Seven people taught an exploration of foreign languages class, 37 taught Level 3 (54%), 13 taught Level 4 (19%), and five people taught Level 5. Seven teachers reported that they taught Advanced Placement and five indicated they taught Concurrent Enrollment courses in which students simultaneously receive high school and college credit. The large majority of respondents instructed their classes on a year-long basis, although one teacher had a two- trimester course, another teacher taught a one-semester course, three teachers taught a one- trimester course, and three teachers taught a one-term course.

Survey respondents had a variety of educational backgrounds and years of experience. Sixty-six respondents were certified teachers, whereas three individuals indicated that they were in the process of becoming certified at the time they participated in the survey. Thirty-six percent of the teachers received their certification prior to 1996 (the advent of the *Standards*), and the rest of the teachers were dispersed rather evenly between the years of 1996 and 2013. Four teachers (6%) were additionally certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Participants had a wide range of teaching experience, including 26 veteran teachers (15+ years of experience) and four first-year teachers. Thirty-two percent, or 22 teachers, fell within the 4-10 year experience category.

Not only did the study participants have a wide range of teaching experience, but they had a considerable amount of educational experience as well. Eighty-three percent of respondents had completed more than a bachelor's degree, with 25% holding a master's degree and one respondent having a doctoral degree. The respondents also

indicated that they regularly participated in professional development opportunities, and 89% claimed membership in the Utah Foreign Language Association.

These 69 teachers gained knowledge of their second language and culture in a variety of ways. Four teachers were native speakers of the L2, whereas 63% said they primarily learned their language in college, and 34% said they learned their language primarily in K-12 schooling. Another large percentage learned their language or supplemented their learning by immersion, either through a religious mission (56%), a study abroad program or internship abroad (28%), or a non-academic residence abroad (16%). All but one of the participants of this study had had contact with one of the target cultures for the languages they teach, and most had had considerable experiences with the culture. Ninety-three percent reported having spent more than three months living in the target culture, and 71% had spent more than a year and a half in-country.

### *Sources of Information*

Survey data were collected through an online questionnaire using Qualtrics software. Teachers consented to participate in the study by agreeing to the terms listed at the beginning of the survey. The questionnaire contained 35 items, including multiple-choice questions, Likert scale questions, rank-order questions, and short-answer questions. The questionnaire took teachers approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete, and upon completion, teachers were invited to upload a copy of their Level 1 course syllabus or classroom disclosure document. Nine teachers attached documents, and data from both the survey and the uploaded documents contributed to the findings.

### *Data Analysis*

The study used both quantitative and qualitative means of data analysis. The selected response items of the questionnaire provided demographic data needed to describe the participants and test for factors related to culture teaching through multiple regression analyses using SPSS software. The remaining selected response items were submitted to descriptive statistical analyses, such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Responses to open-ended questionnaire items, as well as the cultural content of course syllabuses, were analyzed using open coding (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Similar responses were grouped into categories, and the number of responses in each category was tallied.

Although we originally planned to discuss findings for all 69 respondents together, differences in aspects of the language learning classroom emerged between the spoken-language teachers and ASL teachers. For example, ASL teachers do not have the same objectives for teaching the four language skills as do their foreign language-teaching peers. For this reason, responses from the six ASL teachers were excluded from the analysis of the data.

## **Results**

This section addresses key findings relating to each of the four research questions, followed by correlation and regression analyses of variables related to teachers'

## A Survey of Teachers' Integration of Culture

inclusion of culture in their teaching. Due to space limitations, only the responses to selected survey items are included in this discussion.

### *Research Question 1: What Methods Do Teachers Use for Teaching Culture?*

Study participants were asked to briefly describe, in a step-by-step fashion, a typical lesson in their own foreign language classrooms. Of the 60 teachers who responded to this question, only 17 explicitly mentioned the word(s) “culture,” “cultural,” or “culturally based.” Although this does not necessarily indicate that these teachers did not incorporate culture, it does suggest that they may not explicitly think of culture as a key component of their lessons. Another two responses expressed teaching cultural principles without actually mentioning “culture” or its derivative words, and five responses mentioned the use of media, which may or may not have contained cultural content. Lesson elements emphasized by teachers as typical to their instruction are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Elements of a Typical Lesson Mentioned in Open-ended Responses

Typical lesson elements used by teachers	Number of mentions	Percent of respondents
Starter, warmup, or review at beginning of class	45	75
Practice activities or worksheets to reinforce concepts introduced or highlighted during the class period	39	65
Lesson or presentation on new topic or content	27	45
Writing activities	17	28
Assessments, usually formative and informal	16	27
Partner or small group work	14	23
Student-centered speaking activities	14	23
Explaining and assigning homework or study goals	12	20
Music or songs	11	18
Listening activities	9	15
Games	8	13
Reading activities	8	13
Video clips	6	10

Teachers also varied in their use of the target language during class. When asked on which occasions teachers use English in their classrooms, with the possible responses of *never* (1), *occasionally* (2), *often* (3), and *all the time* (4), “cultural explanations and discussions” had the highest mean ( $M = 2.78$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ), indicating that teachers speak English to teach culture more than any other element of their teaching. In terms of frequencies of responses, 17 teachers said they use English “occasionally,” 9 said they use it “all the time,” and only 3 said they never use English to explain or discuss culture. These findings indicate that more

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than two-thirds of participants used English often or all the time to teach culture.

But how, other than mostly in English, are secondary students typically acquiring cultural knowledge and perspectives? Responses from the 63 teachers who answered this question are summarized in Table 2. Media use is most common, as are stories from the teacher. It is interesting to note that no teachers mentioned field trips as a method of acquiring culture, as some local teachers do use them, but perhaps they were not mentioned because the question specified how students acquire culture “in your classroom.”

**Table 2.** Sources of Classroom Cultural Input

Type of input	Number of mentions	Percent of respondents
Films / video clips / target language commercials	22	35
Teacher (personal stories and tidbits)	21	33
Readings / print media other than textbook	15	24
Experiential learning / celebrations / cooking	14	22
Online websites and resources	12	19
Specifically planned culture lessons / lectures / focus	12	19
Music / songs	11	17
Classroom discussion	11	17
Slide shows / presentations	9	14
Textbooks and their associated resources	8	13
Realia / culture capsules	7	11
Projects / reports / essays assigned to students	6	10
Guest speakers	6	10
Unspecified “activities”	6	10
Print or film news / current events	5	8
Unspecified “authentic materials”	5	8
Culture taught “in association with language goals”	5	8
Culture taught through idioms / usages of the target language	4	6
Culture taught through “lesson material” or tie-ins	4	6
Paintings / photos / images	3	5
Language club activities	2	3
Worksheets / handouts	2	3
Video conference (Skype) “with students from the foreign country”	1	2

## A Survey of Teachers' Integration of Culture

### Research Question 2: What Models of Culture Learning Do Teachers Use?

One survey item asked teachers with which models of culture learning they were “very familiar,” allowing them to select multiple options from a list. Fifty-six teachers responded to this item, choosing a mean of 2.04 paradigms each. In retrospect, this item was somewhat problematic, as it failed to include postmodern conceptualizations of culture that are less easily encapsulated in specific “models,” and thus may not have provided a thorough or accurate representation of teachers’ knowledge. Nevertheless, the item did provide a measure of teachers’ familiarity with the conceptualization of culture in the *Standards*.

Of the respondents, 89% (N=50) reported that they were very familiar with the 5 Cs of the *Standards* (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities), although curiously, only 43% (N=24) indicated familiarity with the “products, practices, perspectives” of the Cultures goal area of the *Standards*. Only a few teachers were familiar with other cultural models (see Table 3).

**Table 3.** Cultural Frameworks with which Respondents are Very Familiar

Terms or models	Number of mentions	Percent of respondents
Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities	50	89
Products, practices, perspectives	24	43
Big-C and little-c cultures	17	30
Surface vs. deep culture	9	16
Performance / performed culture	7	13
Achievement, behavioral, and informational cultures	5	9
Olympian culture / culture MLA vs. hearthstone culture / culture BBV	1	2
Other (nothing specified)	1	2

In response to the question “Which standards or benchmarks do you use *most* to guide your teaching?”, 38% of respondents (N=24) indicated that the guidelines they use most in their classrooms to help plan their instruction are district-level benchmarks. Another 21% (N=13) of teachers use the state core curriculum standards in lesson planning, while 19% (N=12) use the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, 13% (N=8) use the scope and sequence of their chosen textbook, only 3% (N=2) use the *Standards*, an additional two teachers (3%) use departmental essential questions, one respondent (2%) uses no standards (“I set my own curriculum”), and one uses concurrent enrollment standards from a university. Additionally, only 26 of the 63 respondents regularly use a textbook, and an additional six teachers occasionally use textbooks for certain activities, for reference, or to get ideas.

*Research Question 3: To What Extent Do Teachers Incorporate Culture in the Classroom?*

Given teachers' stated beliefs in the value of culture learning, surprisingly little planning and instructional time is spent addressing it. Nine teachers accepted the invitation to upload their syllabus or disclosure document with their survey response. All nine mentioned culture, and culture or a derivative word was mentioned four times per document on average. Of the documents examined, four mentioned culture as a fifth skill, and two described culture in terms of the "5 Cs." Two more documents made little mention of culture, except to state that specific "culture days" would happen from time to time throughout the semester. The final syllabus also mentioned a culture day, but integrated the theme of culture more fully throughout the document, stating: "The purpose of this French course is to expose students to French culture while giving them a grasp of the basic fundamentals of the language."

In terms of planning for instruction, culture fared poorly in comparison with other elements of the curriculum. When asked to rank the top four components of their classroom in order of planning time spent, the components receiving the most planning time were speaking, with a mean ranking of 2.67 (note that a lower mean signifies a higher ranking), vocabulary (2.86), grammar (3.93), reading (4.07), listening (4.12), and writing (4.31). Cultural elements were ranked at the bottom of the list, namely daily practices of the target culture (4.76), comparisons between the target culture and the native culture (4.78), history and geography of the target culture (4.80), and perspectives of those who live in the target culture (4.93).

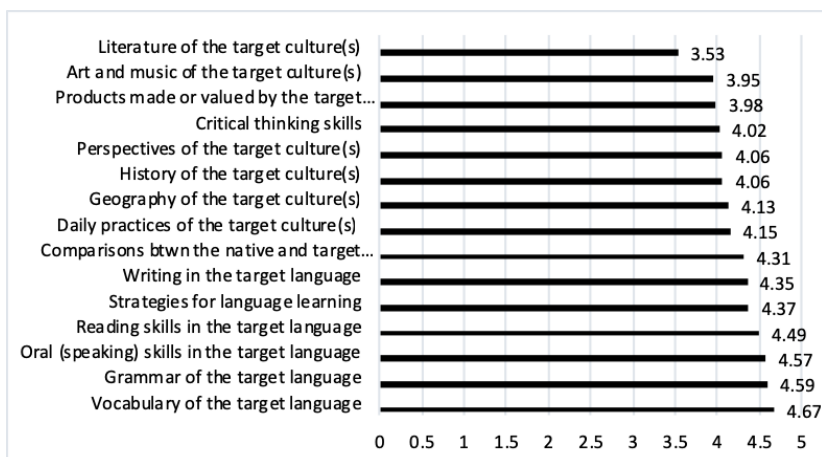
When asked which category best describes the instructional time teachers devote to the teaching of culture—a question borrowed exactly from Moore's (1996) study—6 respondents (10%) indicated that they include culture "in all my lessons," 21 (33%) "in more than half of my lessons," 35 (56%) "in less than half of my lessons," and one teacher (2%) did not include culture "in any of my lessons."

Respondents were also asked to report on which elements of culture teaching they spend most of their instructional time and were allowed to select up to two options from those listed. The most commonly selected response was comparisons between the target cultures and students' own cultures (see Figure 1, next page).

In response to the open-ended question "How do you *typically* assess your students' culture learning?," 14 teachers (23%) said they do not assess culture. One respondent said simply "yes," implying that culture is assessed, but did not specify how. Twenty-five teachers (42%) said that they do assess culture, but very informally. Another 14 teachers (23%) said they do a mixture of informal and formal assessments, although the "formal assessments" are usually just a few questions on existing quizzes or tests. Eight participants (13%) responded that they assess culture formally through test questions, presentations to the class, or comparative writing assignments.

Six respondents (10%) mentioned that including culture in assessments is only necessary when it helps with language performance, and three other respondents expressed ideas such as the following: "Culture to me doesn't have to necessarily be assessed. I don't think everything has to be assessed. To me, proficiency in the language (mostly speaking) is my focus," and "I don't usually assess culture . . . we mostly experience it."

## A Survey of Teachers' Integration of Culture



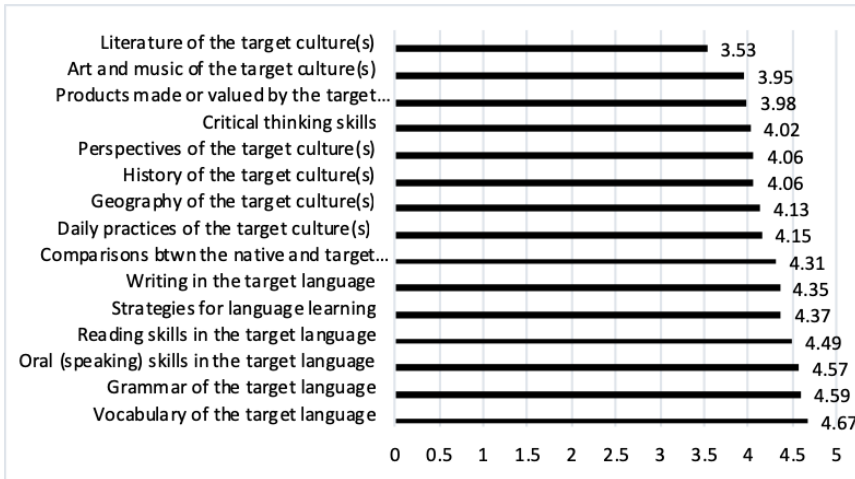
**Figure 1.** Cultural elements on which respondents spend most instructional time.

### *Research Question 4: What Factors Affect Teachers' Decisions Regarding Culture Teaching?*

Some research suggests that the teaching of culture reflects teachers' degree of comfort with their cultural knowledge and experience, and that teachers without experience in the target culture may find it difficult to teach (Phillips & Abbott, 2011b; Social Science Education Consortium, 1999). In the present survey, most respondents seemed comfortable with almost all aspects of teaching, including culture; however, teachers on average were relatively less comfortable teaching cultural components than other topics, as shown in Figure 2 on the following page. Teachers were most comfortable teaching the vocabulary of the target language, followed by grammar, speaking skills, reading skills, strategies for language learning, and writing. Only then do cultural components appear, including comparisons between the native and target culture(s) and daily practices of the target culture(s). The subjects that teachers were least comfortable teaching were primarily culture-related, including literature, art and music, products, history, perspectives, and geography of the target culture(s).

Participants were also asked to select the single factor most likely to prevent them from teaching culture in their classrooms. Twenty-five teachers (40%) selected "lack of time" as being the element that deters them most from teaching culture, followed by "insufficient materials" (n=9, 14%) and "insufficient knowledge" (n=7, 11%). Fifteen teachers (24%) selected "nothing prevents me." The remaining response options were selected by two or fewer participants.

Respondents were also asked, "What motivates your decisions most when it comes to setting your curriculum?" Of the 63 respondents to this question, 26 (41%) chose "District/state standards," and another 26 chose "What I believe is best for my students." Five respondents (8%) selected "My personal interests," with the remaining response options selected by three or fewer participants.



**Figure 2.** Mean comfort level for teaching specific curricular elements. (Scale: 1 = “Not at all comfortable”; 5 = “Extremely comfortable”)

*Correlation and Regression Analyses*

In an effort to discover any relationships that could help to explain teachers’ inclusion or non-inclusion of culture, we performed two multiple regression analyses. We hypothesized that certain characteristics or behaviors of teachers might be related to how much they integrate culture into their classrooms. As an initial step, we performed a series of correlations among survey variables. Worth mentioning is the negative relationship between the year that teachers finished their teacher training and percentage of lessons including culture,  $r(61)=-.289, p < 0.05$ , meaning that teachers who graduated longer ago were more likely to include culture in a higher percentage of their lessons. Teachers were also more likely to include culture if they had more years of teaching experience ( $r=.266, p<.05$ ), and if they were members of a particular school district, District B ( $r=.245, p<.05$ ). Teachers were even more likely to include culture if they used the state core standards to guide their curriculum ( $r=.328, p<.01$ ).

Based on these correlations, we decided to run a multiple regression analysis to determine if certain factors predict a greater amount of culture inclusion in the classroom. The results of two models with different dependent variables are in Tables 4 and 5. Both of these models were based on a regression analysis using SPSS software.

Tables 4 and 5 show that the year teachers completed their training, the highest level of education they reached, whether or not they used state core standards to guide their curricula, if they were ACTFL members, if they worked in District B, and if they taught French or German, all contributed to increased emphasis on culture (although again, differences among teachers of different languages should be interpreted with caution due to the limited sample size).



## A Survey of Teachers' Integration of Culture

### Discussion

#### *Research Questions 1 and 2: Methods and Models of Culture Teaching*

The results of this study found that teachers do attend to culture to some extent in their teaching, but through a wide variety of means and methods – there is no standardized approach. However, analysis of the data uncovered other important trends.

**Table 4.** Results of Multiple Regression Analysis 1

Constant	Predictor variables	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> square	Adjusted <i>r</i> square	Std. error of estimate	Sig. of <i>F</i> change
Percentage of culture included in lessons	Year completed teacher training, uses state core standards, ACTFL member, School District B	.532	.283	.217	26.28018*	.005

**Table 5.** Results of Multiple Regression Analysis 2

Constant	Predictor variables	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> square	Adjusted <i>r</i> square	Std. error of estimate	Sig. of <i>F</i> change
Mentioned culture in description of typical lesson	Highest level of education obtained, uses state core standards, French teacher, German teacher	.561	.315	.251	.40608	.002

First, culture is typically taught in the students' native language (English). Of the study participants, 67% indicated that they use English "often" or "all the time" to teach cultural topics, and "cultural explanations and discussions" had the highest score for teachers' English use, meaning that culture is taught in English more than any other element of language courses, even grammar. Clearly, this finding raises questions about the assumed inseparability of language and culture, which this study is unable to answer but which certainly merit further investigation (see, for example, Risager's 2006 extensive work on this topic).

Regarding the presence of culture in the curriculum, the study found that teachers' inclusion of culture appears to be somewhat random. These findings suggest that if culture is present, it is typically not pre-planned, which generally leads to less instructional time and little assessment of culture learning. The use of film clips and video as primary methods through which cultural content is conveyed does indicate some level of preparation on the teacher's part, as do personal anecdotes related by the teacher, which the study identified as the other main source of cultural input for students. However, there was little indication that the use of these resources was part of any coherent plan for teaching and assessing culture.

Another potential cause for concern is the percentage of lessons in which teachers reported including cultural content. Whereas Moore's (1996) study found that 86% of teachers reported including culture in more than half of their lessons, in the present study that figure was only 47%. This apparent decline in culture inclusion could be related to multiple factors (including the limited sample size of the present study), but one possible explanation is that the advent of the *Standards* in 1996, with their focus on interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational modes of communication, as well as ACTFL's recommendation that teachers use the target language 90% of the time or more, may have contributed to a decrease in culture teaching: if teachers must use the target language at least 90% of the time, and if they feel the need to teach culture in English, they may feel that teaching culture detracts from time spent focusing on proficiency in the target language. This hypothesis seems to be supported by Phillips and Abbott's (2011a) report that the area of greatest impact from the *Standards* was "using the three modes of communication and making communication meaningful," whereas "the impact seems to be marginal in the Cultures goal area and minimal in Connections, Comparisons, with the least impact in Communities" (p. 40).

Regarding models of culture learning used by teachers, 89% of teachers recognized culture as one of the "5 Cs" of the *Standards*, and 43% of teachers reported familiarity with the framework of cultural products, practices, and perspectives. These results dovetail with the findings of Phillips and Abbott (2011b). In both studies 89% of participants were familiar with the "5 Cs," but a lesser percentage were actually implementing those goal areas into the classroom.

#### *Research Questions 3 and 4: Attention Given to Culture in the Curriculum*

This study found, as others have before (e.g., Klein, 2004), that although most teachers claim to value teaching culture and view it as integral to language learning, it does not receive the planning, instructional, or assessment time that the four skills do. This finding reaffirms the conclusions of other studies that culture remains subservient to language in foreign language classrooms (Byrd et al., 2011; Hadley, 2001; Klein, 2004).

The study also confirmed the results of previous research indicating that teachers find cultural perspectives challenging to address (Byrd et al., 2011; Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014; Phillips & Abbott, 2011a; Social Science Education Consortium, 1999), partially because they involve additional planning time and effort. The present study also suggests that teachers devote relatively little of their scarce planning time to culture: of all the aspects of the FL curriculum, culture topics were ranked lowest of time spent planning.

Contrary to some previous research, the present study suggested that teachers' comfort level may not be the primary factor preventing them from including more culture in their classrooms. In fact, participants reported relatively high levels of comfort with teaching cultural elements of the FL classroom, even though they were more comfortable teaching linguistic components of the FL. Additionally, only 14% of teachers cited a lack of knowledge or training as having an effect on their inclusion of culture. Forty percent of the participants stated that lack of time

## A Survey of Teachers' Integration of Culture

was the greatest obstacle. This finding partially supports that of Byrd et al. (2011), who identified a lack of time as an obstacle to culture teaching, although it may be argued that if teachers truly prioritized culture, they would find time to include it.

It appears that an additional obstacle to culture teaching may be a lack of emphasis on culture in state and district standards. Teachers chose school district or state standards (41%) and what they personally believe to be best for their students (41%) as the factors that most influence their curricula. In addition, no cultural elements ranked above linguistic ones in respondents' "Top 4" lists for importance in their classrooms. These two findings suggest that culture receives less curricular emphasis than language. The authors' own experiences in schools support this finding, as do the comments of one respondent, who in the questions and comments section at the end of the survey, wrote:

The new curriculum for foreign language that [School District A] is trying to implement is VERY light on culture. It's all about teaching real skills—reading, writing, speaking, and listening. . . . It's sad because without good cultural materials and direction from above, culture slips through the cracks.

Despite the relative lack of emphasis on culture at state and district levels, there are certain factors that help predict whether a teacher is likely to integrate culture into the classroom. It is interesting to note that no significant relationship was found between being an L1 speaker of the target language or having spent time living in the target culture and the inclusion of culture in teaching, nor was a significant relationship found between high involvement in general professional development (PD) and increased culture teaching (although this may not apply to PD focusing specifically on culture, as suggested in the case of teachers from District B as discussed below). On the other hand, teachers were more likely to integrate culture into their curriculum if they were ACTFL members, held a higher degree, or had a higher level of education—factors that likely contribute to a knowledge of effective teaching practices.

Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between years of teaching experience and the amount of culture included in the classroom. This finding echoes those of previous studies (Moore, 1996; Social Science Education Consortium, 1999), which found that more years of teaching experience correlated with a higher percentage of classes taught containing culture. It may be that many new teachers have so much to learn, plan, and do in the first few years that it takes them years of fine-tuning the curriculum to be able to effectively integrate culture and language instruction.

Other variables can affect culture inclusion as well, as illustrated by the fact that teachers in District B were more likely to include culture in the classroom than teachers in other districts. We suspect this to be the result of a focus, through in-service training or culture-rich benchmarks, on culture teaching in that district. The use of state core standards was also a significant predictor of emphasis on culture, but not the level taught. Level 1 teachers were just as likely to include culture as Level 4 or 5 teachers; however, as one respondent commented, "staying in the target language with lower level classes" is one deterrent to culture teaching.

## Limitations of the Study

### *External Validity*

One major limitation of the study was the low response rate (13.8%). The participants who took the time to complete the survey were a self-selecting sample and may therefore not be representative of the population. Furthermore, participants were recruited from only one state, and 84% of respondents came from four school districts in three counties of the state. These factors clearly limit the generalizability of the findings.

### *Internal Validity*

The survey required teachers to self-report data such as how many of their lessons include culture, and what a typical lesson in their classroom looks like. Teachers' perceptions of the percentage of their lessons that include culture may not correspond exactly with their actual teaching practices, which suggests the need for additional research relying on actual classroom observations. In addition, as is the case with most surveys, our survey instrument itself was imperfect. For example, in asking teachers to rate their inclusion of culture separately from language skills, the survey did not allow for the possibility (and likelihood) that reading and listening materials, as well as speaking and writing activities, may have included cultural content. In addition, as previously mentioned, the item intended to assess teachers' familiarity with various cultural models did not adequately account for more recent process-oriented conceptualizations of culture learning, nor did it include the *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements for Intercultural Communication* (2017), which had not yet been released when the survey was constructed. Perhaps most importantly, the survey neglected to ask teachers what their goals were for culture learning, and what knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness they aimed to help their students develop. Future surveys would do well to give consideration to these factors.

## Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

Clearly, the FL teaching profession still has a long way to go in regard to the teaching of culture. In a sense, this study raises more questions than it answers: Why have decades of emphasis on teaching culture not translated into greater emphasis on it in the classroom? Can certain aspects of culture be taught independently from language, and if so, which ones? How can we help teachers move beyond a view of culture as

*Clearly, the FL teaching profession still has a long way to go in regard to the teaching of culture.*

a static, monolithic set of facts to be taught toward a conceptualization of culture as a dynamic process of learning to understand the perspectives of others and to better understand oneself? Unfortunately, this study provides no definitive answers to these questions. However, in light of the finding that teacher preparation, professional development, and experience can influence the way teachers approach culture, we would like to conclude with several broad suggestions for inservice and preservice teacher development, which also have implications for future research agendas.

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With regard to inservice training, some local school districts are beginning to incorporate an emphasis on culture as expressed in the *Can-Do Statements*, which holds promise for an increased focus on culture. However, the findings of this study suggest that an even more effective approach would be to incorporate culture as a central part of the curriculum at the district level. It is interesting to note that the Utah core curriculum for world languages affords a central role to culture; however, given that teachers apparently rely more on district documents than state documents in their planning, school districts may need to provide models, curricula, and sample lessons and assessments integrating culture with language teaching.

With regard to preservice training, we would argue that in order to improve the quality of teacher preparation, the profession first needs a better understanding of how teacher educators conceptualize culture and culture learning. It is quite possible that many teacher educators are continuing to address the teaching of culture in the same ways that they themselves learned it decades ago. Teacher educators may not be familiar with newer professional documents such as the *NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements*, nor with postmodern conceptualizations of culture, with their emphasis on process as opposed to content and on culture as dynamic and personal as opposed to static and monolithic.

*With regard to preservice training, we would argue that in order to improve the quality of teacher preparation, the profession first needs a better understanding of how teacher educators conceptualize culture and culture learning.*

In regard to the latter point, we would argue that one obstacle to the implementation of postmodern approaches to teaching culture is the relative complexity and abstract nature of the literature on such approaches. The meanings of terms such as *symbolic competence* (Kramsch, 2006) and *social semiotic practices* (Garrett-Rucks, 2016) are probably not self-evident to many teacher educators, and certainly not to most teachers. Although the “overproduction of complexity” called for in culture teaching by authors such as Kramsch (2006, citing Gumbrecht, 2004) may accurately reflect the many-faceted nature of intercultural communicative competence in an era of globalization, the very complexity of such approaches raises questions as to how teacher educators can effectively prepare teachers to implement them in the classroom instead of merely resorting to static representations of culture and fact-based culture teaching.

One activity that has shown promise in this regard is ethnographic interviews conducted by students with individuals from other cultural backgrounds. Research has demonstrated the potential for personal interviews to break down stereotypes and develop intercultural understanding and cultural self-awareness (Bateman, 2004; Hoyt, 2016; Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan, & Street, 2001; Robinson-Stuart & Nocon, 1996). One strength of these interviews is that they align with the current view of culture as a dynamic process of negotiation between individuals who hold a variety of values and ideologies (Kramsch, 2006), and they highlight “the centrality of discourse and dialogue in all human meaning-making” (Garrett-Rucks, 2016, p. 38). Other promising activities that involve interpersonal interaction include online peer

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discussions (Garrett-Rucks, 2013); wikis and Pinterest (Mitchell, 2016); study abroad blogs (Lee, 2012); project-based learning (Kean & Kwe, 2014); and service learning (Guglani, 2016).

Despite the promise of such activities, one limitation of nearly all research literature on culture teaching is that it reports on studies conducted at the postsecondary level, with little or no guidance as to how teachers might generalize the findings to the K-12 level, especially in light of young learners' limited language skills and developing cognitive abilities. Furthermore, although there exists a growing number of non-research articles on culture teaching geared toward K-12 teachers, such articles are often difficult to locate; for example, ACTFL's *The Teacher Educator* has devoted several issues to the teaching of culture (Jan 2014; Aug/Sept. 2015; Jan/Feb 2018), but the content of these issues cannot be found through standard online search procedures because the periodical is unindexed.

We would argue that parallel to the need for bridging cultural gaps between members of different language groups, communities, and countries, there exists a need for bridging cultural gaps between theory and practice, between K-12 and postsecondary levels, and between teachers and teacher educators. Preservice courses for language teachers must not only address the theoretical aspects of intercultural communicative competence, but must also help teachers develop techniques and activities for applying these theories. Equally importantly, there exists a critical need for more collaborative research between teacher educators and teachers, conducted at the K-12 level, which would take into account the realities and challenges of teaching young learners in public school settings. And, we would add, there is a need for universities to acknowledge the legitimacy of such research when considering faculty members for promotion and tenure.

We conclude with a quote from Seelye (1993), which still holds true today:

In the final analysis, no matter how technically dexterous a student's training in the foreign language, if the student avoids contact with native speakers of that language and lacks respect for their world view, of what value is the training? Where can it be put to use? What educational breadth has it inspired? (p. 21)

In light of the potential for culture learning to expand worldviews and enhance learners' understanding of others and of themselves, we believe that continued investigation of the role of culture in language learning is more than worth the challenges.

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### Appendix: Survey Questionnaire for Secondary Foreign Language Teachers

- Q1 Do you live in the state of Utah?
- Q2 Select the grade level(s) you currently teach.
- Q3 Which foreign language(s) do you currently teach?
- Q4 What course level(s) do you currently teach?
- Q5 Please select the duration of the *majority* of the foreign language courses you teach.
- Term
  - Trimester
  - Semester
  - Yearlong
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q6 Please select your school's schedule model.
- Traditional
  - Block
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q7 Which standards or benchmarks do you use *most* to guide your teaching? (Select only one response.)
- ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines
  - Departmental essential questions
  - District benchmarks
  - National Standards for Foreign Language Learning
  - State core curriculum standards
  - What is outlined in the scope and sequence of my textbook
  - No standards - I set my own curriculum
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Q8 Which textbook(s) do you use in your language courses, if any?
- Q9 In a brief, step-by-step fashion, please describe a typical lesson in your foreign language classroom.
- Q10 From your perspective, please define "culture" as it pertains to foreign language teaching.
- Q11 How do your students *typically* acquire cultural knowledge and perspectives in your classroom?
- Q12 How do you *typically* assess your students' culture learning?
- Q13 For the following items, please indicate how much you use the students' native language (English) in the classroom. (Never – Occasionally – Often – the time)
- Classroom management
  - Cultural explanations/discussions
  - Explaining assignments
  - Grammar instructions/clarifications
  - General content instruction
  - Test preparation/review
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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Q14 When you teach *culture*, on what do you spend *most* of your instructional time? (Please select only one response, two if needs be, but not more.)

- Addressing cultural stereotypes
- Comparisons of the target and native cultures
- Geography and environmental studies
- Having students role play to demonstrate how they would speak and act in the target culture
- History and great achievements of the target culture
- Pragmatics (how students would use certain constructions in the target language if they were actually in the target culture)
- Teaching about the tangible products of the target culture (food, dress, objects)
- Teaching about cultural practices (knowledge of what to do, when, and where)
- Teaching about the perspectives (ideas and attitudes) a target culture has
- Teaching about the relationship between language and culture
- Teaching about the relationship between cultural products, practices, and perspectives
- Teaching about your own experiences of when you were in the target culture
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Other 2 (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q15 Which target culture regions do you include in your lessons?

- I only use the 'main' target region with which I am most familiar
- I teach 2-3 different target regions, but I focus mainly on one
- I teach 4-5 different target regions, but I focus mainly on one or two
- I teach about all of the target regions, but I don't go into much depth for most of them
- I teach all of the target culture regions equally
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q16 Which category best describes the instructional time you devote to the teaching of culture?

- Included in all my lessons (100%)
- Included in more than half of my lessons (50-75%)
- Included in less than half of my lessons (-50%)
- Not included in any of my lessons (0%)

Q17 With which of the following terms are you *very* familiar?

- Achievement, Behavioral, and Informational Cultures
- Big-C and little-c cultures
- Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities
- Performance/performed culture
- Products, Practices, and Perspectives
- Olympian culture, or culture MLA vs. Hearthstone culture, or culture BBV
- Surface vs. Deep culture
- Other (please specify)

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Q18 How comfortable do you feel teaching the following items in your classroom? (Not at all comfortable – Somewhat uncomfortable – Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable – Somewhat comfortable – Extremely comfortable)

- Art and music of the target culture(s)
- Comparisons between the native and target culture(s)
- Critical thinking skills
- Daily practices of the target culture(s)
- Geography of the target culture(s)
- Grammar of the target language(s)
- History of the target culture(s)
- Oral (speaking) skills in the target language
- Reading skills in the target language
- Strategies for language learning
- Vocabulary of the target language
- Writing in the target language(s)
- Perspectives of the target culture(s)
- Products made or valued by the target culture(s)

Q19 What is *most likely* to prevent you from teaching culture in your classroom? (Select only one response.)

- Nothing prevents me
- Insufficient knowledge
- Insufficient materials
- Insufficient training
- Lack of funding
- Lack of institutional support
- Lack of technology access
- Lack of time
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q20 What motivates your decisions *most* when it comes to setting your curriculum? (Select only one response.)

- Community expectations
- District/State standards
- My personal interests
- Institutional expectations
- What I believe is best for my students
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q21 Drag and drop your top 4 components of the language classroom to rank them *in order of importance* to you when teaching a foreign language course. (You only need to select your top 4 components; #1 means most important.)

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom business
- \_\_\_\_\_ Oral assessment of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching comparisons between the target and native cultures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the daily practices of the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the grammar systems of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching history and geography of the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching listening comprehension in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the perspectives of those who live in the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching reading in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching and practicing speaking in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the vocabulary of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching writing in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written assessment of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

Q22 Drag and drop your top 4 components of the language classroom to rank them *in order of instructional (class) time spent* in your foreign language courses. (You only need to select your top 4 components; #1 means most time spent.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom business
- \_\_\_\_\_ Oral assessment of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching comparisons between the target and native cultures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the daily practices of the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the grammar systems of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching history and geography of the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching listening comprehension in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the perspectives of those who live in the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching reading in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching and practicing speaking in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the vocabulary of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching writing in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written assessment of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

Q23 Drag and drop your top 4 components of the language classroom to rank them *in order of planning time spent* in your foreign language courses. (You only need to select your top 4 components; #1 means most time spent.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom business
- \_\_\_\_\_ Oral assessment of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching comparisons between the target and native cultures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the daily practices of the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the grammar systems of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching history and geography of the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching listening comprehension in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the perspectives of those who live in the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching reading in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching and practicing speaking in the target language

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- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the vocabulary of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching writing in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written assessment of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

Q24 Drag and drop your top 4 components of the language classroom to rank them *in order of how much technology you use* (PowerPoint presentations, foreign content websites, helpful applications for study and assessment, etc.) to teach them in your foreign language classroom. (You only need to select your top 4 components; #1 means most use of technology in instructional materials.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Classroom business
- \_\_\_\_\_ Oral assessment of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching comparisons between the target and native cultures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the daily practices of the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the grammar systems of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching history and geography of the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching listening comprehension in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the perspectives of those who live in the target culture(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching reading in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching and practicing speaking in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching the vocabulary of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching writing in the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Written assessment of the target language
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

Q25 If you live in the state of Utah, in which school district do you teach? (select district)

Q26 What is the highest degree or lane of education you have achieved?

- Bachelor's degree
- Bachelor's +20 semester hours
- Bachelor's +37
- Bachelor's +50
- Bachelor's +70
- Master's degree
- Master's +20
- Master's +37
- Doctoral degree

Q27 In what year did you complete your teacher training/certification? (select year)

- My teacher training is ongoing
- I am not a certified teacher

Q28 Please indicate how many years you have been teaching a foreign language.

- Current student teacher/intern
- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-10 years

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- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 20+ years

Q29 In which of the following professional development opportunities do you regularly participate? (Select all that apply.)

- Attend departmental or in-service trainings (as a job requirement)
- Attend professional conferences and workshops
- Member of professional organization(s)
- National Board certification
- Read professional journals
- Read blogs/websites about professional topics
- Read newspaper or magazine articles about professional topics
- Read social media on professional topics
- Take graduate/continuing education courses
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q30 Of which professional organizations are you currently a member? (Select all that apply.)

- American Association of Teachers (AAT) of \_\_\_\_\_ (Language)
- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
- Southwest Conference on Language Teaching
- Utah Education Association/National Education Association
- Utah Foreign Language Association
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q31 Please select the *primary* ways in which you learned the language(s) you teach. (Select all that apply.)

- I am a native speaker
- College/university
- K-12 Schooling
- Religious mission
- (Non-academic) residence abroad
- Study abroad/internship
- Television
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q32 How long have you spent (visiting, studying, or living) in a culture of the target language you teach?

- I have never been to a target culture of the language I teach
- Less than one month
- 1-3 months
- 4-10 months
- 11-18 months
- 19 months-3 years
- More than three years

Q33 If you are interested in helping the researcher more fully answer her research questions, please upload a copy of your syllabus/disclosure document for the lowest level of the language(s) you teach (Level 1



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preferred, if applicable). This information will remain completely anonymous and will only be used for the purposes of this research study.



## Syllabus Matters: The Impact of Course Type on Speaking Gains Abroad

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Jorge H. Cubillos, *University of Delaware*  
Thomas W. Ilvento, *University of Delaware*

### Abstract

This investigation explores oral proficiency outcomes in short-term study abroad programs, as well as the interaction of those outcomes with the type of second language (L2) courses involved. For three years, speaking ability gains were measured in a study abroad setting among intermediate learners of Spanish under two different course conditions: (1) structural (courses focused on the explicit exploration of the grammar of the target language), and (2) functional (courses focused on practical language use). The results of the investigation demonstrated that intermediate-level learners exposed to functionally-oriented L2 courses consistently reached higher speaking gains as measured by the Versant Spanish™ Test (a commercially available computerized oral assessment instrument). These research findings suggest that oral skill development is sensitive to course content and orientation and that course syllabus design considerations can make a significant difference in study abroad settings.

Do second language (L2) learning outcomes vary depending on the type of syllabus selected by the instructor? In other words, is it reasonable to assume that

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**Jorge H. Cubillos** (Ph.D. The Pennsylvania State University) is Professor of Spanish and Applied Linguistics and currently serves as Sequence Supervisor for Spanish in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at the University of Delaware. He is the author of several textbooks and ancillaries for the teaching and learning of Spanish. His research focuses on materials design, technology-assisted language instruction, and study abroad.

**Thomas W. Ilvento** (Ph.D. The Pennsylvania State University) is Professor of Applied Statistics, and he serves as Chair and StatLab Coordinator in the Department of Applied Economics and Statistics at the University of Delaware. His research focuses on applications of statistical analysis to social and economic data as well as social survey research. He is involved in on-line learning and provided leadership in the development of an on-line M.S. in Applied Statistics.

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course organization and pedagogical orientation have a determining impact on L2 learning? Although most L2 teachers would instinctively respond in the affirmative to both questions, the reality is that there is limited empirical evidence in support of the notion that course syllabi actually have the ability to regulate L2 developmental patterns. Such a lack of empirical evidence applies not only to “foreign language courses” (those taught in settings in which the L2 is not spoken) but also to those offered in study abroad (SA) settings, in which course design and articulation have received minimal attention in the literature for the past three decades. This investigation seeks to contribute to a conversation on the significance of L2 course design by providing empirical information on the impact of syllabus orientation on oral proficiency development in SA settings.

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Syllabus design has traditionally been regarded as a central aspect of foreign language pedagogy (Finnemann, 1987; Newby, 2000; Rabbini, 2002; Tabari, 2013). The selection and sequencing of course goals and content, the articulation of learning tasks, and the selection of course assessments (the essence of what a course syllabus is and does) closely reflect teachers’ understanding of fundamental second language acquisition processes (Richards, 2013; Yalden, 1987). In fact, current variations in approaches to L2 syllabus design provide valuable insights into the profession’s developing estimation of L2 learning parameters and its divergent ideas on how L2 instruction must be structured and managed (Baleghizadeh, 2016; Bazyar, Dastpak, & Taghinezhad, 2015).

Krahnke (1987) highlighted the importance of language learning theory as the necessary foundation of any L2 syllabus design effort. Within his theoretical framework, Krahnke proposed six basic types of L2 syllabi: (1) structural (syllabi built around grammatical forms); (2) notional/functional (syllabi organized around practical uses of the L2); (3) situational (the organizing principle is related to likely contexts where the L2 will be required); (4) skill-based (courses focused on specific abilities that involve use of the L2, such as writing or reading); (5) task-based (the organizing principle is a series of complex and purposeful L2 tasks relevant to the learner); and (6) content-based (the focus is on the learning of specific subject-matter, not the L2).

As our understanding of language acquisition processes has grown due to the research boom at the turn of the century, additional conceptual frameworks have emerged for the analysis of L2 course design (Bazyar, Dastpak, & Taghinezhad, 2015; Martin de Lama, 2015; Rahimpour, 2010). These conceptual frameworks have made it possible for us to differentiate between “wide-” and “narrow-angle” L2 courses (Widdowson, 1983); between Type A (product-oriented) and Type B (process-oriented) syllabi (White, 1988); between “focus-on-form” and “focus-on-meaning” L2 pedagogies (Long & Crookes, 1992); between “specialist-” (top-down) and “learner-centered” (bottom-up) approaches to L2 syllabus design (Tudor, 1996); and also between “synthetic” and “analytic” L2 course syllabi (Nunan, 1998).

Of particular interest to our discussion is the distinction between synthetic and analytic L2 syllabi (Nunan, 1998). The difference between these two types of course

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design frameworks resides in the role assigned to language learners in the L2 learning process. In synthetic courses, L2 syllabi are supposed to guide the presentation of discrete components of the L2 linguistic system to the learners. L2 learners, on their part, are supposed to collect and integrate those discrete language elements, such as grammar rules, spelling principles, and pronunciation guidelines into a coherent linguistic system. It would be fair to say that synthetic syllabi support a pedagogy in which L2 learning is conceived as a form-driven, linear, systematic, and cumulative process (Wilkins, 1976). On the other hand, analytic syllabi present the L2 in the form of larger textual units with meaning-based tasks aimed at directing learners' attention to specific features of the L2. Analytic syllabi are designed to support a pedagogy in which L2 learning is viewed as a meaning-driven, non-linear, and recurrent process (Nunan, 1998; Widdowson, 1990).

The curriculum for students seeking to specialize in languages at the post-secondary level in the US also provides evidence of the aforementioned course-design debates (Byrnes, 2002; Hasegawa & Kambara, 2008; Jurasek, 1982; Rios-Font, 2017). In this country, L2 majors and minors are often required to complete a series of specialized linguistic courses that often fall toward one of the design extremes: either synthetic courses that focus on the development of declarative knowledge of the L2 through the systematic exploration of its linguistic system (usually following structural syllabi), or analytic courses that focus on the development of procedural knowledge or "language in use" (often following functional or skills-based syllabi). Although there are multiple examples of these theoretical extremes in our L2 curricula, we must also recognize there are many courses with a "mixed" or "layered" syllabus, i.e., courses in which faculty combine, to a greater or lesser degree, elements from both pedagogical perspectives (Brown, 1995).

Even though it is well documented that L2 curricula in the US adhere to a greater or lesser degree to either an analytic or synthetic course design option, it is not clear how these curricular choices are made (Scida & Jones, 2017). It often seems to be a matter of preference based on the approach the teacher is most familiar with, the approach used in the course textbook, or the approach recommended by the institution (Herschensohn, 1990). The evidence-based teaching practices that are quite common in the natural sciences (i.e., pedagogical paradigms grounded on the objective analysis of learning outcomes) have yet to permeate the L2 teaching profession (Ragland, 2016).

Albeit limited, a few empirical studies have sought to measure the actual benefits of specific curricular choices in L2 programs. These studies have been conducted mostly outside the US in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. In Turkey, Demirezen and Bakla (2007) investigated the difference between a structural and a functional EFL reading course (one designed with the practical, linguistic survival parameters established by the Common European Framework/CEF for Languages). Results of their investigation showed that functional CEF syllabi were more successful in preparing students to perform survival tasks. In Iran, Mahmoudi and Amirkhiz (2011) investigated the impact of structural versus task-based syllabi on listening comprehension among EFL college students. The fifty students who participated in this investigation were assigned at

random to either instructional approach, and they were tested for gain using a pre- and post-assessment. Unlike students in the structural group, task-based students showed significant improvement in their listening skills by the end of the course, as measured by their post-test performance. Also, in Iran, Salimi (2015) measured the impact of task-based courses on the oral-skill development of EFL students at the college level. Sixty Iranian male EFL students participated in Salimi's experiment, which involved assigning students to one of two learning conditions: a task-based group (30 students) and a traditional structural group (30 students). At the end of the course, students in both groups were given a decision-making task to resolve, and their oral output was recorded and analyzed by the researcher. Findings of this investigation revealed that the output of learners who received task-based instruction in complex tasks was significantly more accurate than that of students who received traditional presentation/practice/production (PPP) instruction. In a subsequent study, Rababah (2016) explored the difference in oral performance among Jordanian students exposed to regular output-oriented courses and those exposed to a process-oriented curriculum (courses focused on explicit oral-strategy training). The results of his investigation showed students in the strategy-training course significantly outperformed their output-oriented counterparts. Finally, in Japan, Roy (2017) documented the outcomes of an analytic syllabus through task-based instruction for the teaching of technical writing skills. Forty-seven EFL Japanese college students participated in a problem-based English writing course organized around authentic problems and tasks. These tasks required extensive student-to-student interaction, processing of authentic texts, and development of multimedia products in the target language. The researcher tracked performance on all course tasks using standardized rubrics and documented favorable outcomes for process-oriented courses in most language skills.

The emerging picture from these empirical studies on L2 course outcomes is one that favors analytic syllabi, particularly those with a task orientation (procedural or problem-based). Analytic syllabi consistently succeed at enabling L2 learners to carry out communicative tasks in open-ended assessments. Nevertheless, L2 classroom evidence is still limited, and the information available is restricted to non-immersion settings. At this point, we simply do not have enough information about the impact of broad curricular choices in SA settings.

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## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To better understand the impact of course content and pedagogical orientation on oral proficiency gains in SA settings, this investigation posed the following questions:

1. What is the impact of L2 course type on the speaking ability of students in short-term SA programs?
2. What is the impact of L2 course type on grammatical competence abroad?
3. To what extent are overall speaking gains abroad related to the pedagogical approach implemented in the L2 course?
4. To what extent are speaking gains abroad related to learners' initial speaking ability?

## Syllabus matters

### THE PRESENT STUDY

The University of Delaware is recognized as a pioneer in study abroad in the United States (Bowman, 1987). This university launched the first officially-credited US study abroad program in 1923 (Lee, 2012), and today, it offers more than 90 short-term programs abroad every year, about 20% of which are programs focused on language learning. One of these language programs is based in Panama City, Panama, and it is geared toward intermediate and advanced language learners interested in improving their oral communication skills while taking selected courses from the Spanish major or minor curriculum in an immersion setting.

The Panama program was developed by faculty from the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures in 2006, and over the past decade, it has developed a focus on oral communication. This program features a language pledge (i.e., mandatory use of the target language throughout the program), a service learning component (conducting educational and recreational activities for children at a local orphanage), and abundant opportunities for interaction with the local community. The underlying assumptions behind the articulation of this program were that linguistic immersion was inherently beneficial for all L2 learners, and that the specifics of the SA curriculum were fundamentally inconsequential, as long as they were thematically linked to the immersion site, and they followed the rigorous academic parameters of courses offered at the home institution.

For quality control purposes, objective speaking ability assessments (pre and post) were introduced into this program in 2013. The goal of these assessments was to obtain an objective measure of speaking ability gain, independent from specific coursework. Results of these assessments were meant to track the overall effectiveness of the immersion program in order to identify any potential weaknesses and to guide future curricular adjustments.

From the first data collection event, a review of speaking ability scores revealed great variations in achievement across program participants. This finding was consistent with data from multiple studies on the impact of study abroad, which have suggested that individual variables play a determinant role on proficiency development in immersion settings (Grey, Cox, Serafini, & Sanz, 2015; Hassall, 2012; Klapper & Rees, 2012; Llanes, Tragant & Serrano, 2012). However, it was also detected that, on average, students in the oral communication course (SPAN306) showed higher rates of speaking ability gain at the end of the program than their advanced grammar (SPAN401) counterparts. This surprising outcome was originally interpreted as an abnormality (perhaps an artifact of random teacher and learner factors). However, when similar learner outcomes were detected the following two years, it became apparent that we were, in fact, witnessing a peculiar language learning pattern that had not been previously documented and that required closer inspection.

As noted earlier, the SA program in Panama offers a similar immersion experience to all participants, except for a choice in linguistics courses (SPAN306 versus SPAN401). All students in this program are expected to enroll in three courses: a 3-credit language course (with an option between a high-intermediate oral communication course, and an advanced grammar course), a 3-credit

literature course, and a 1-credit service learning course. Choice of a language course is based on curricular need, not personal preference (students who have already completed all their required coursework for the Spanish major or minor at the 300-level enroll in the grammar course SPAN401; otherwise, they enroll in the oral communication course SPAN306).

Although one would assume that the two L2 courses would have significantly different content, a closer inspection of their course syllabi revealed a surprising similarity: both courses covered essentially the same content but in substantially different ways. As shown in Table 1, both courses had the same number of units, those units were covered in about the same amount of time, and their grammatical content was essentially the same. The main difference between the two courses,

**Table 1.** Course Comparison Chart

Course number	SPAN306	SPAN401
Course name	Oral and Written Expression	Advanced Grammar II
Credits	3	3
Instructional hours	25 hours in the classroom +10 hours of individual tutoring	25 hours in the classroom + 10 hours of individual tutoring
Language of instruction	Spanish (100%)	Spanish (100%)
Number of Instructors	2 (1 professor, 1 TA)	2 (1 professor, 1 TA)
Professor profile	Native speaker, advanced degree in Spanish, 20+ years of experience	Native speaker, advanced degree in Spanish, 20+ years of experience
TA profile	Native speaker, MA candidate in Spanish (Concentration: Language Pedagogy), 1 year of experience in the classroom	Native speaker, MA candidate in Spanish (Concentration: Language Pedagogy), 1 year of experience in the classroom
Type of syllabus	Functional	Structural
Number of units	5	5
Unit focus and content	(1) Describing objects and people (present tense, <i>ser/estar</i> , prepositions, comparatives/ superlatives, reflexive constructions, verbs like <i>gustar</i> ); (2) narrating (preterite, imperfect, present perfect); (3) giving instructions (formal and informal commands, impersonal <i>se</i> ); (4) recommending (subjunctive in noun and adjective clauses); (5) articulating arguments (future, conditional, imperfect subjunctive)	(1) Descriptions (present tense, prepositions, adjectives); (2) Narrations (preterite, imperfect); (3) Essays (passive constructions, future and conditional); (4) Expositions (subjunctive, infinitives and participles); (5) Argumentations (uses of <i>se</i> , <i>si</i> clauses, reported speech)



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Skill focus	Speaking	Writing
Standard instructional sequence	<b>Oral input task</b> (reading or video segments to model the targeted function, listening or reading comprehension tasks focused on content and structure) → <b>Skill-building tasks</b> (pair/group written and/or oral tasks aimed at parsing or rehearsing the function at hand: simulations, role-plays, interviews) → <b>Application task</b> (homework: mainly video projects where students would document their ability to use targeted linguistic functions)	<b>Presentation of grammar topic</b> (teacher would explain and give examples of a particular grammar point) → <b>Grammar practice tasks</b> (students completed contextualized grammar practice tasks, individually or in group, in writing or verbally. Typical formats: fill-in-the-blank; sentence building, text completion) → <b>Application task</b> (homework: mainly compositions aimed at incorporating targeted structures in extended written discourse)
Course assessments	Video projects (30%), audio recordings (20%), written exams (20%), online workbook activities (20%), in-class oral participation (10%)	Compositions (40%), written exams (20%), online workbook activities (20%), in-class oral participation (20%)

however, was the type of syllabus used. SPAN306 used a functional approach to the organization of its syllabus, whereas SPAN401 used a structural one.

The structural course (SPAN401: Advanced Spanish Grammar), as the title suggests, focused on the analysis and practice of selected L2 grammar topics following the PPP instructional sequence (presentation of the grammar structure on the part of the instructor; oral and written practice of relevant grammar-oriented tasks, production of the targeted structure primarily through open-ended writing tasks). The functional course (SPAN306: Practical Oral and Written Expression) focused on the application of selected L2 structures in advanced functional contexts (such as description, narration, and argumentation), mainly through oral tasks. The instructional sequence followed in the functional course featured input processing activities (reading and listening), followed by controlled output tasks (both written and oral), leading to open-ended functional tasks (primarily oral). Both courses had the same number of contact hours (35), the same number of individualized tutoring hours (15), and both required about the same amount of work outside the classroom (roughly an hour per day). Lead instructors for each course were constant; however, the TAs assigned to each course varied each year.

Because all contextual variables were the same for all participants (same host country, same host institution, same living arrangements, same extra-curricular activities, and same academic curriculum), this SA program provides a unique opportunity to analyze the effects of course design and orientation on the development of speaking skills among intermediate L2 learners abroad. The pedagogical evidence gathered here will allow us to compare the impact of two different course types on speaking skills (a synthetic course focused on the explicit

exploration of aspects of the L2 grammar, versus an analytic course focused on the oral practice of advanced linguistic functions). Furthermore, it will help us assess the validity of commonly held beliefs about language study such as the inherently beneficial effect of SA for the development of speaking skills, and the secondary nature of the academic curricula offered in such programs. In the sections that follow, we shall explore in more detail the nature of these interactions and attempt to provide some pedagogical recommendations that emerge from these findings.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To measure the impact of course orientation on L2 speaking gains, data from the institutional oral assessment (the Versant Spanish™ Test) were used and analyzed. This assessment was administered to all program participants at the beginning and at the end of their SA experience in Panama City, Panama.

The Versant Spanish™ Test is a commercially available automated assessment of oral ability, which seeks to measure basic encoding and decoding of oral language as performed in integrated tasks in real time (Townshend, Bernstein, Barbier & Rosenfeld, 2004). This test is meant to probe the psycholinguistic elements of spoken language performance (namely, lexical access and syntactic encoding), rather than the social and rhetorical elements of communication (Balogh, Bernstein, Suzuki & Lenning, 2006). Overall scores in the Versant Spanish™ Test range from 0 to 80 points, and the publisher provides a table of estimated equivalencies to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (Pearson, 2011). In addition to overall speaking ability scores, the Versant Test reports on 4 additional sub-scores: (1) sentence mastery, (2) vocabulary, (3) fluency, and (4) pronunciation. The entire assessment takes about 25 minutes to complete, and it is available via phone or computer.

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The Versant Spanish™ Test consists of 7 tasks as follows:

1. Reading: Test-takers are presented with sentences to read out loud;
2. Repeat: Test-takers must repeat sentences they hear;
3. Opposites: Students must provide antonyms for selected vocabulary;
4. Questions: Students answer simple questions presented verbally;
5. Sentence builds: Test-takers reconstruct sentences based on components presented orally;
6. Story retelling: Test-takers retell three brief stories they hear; and
7. Open questions: Students respond freely to two open-ended questions on family life or personal choices. (Fox & Frazer, 2009)

It is worth noting here that neither the functional nor the structural course used any of these elicitation tasks as part of their daily classroom or at-home learning activities.

Results from the overall pre- and post-program Versant Spanish™ Test were statistically compared to determine the magnitude and significance of any changes in oral ability resulting from participating in the SA program. Results were also

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statistically analyzed to establish the relationship between changes in oral ability and the type of language course taken abroad. All data analysis was done with the help of the statistical program JMP (an interactive statistics program created in 1989 by the SAS Institute to allow researchers to explore data visually).

## SUBJECTS

To maximize the number of research subjects, data from three consecutive SA programs sponsored by the University of Delaware in Panama City, Panama were used for this analysis. Since pre- and post-program oral proficiency testing is part of the regular assessment of all language courses in this program, no further testing was required for this investigation. Over the course of a three-year period, the number of students assessed was 74.

The majority of subjects were in their late teens (the average age was 19), women outnumbered men in all groups (82% versus 18%), and the vast majority of participants (67%) were Spanish language minors. Over the course of the three years of these observations, the total number of students enrolled in the structurally-oriented course (SPAN401) was 40, and the total number of students enrolled in the functional course (SPAN306) was 34. The average number of participants in the Panama SA program per year was 25 (20 in 2016, 28 in 2017, and 26 in 2018).

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

*RESEARCH QUESTION # 1. What is the impact of L2 course type on the speaking ability of students in short-term SA programs?*

To answer the first question, the mean Versant test score for each group was examined. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the levels of the pre-, post-, and gain of each group for each year. A few things are worth noting. The pre-scores were slightly higher for the students in the structural class, indicating that students in the SPAN401 course tended to be more proficient in the L2 at the beginning of their SA experience. This was true for each year in which speaking ability data were collected. However, students in the functional class consistently had the higher gain. Due to this consistency, and the relatively small sample size in each period, the data were combined across all three years of the Panama program when conducting a formal test of the gain.

**Table 2.** Mean Scores for the Versant Spanish™ Test by Year and Syllabus Type

YEAR	Versant Pre-	Versant Post-	Gain
2016	55.45	59.60	4.15
2017	56.86	59.86	3.00
2018	48.12	50.50	2.38

Syllabus Type			
Functional	50.43	54.95	4.53
Structural	56.91	58.32	1.41

YEAR	Syllabus Type			
2016	Functional	53.00	60.00	7.00
	Structural	57.45	59.27	1.82
2017	Functional	53.75	57.63	3.88
	Structural	61.00	62.83	1.83
2018	Functional	45.33	49.07	3.73
	Structural	51.91	52.45	0.55

Since the same subjects were used in the pre- and post-tests, two statistical tests were implemented: an overall matched pairs *t* test, and an ANOVA test across the two syllabus types. The first test determines if the gain in the score is different from zero. Overall, there was a positive gain in speaking ability. On average, students across both groups gained 3.09 points during the SA experience. This was significant at  $t(73)=5.245, p < .0001$ . The second test was an ANOVA to determine if the gain for the two groups was different. The gain for functional students was indeed determined to be statistically greater  $F(1,72) = 7.53, p < .01$ , R-squared = .095. The difference in gain across the two types was 3.11 points (see Table 3 for mean and standard deviations for each group). The evidence suggests that the implementation of functional syllabi abroad was associated with higher gains in speaking ability as measured by the Versant Spanish™ Test.

**Table 3.** Mean and Standard Deviations of Speaking Gain Scores by Syllabus Type

Syllabus Type	Number	Mean	Std Dev
Functional	40	4.525	4.857
Structural	34	1.412	4.869

*RESEARCH QUESTION # 2. What is the impact of L2 course type on grammatical competence abroad?*

One of the common arguments in favor of syntactic grammar courses is their perceived superiority to promote grammatical competence through the explicit presentation and practice of L2 grammar rules (Graus & Coppen, 2012; Klapper & Rees, 2003; Salimi, 2015). To test the validity of this assumption in this SA program, the Versant Spanish™ Test “Sentence Mastery” sub-scores for the structural and functional groups were statistically compared. In Versant, “Sentence Mastery” refers to the ability to understand, recall, and produce Spanish phrases and clauses in complete sentences. According to the Versant test developers, performance in this area depends on accurate syntactic processing and appropriate usage of words, phrases, and clauses in meaningful sentence structures (Pearson, 2011).

In order to determine if there was a difference in “Sentence Mastery” between the functional and structural groups at the end of the study program, an ANOVA test was conducted. This comparison showed no significant statistical difference between the two groups  $F(1,72) = 2.02, p = .16$ , R-squared = .027. As the findings

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summarized in Table 4 suggest, the structural and functional courses in this investigation were comparable in their ability to promote advanced usage of L2 words, phrases, and clauses in meaningful sentence structures, as elicited by the oral tasks in the Versant Spanish™ Test.

**Table 4.** Mean and Standard Deviations of Sentence Mastery Subscores by Syllabus Type

Syllabus Type	Number	Mean	Std Dev
Functional	39	58.744	12.506
Structural	35	63.086	13.787

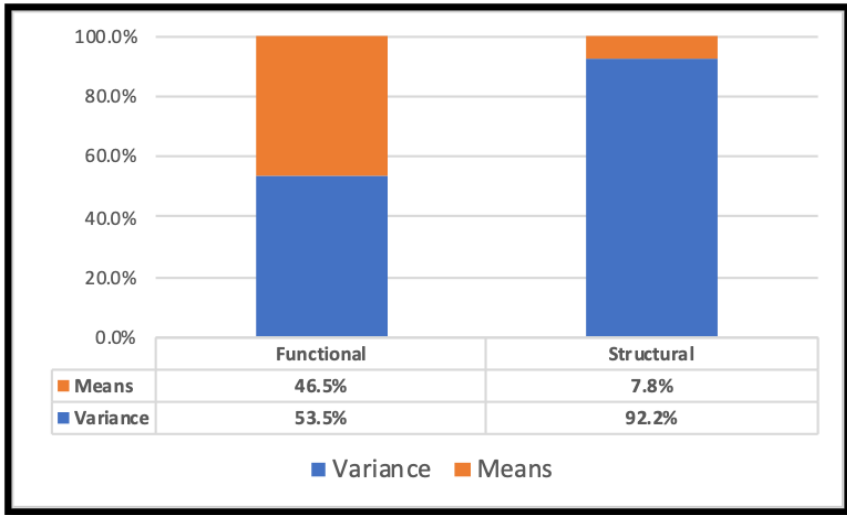
*RESEARCH QUESTION # 3. To what extent are overall speaking ability gains abroad related to the pedagogical approach implemented in the L2 course?*

To better understand the impact of pedagogical approach on overall speaking gains abroad, Kessler and Greenberg's (1981) measure of change (better known as  $Q^2$ ) was used. This measure examines gain scores over time, and it is used to compare the nature of change across groups by breaking it down into two component parts. The first part reflects the variance of the gain, which can be best described as "individual shifting" (with some subjects improving more or less than others). The second part reflects the changing mean of the pre- and post- group scores, which suggests a raising (or lowering) of scores across all subjects in the group. If all of  $Q^2$  comes from the first component, it indicates that the mean level of the Versant Spanish™ Test score did not change over time, but that there was some degree of shifting among subjects. Alternatively, if all of  $Q^2$  comes from the second component, all the subjects in the group changed an equal amount.

The  $Q^2$  scores and the percent components for the speaking scores by group can be found in Figure 1 on the next page. The functional group had a larger part of  $Q^2$  in the means component, while the structural group had a larger part in the variance component. This implies that students in the functional group showed greater improvement in their Versant Spanish™ Test scores and were lifted as a group by the experience, while students in the structural group mostly experienced individual shifting across the two tests.

*RESEARCH QUESTION # 4. To what extent are speaking gains abroad related to learners' initial speaking ability?*

The final research question focuses on whether the difference in gains is due to the fact that some students began their SA program with a higher pre-Versant Spanish™ Test score. A direct way to test for the effect of initial proficiency level is by using a regression model of the gain in Versant Spanish™ Test score on the pre-score and syllabus type. This regression model provides a way to control for the pre-score level in the analysis. Group type was represented by a dummyvariable, in which 1 = Functional group and 0 = Structural group. The focus of this analysis was on the size and significance of the regression coefficient for group type after



**Figure 1.** Breakdown of the Versant Spanish™ Test Score Gain by Syllabus Type controlling for pre-score, which represents the difference in gain between the function and structural syllabi. The results are given in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Regression of Gain on Versant-Pre and Syllabus Type

Variable	Coefficient	p-Value
Intercept	7.387	.0244
Versant-Pre	-.105	.0583
Functional	2.432	.0410
R-squared	.140	

The regression model shows that the pre-score was not a strong predictor for the gain in speaking ability. The pre-score coefficient was negative and not statistically significant in the model at the  $\alpha = .05$  level. However, the “group” variable was statistically significant. After controlling for the pre-score, the estimate for the difference in gain was 2.43, a slight reduction from the overall difference of the gain found in Research Question #1 (which was 3.11).

*Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research*

Since this study was articulated a posteriori (i.e., after the relevant data had already been collected), there are a number of methodological limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting its findings:

1. The investigation focused on the impact on speaking ability of two (and only two) pedagogical approaches. Information on the relative effectiveness of other types of courses (for instance, task-based or content-based) would be needed to obtain a more complete picture of the nature of the relationship between course type and speaking ability development abroad.

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2. Another limitation of this study has to do with the self-selection of students into their respective courses. For a true experimental design, random subject assignment to treatment groups would be desired.
3. Although the instrument used in this investigation (the Versant Spanish™ Test) is highly practical and reliable, it focuses solely on oral output and it does so in a non-interactive manner. Replication of the study using interactive assessments (such as ACTFL's Oral Proficiency Interview or the Instituto Cervantes' SIELE), or validated tests of other L2 skills (such as reading, listening, or writing) would significantly enhance our understanding of the impact of course type on all L2 modalities.
4. Finally, the target audience (intermediate-level learners of Spanish) introduces another methodological limitation. Similar investigations with learners of other languages, and at different proficiency levels, would be required for us to fully appreciate the interplay between course design and oral proficiency development abroad.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation began with the question: Do second language (L2) learning outcomes vary depending on the type of syllabus selected by the instructor? The results of this investigation suggest that speaking ability is indeed sensitive to variations in course design and structure, that pedagogical orientation can make a significant difference in speaking ability outcomes for intermediate-level students, and that specific features of the coursework offered abroad can mediate the impact of individual learner variables in SA settings.

The differences in course design documented in this investigation (namely, differences in academic focus, handling of L2 input and output, pedagogical sequences, in-class tasks, and at-home assignments) appear to have created different learning environments that resulted in different levels of oral-proficiency development among program participants. Functional and structural frameworks for L2 course design introduce significantly different purposes and contexts for language learning, and these differences seem to have important learning implications in immersion settings. Both pedagogical approaches appear to encourage students to process L2 input and to generate L2 output in different ways and for different reasons. Structural approaches focus on linguistic analysis to gain further control of the L2 grammar, while functional approaches direct learners' attention toward the practical social applications of language. Those variations in purpose and context were shown to translate into different levels of oral skill achievement among L2 learners in this investigation and should be taken into account when designing L2 curricula abroad.

The results of this investigation suggest that speaking ability is indeed sensitive to variations in course design and structure, that pedagogical orientation can make a significant difference in speaking ability outcomes for intermediate-level students, and that specific features of the coursework offered abroad can mediate the impact of individual learner variables in SA settings.

A further corollary of this investigation is that linguistic immersion, per se, is not sufficient to generate the L2 proficiency outcomes that we hope for in SA programs. Harvesting the benefits of study abroad appears to be mediated by our ability to focus the attention and interest of L2 learners onto key aspects of their linguistic immersion experience (such as engagement in meaningful exchanges of information with members of the local community, processing of relevant L2 input for both meaning and form, and in the development of cross-cultural interactional skills). Clearly, not all learners take advantage of these (and other) helpful aspects of their immersion experience, so they can benefit from a well-informed instructional intervention. As these research results show, the content and pedagogical orientation of L2 syllabi do matter. Faculty and program administrators would be well-advised to adopt an evidence-based approach to course design in order to maximize the linguistic impact of their L2 programs abroad.

... linguistic immersion, per se, is not sufficient to generate the L2 proficiency outcomes that we hope for in SA programs.

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# Picturing Another Culture: Developing Language Proficiency, Empathy, and Visual Literacy through Art

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Gisela Hoecherl-Alden, *Boston University*

Kathy Fegely, *Antietam High School, Reading, PA*

## Abstract

Integrating art (paintings, sculptures, photography, and other types of images) into second language (L2) instruction, can have a positive effect on language acquisition and developing intercultural understanding. As the instructor provides visual scaffolding, learners at all proficiency levels have the opportunity to engage more deeply with L2 course materials. Not only can students learn to interpret imagery and create their own effective combinations of visuals and texts, they also develop some familiarity with seminal artwork from the target culture. This article outlines how spiraling art through a language curriculum can aid vocabulary retention, illustrate poetic language, and raise awareness of diversity and inclusion. As a result, learners investigate and interact with the products, practices, and perspectives of the L2 culture while simultaneously developing visual analysis skills—the latter essential in an age in which both authentic and digitally manipulated imagery dominate the media and social discourse.

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**Gisela Hoecherl-Alden** (PhD, University of Wisconsin-Madison) is Director of Language Instruction, Professor of the Practice, and Assistant Dean at Boston University. She works with language faculty in four departments on curriculum design and teaches all levels of German. She has recently published on post-Wall German film and media literacy and currently focuses on greening the curriculum and developing historical literacy.

**Kathy Fegely** (MA, Kutztown University) is a German instructor at Antietam Middle/ Senior High School in Reading, PA. She instructs grades 7 through 12, exploratory German, German 1,2,3,4, and 5. She also directs a German American Partnership Program with Antietam's partner school in Munich.

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from its intercultural and interdisciplinary nature, art can inspire creativity and help students develop their interpretive abilities. While students with auditory and verbal learning preferences fare better in traditional, text-based L2 classes than those who need to create visual connections to a text in order to understand it better (Grandin, 2006; Silverman, 2002), many learners benefit from the inclusion of visual dimensions into language instruction. Furthermore, according to Knapp (2012), paintings provide a meaningful cultural context in which students produce language ranging from the use of “concrete vocabulary to the illustration of grammatical concepts” as the “interpretation of the image requires the students to engage language,” even though the information is not linguistic (pp. 20-21). In addition to acquiring knowledge about the target culture’s artistic legacy, Ortuño (1994) found that “the use of visually engaging, authentic materials in the classroom has a definite, positive effect in acquiring language and forming cultural attitudes” (p. 500). Best of all, neither L2 instructors nor their students need artistic abilities or knowledge of art history to engage with art.

More than ever, students need to become visually literate and learn to make sense of the proliferation of authentic and digitally manipulated imagery and combinations of visuals and texts (Farrell, 2015; Felten, 2008). They need to be able to access images and visual media effectively and efficiently, interpret and analyze their meanings, evaluate images and their sources, import meaningful images into visual media, and understand the ethical, legal, social and economic issues surrounding the creation and use of images and visual media (Ervine, 2016; Visual Literacy Task Force, 2012). Since students do not necessarily already possess the skills to engage effectively in multiple modes of communication or make meaning visually (i.e., visual literacy), targeted literacy instruction should be integrated into the curriculum at all levels.

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Systematically interweaving visual analysis should be a fundamental goal of a liberal education, “whether conceptualized as a distinct set of capacities or as part of a larger multimodal literacy,”—which also includes interpreting music, movement, and text (Felten, 2008, p. 60). In an L2 curriculum, that means language learners practice all three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, presentational) as they learn to analyze not only art but also interpret and create—among other visually-based work— charts, graphs, timelines, photographs, cartoons, illustrations, digital narratives, maps, memes, signs, symbols, and logos.

The following examples come mostly from German classes, but are applicable to all languages and proficiency levels. They provide strategies and templates for oral and written art-based assignments, which demonstrate how to (1) integrate images at all levels of the L2 curriculum and in different types of courses; (2) guide students toward developing visual analysis capabilities (visual literacy); (3) help students become more reflective and engaged communicators, orally and in writing; (4) create inclusive classrooms and communities of practice; and (5) enable learners to become more adept at analyzing and prepare them for combining written and visual information.

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### From the very beginning: Spiraling art through the language curriculum

A well-scaffolded curriculum planned around the principles of backward design requires that L2 instructors identify the desired results first, then determine acceptable evidence of student learning, and finally plan learning experiences (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006). Such a curricular structure also allows teachers to spiral certain themes, texts, and images through various proficiency levels so students engage and re-engage with specific topics throughout their studies and develop a deeper understanding of L2 material (Swaffar & Arens, 2005). Additionally, as they design multiple thematic and literacy-focused strands for their program, instructors take into account a progression of language functions that integrate textual thinking with language development across all levels of the language program (Maxim, Höyng, Lancaster, Schaumann, & Aue, 2013; Paesani, Allen, & Dupuy, 2016).

In a curriculum centered on developing visual analysis abilities as well as the vocabulary and linguistic structures needed to develop them, instructors ensure that lesson plans move students from simple to complex activities in every class meeting, every unit, and every term throughout the entire program. Guiding questions, driven by content, not grammar, help learners make meaning “through the acts of interpreting and creating written, oral, visual, audiovisual, and digital texts” (Paesani et al., 2016, p. 23). This means that learners acquire the grammar structures necessary to communicate when they need them, requiring them to narrate at the lower proficiency level, shift to explanation, and conclude with argumentation in the most advanced classes (Maxim et al., 2013, pp. 6-8).

Since novice learners can identify shapes and create simple titles in addition to naming colors, figures, and objects, an effective activity for beginning L2 students is to color various shapes in a black-and-white version of a Cubist painting, such as Franz Marc’s cubist painting *Rehe im Walde* [Deer in the forest] (1914). At this basic level, the instructor provides a rudimentary introduction to color theory (Goethe, 1810/1994), as students determine how mixing primary colors creates others in very basic language (e.g., *blau und gelb ist grün* [blue and yellow make green]). They also discuss what they think each color could mean through providing basic nouns or adjectives (e.g., *rot symbolisiert Liebe, gelb ist hell und froh* [red symbolizes love, yellow is light and happy]). As they first identify and list shapes, figures, and colors and then explain their color choices by adding adjectives, comparing their versions to the original allows them to create a very basic interpretation of the image.

As Knapp (2012) demonstrates, beginners can discuss a painting like August Macke’s Expressionist *Dame in grüner Jacke* [Woman in a green jacket] (1913), which depicts five people in a park-like setting. They first explain what they associate with the specific colors and then connect them to basic items of clothing. As students describe the other people in the painting, they also position them at the front, back,

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side of, beneath, or wherever in relation to the park, river, and the trees. This lends itself to introducing and practicing prepositions. While this is still a very basic task, novice-level students begin to formulate hypotheses and justifications as they move from identifying to contrasting and describing. At this point, they also determine spatial relationships of objects to one another. While engaging with the works of two of the most famous German Expressionist painters, a short research assignment ensures that they also glean some biographical information and learn that both died during World War I.

At the intermediate proficiency level, an activity that moves L2 learners from simple to more complex language is based on a painting and a sculpture of an important cultural icon. At this point in a German class, students may have acquired some knowledge of Martin Luther's role in the Reformation through simple readings and discussions. Applying what they have learned, they first describe Lucas Cranach the Elder's portrait of Luther (1529) and then take turns playing the role of the rather stern-looking Luther in the portrait to ask and answer questions about his activities. This allows the instructor to assess what the students have learned about Luther and the Reformation, as well as providing opportunities for describing the portrait. In order to move the discussion from portraiture to statues in public spaces, students compare the painting to a photo of Rietschel's 1885 Luther statue in front of Dresden's restored *Frauenkirche* [Church of Our Lady]. Without giving them information about the statue's date of creation, students are also asked to determine whether the painting or the statue is more recent and try to justify their answers.

Analyzing three-dimensional art situated in a public space also provides learners with an opportunity to apply a series of questions that help them understand which "historical discourses are represented and given authority via the landscape" (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 170). Using the Luther statue, students try to determine what kind of memorial it is, describe the surroundings and its position in relation to the church, ascertain what it memorializes, describe who and what they can see, who or what is at the center or periphery, and who or what is missing, and decide if the memorial is intended to remind the viewer of a loss, gain, or victory. Students then transfer this approach to analyzing a memorial in their home or school community, apply this same set of questions, take a picture of the monument, and create a short digital presentation or poster explaining the historical and cultural significance of the monument.

The final example describes how introducing and revisiting an iconic painting throughout their studies will enable learners to re-engage with a particular work of art and apply what they have previously seen to a new, different context. At the novice level, students describe what they see in a painting and compare it to a different, but similar image. If a language program has a study abroad component, choosing a culturally significant image students might encounter in the original prepares them for more in-depth engagement in a museum. Revisiting a work of art at a higher proficiency level also helps students develop a more multi-dimensional understanding of an artist's work, a cultural event, artistic style, or time period.

## Syllabus matters

Novice-level German students may learn to describe rooms and furniture with Carl Spitzweg's *Der arme Poet* [The poor poet] (1839). They can easily identify and list objects and compare the painting of a shabby little attic bedroom to other images of rooms. Learners can also employ basic color theory to ascertain the mood the painter wanted to convey. As they add adjectives, they move on to simple descriptions and toward asking and answering what, when, how, where, and why questions to provide details that require some basic interpretation. When they re-encounter the painting—either in a museum when on their exchange with a school abroad or in an advanced literature and culture course—they engage with it in greater depth. In an advanced literature course, learners understand that the painting of a destitute poet who is burning his life's work to stay warm, functions as an ironic commentary on the state of the humanities in the nineteenth century. As they investigate the painter, students find out that the man in this image is often identified as a well-known court poet who fell into royal disfavor and died in poverty (Schultes, 2002). This, in turn, allows them to understand the often-precarious situation of writers, artists, composers, and even scientists and the role wealthy sponsors played in making or breaking them.

The activities above illustrate that art can function as a stimulus for practicing all three modes of communication at different proficiency levels. Becoming familiar with and then revisiting specific works of art or artistic representations of cultural icons at different junctures in the curriculum also allows instructors to introduce analysis strategies like the ones applied to memorials.

### Techniques and approaches that hone students' visual analysis and interpretive communication abilities

Even if students regularly analyze and produce visual materials, they do not automatically read or evaluate them critically (Ervine, 2016). Since some learners also feel anxious when asked to interpret a work of art, icebreakers and hands-on activities that slowly help develop visual analysis capabilities can serve to relax learners and teach them to trust their instincts and life experiences. These range from collaborative activities and trying to create a visual message, understanding how images convey bias, moving from details to the whole, involving all senses when interpreting an image to in-depth analyses of historical monuments in their surroundings.

Scaffolding the activities to ensure that students engage in all three levels of the interpretive mode (comprehension, interpretation, analysis) means that they first demonstrate comprehension of the content, then examine, compare, and reflect on the products and practices of culture, and finally make connections to new or different content areas. Visual analysis of an image requires similar steps: understanding, interpreting, and finally explaining its significance within a specific cultural context. As learners engage with the visual artifact, they first note composition elements, color, placement, before determining how the artistic elements of the image

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might communicate artistic intent to the viewer, and then explain interpretation by backing it up with elements from the image. If it is a multimodal image, they also consider sound and text.

While students interpret art and other visuals through these activities, they also learn that there is not one objective interpretation, but that analyses are subjective and are only persuasive if they are backed up with justifications. Diaz (2016) suggests an icebreaker that shows students how art and its interpretation are subjective. She provides learners with a piece of paper and asks them to close their eyes and draw something. They then pass their paper to a classmate who finishes the drawing with open eyes but without asking for explanations. Students then randomly explain the art they finished. Diaz ascertains that the humorous results lower anxiety levels and prepare learners to work with specific pieces of art.

In one exercise, which can easily be used at various proficiency levels, students reflect on the nature of visual communication by communicating through images. As they take a picture with their cell phones, the photographers decide what their pictures mean, think of a title, and write a short interpretation. Then, they e-mail the image only to a partner, who writes an interpretation and also creates a title. Either online or at the next class meeting, the partners exchange their interpretations, compare them to the images, and decide how they could have communicated their intent more clearly.

In another low-anxiety technique that prepares students for more in-depth visual analysis, the instructor provides them with a section of an entire painting or photograph. This activity is designed to get them to trust their mind's eye and helps learners realize that they apply what they already know about the world around them to fill in empty spaces. The example Wicke (2016a) uses is the bottom part of a photograph depicting two parrots sitting on a perch. The students only see two sets of claws, some colored feathers, and part of a branch. At the top of the blank image they read the words *der Baum* [the tree] and *der Himmel* [the sky]. With a partner, they fill in a collage of words and try to explain what else might be in the picture. Before they see the complete photograph, they share their collages with the class.

In a variation on this activity, Wicke (2016b) uses Marc's painting *Tiger* (1912) to train students to pay attention to details and familiarize them with Cubist art. In this type of activity, students pay attention to the use of color, so they apply some of their ideas on color theory. The class first sees a detail of the painting—in this case part of the face with an eye. Students brainstorm, and the instructor collects their suggestions and justifications. Then they see the rest of the painting and decide how both sections they have fit together. They discuss what they think the painting depicts and think of a title. Finally, as they see the entire painting, they discuss their guesses and adjust the title, if necessary.

As students learn to detect bias inherent in images, they take an important step toward becoming visually literate and also begin to recognize cultural dimensions of meaning. One

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way to raise awareness is to help them understand how illustrations can influence the way readers acquire vocabulary or interpret a story. If, for example, instructors ask learners to create image-based vocabulary flashcards or a picture dictionary, they should pick some words that seem straightforward, but tend to evoke strong emotions—both positive and negative. Learners' choice of image for words like "politician" or "police officer" will easily convey their own, often unconscious and cultural, bias and lends itself to a fruitful class discussion of the power of images.

In a class in which students have discussed a fairy tale—say, *Little Red Riding Hood*—they form groups. One receives Brewtnall's (n.d.) and the other Doré's (1867) illustration in the form of a wanted poster [see Appendix A]. Without showing the images to members of the other group, students create narratives explaining why the police would want to give a €20,000 reward for Red Riding Hood. Since both illustrations suggest very different personalities, the stories turn out quite dissimilar. As the first group, whose image shows a very innocent-looking young girl, reads their version to the class, the other students, whose Red Riding Hood is more self-assured and skeptical, are trying to understand how their classmates could have come up with such a story and vice versa. After asking some follow-up questions, the groups finally show each other their respective illustrations and discuss how they have influenced their stories.

To help students engage more deeply with a specific work of art, the instructors ask them to involve all their senses as they interpret. A photograph that lends itself to that approach at a variety of proficiency levels is Graciela Iturbide's *Mujer angel* [Angel woman] (1979). Without knowing anything about the image, the artist, or title, students work in groups to describe what they see, hear, feel, smell, and taste as they view the photograph. Approaching an image this way engenders vivid descriptions. As each group justifies their descriptions, they try to explain the location, identify the gender of the figure as well as the photographer's intent for creating the image in the first place. After a lively discussion, the instructor provides the title (in our case, in German) and explains that the photographer-cum-activist was trying to document the vanishing culture of the Zapotec people in Mexico's Sonoran Desert. The subsequent discussion, in which students decide whether they believe the image is effective or not, also prepares them to create a poster presentation involving images and text on ethnic minorities from the target culture. For a German class, students present textual and visual information on the Sorbs, a Slavic minority in East Germany, ethnic Germans in Rumania, or German-speaking minorities in Italy's Trento and Bolzano regions.

A final example, adapted from Wicke (2016c), involves analyzing a sculpture group in a public space. This type of memorial not only reveals historically relevant information about a specific place, but the three-dimensionality also enables students to pay closer attention to facial expressions and body language. As they move from details to a greater geographic context, learners form and test hypotheses. One such memorial is Franz Meisler's sculpture group *Kindertransport. Züge ins Leben- Züge in den Tod* [Children's transport. Trains to life—trains to death] (2008) near the Friedrichsstraße railway station in Berlin. It depicts two groups of young people who are heading in opposite directions. A boy and a girl

in a lighter bronze color represent the children who were saved, the other, greyer group of five, stands for those who were sent to the gas chambers. Between both groups is a stack of empty luggage. Train tracks flank the entire sculpture.

Before analyzing the entire sculpture, students are divided into groups A and B. Group A receives a close-up of one of the faces from the “trains to death” section; the others study the facial expression of one of the “trains to life” statues. As they study the faces, they discuss who the person is, what s/he sees, what the expression says about the person’s feelings, and hypothesize what could be happening. The next image of the memorial zooms out to provide some more spatial context for each of the two figures. Students analyze the body language and discuss if they still have the same impressions they initially formed. The last image is the same for both groups: depicting the entire sculpture in its urban surroundings [for group A’s handout, see Appendix B]. Students then find a partner from the other group to compare the different close-up images and see whether they can determine what is being memorialized. Without knowing the title or location, students spend significant time hypothesizing, justifying, and adjusting their opinions before providing an interpretation of the group sculpture. The instructor provides the title after in-depth discussion and assigns students to find out more information about children’s transports from Nazi Germany for the following class period. This activity also provides more texture to literary analyses: In an intermediate-level course in which students read a short story about a Jewish boy who is smuggled out of Germany after his parents get picked up by the Nazis (Kordon, 1999) or an advanced-level course in which students read German-Jewish exile poetry (Ausländer, 1978; Kaléko, 1977a, 1977b).

The examples above illustrate how one might scaffold and engage learners in different types of visual analysis, while providing opportunities for practicing all three levels of the interpretive mode. Students describe and demonstrate comprehension of the content, then compare, reflect, and determine cultural dimensions, and finally connect their findings to different content areas or apply them to another context.

### **Art-based activities for interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational oral communication**

The authors have developed or adapted several art-based activities that allow students to practice all three modes of communication at various proficiency levels. One activity that allows students to move around the classroom involves using portions of artworks. Images are used only as partial pictures and might contain a part of a face, a section of a building, or part of an animal’s body. Students circulate to find other portions of the image and recreate it. They then describe the completed images to one another describing colors, emotions created by the colors, and theories of what the completed artwork might mean. The instructor may deliberately choose to use several cut up versions of the same image so that the students can compare their hypotheses once they find their partners. Throughout the activity, learners interact with one another and negotiate meaning, react to what they hear from others, and present their opinions. They might also try to decide which artistic style the work

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represents, applying cultural information they may have previously acquired or bring to the language classroom from other subject areas.

A second task that allows novice-high learners to practice describing and analyzing images while also listening carefully and asking follow-up questions involves describing an image to a partner. Again, the class divides into two groups. In each pair, one student describes the image with as many details as possible to his/her partner who listens carefully, sketches what she or he hears, and asks clarifying questions. After the conclusion of the activity, pairs compare images to sketches and discuss what they need to correct. For additional practice, pairs switch roles and repeat the activity with a different image. A variation on this exercise requires students to sit back-to-back and describe similar looking images to one another, verbally trying to elicit what the differences are through follow-up questions. Once they believe that they have found the answer, they turn around and compare their images.

In a third activity, intermediate-low L2 students conduct research into a specific portrait. The instructor assigns a painting or photograph, provides a title, date, and/or the name of the artist. At home, students find out the story behind the image and prepare short oral group presentations for the next class period. One such painting is *Preussisches Liebesglück* [Prussian Love] by Doerstling (1890), which shows a young man in a Prussian soldier's uniform with his arms around a smiling young woman. What makes the painting unusual is the fact that it is the portrait of an interracial couple at the end of the nineteenth century. Students will find out that the painting depicts the Afro-German bandmaster Gustav Sabac-al-Cher and his wife Gertrud. A brief Internet search will reveal a fascinating family history and allows students to create intriguing oral presentations. The image can also form a starting point for discussing the history of ethnic and racial minorities in German-speaking Europe and legacies of colonialism in the eighteenth through twentieth centuries.

Finally, in a course focused on fairy tales, instructors could further develop the Little Red Riding Hood-based activity described previously: After students have interpreted a second fairy tale, they find illustrations they believe best justify their interpretations—either in an essay explaining their choices or by preparing a short presentation.

The activities outlined in this section—while also relying on visual analysis skills—provide different ways of using images to practice interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication. At the novice level, the activities require responses such as naming, listing, identifying, and asking some basic questions, while students at the intermediate level describe spatial relationships in an image, explain its meaning, and create short presentations. Students also learn to explain how images can support comprehension of a text or subvert it in their L2.

### Art in the diverse and inclusive L2 classroom

Activities that encourage students to explore multiple perspectives enable them to better understand ethnic, cultural, racial, gender, class, physical, and mental diversity. They also seek to prepare both students from culturally and linguistically divergent backgrounds as well as those with

Activities that encourage students to explore multiple perspectives enable them to better understand ethnic, cultural, racial, gender, class, physical, and mental diversity.

and without disabilities for the real world with a wide range of human variance (Voltz, Sims, & Nelson, 2010). In such classrooms, art allows L2 instructors to create learning environments that foster students' positive self-concepts and attitudes toward others and facilitate conversations about differences. Given that Americans with disabilities make up around 20% of the population (Garland-Thomson, 2005), the examples provided here are designed to raise students' awareness and understanding of physical and mental diversity. As instructors and students understand that some classmates may process information differently, or, as Grandin (2006) put it for autistic learners—have detailed spatial visualization abilities but not always the words to convey them— an inclusive classroom will also allow everyone to accept them as different, not less (Grandin, 2012).

As the activities described below are illustrative of diverse visions of the world, they provide opportunities for critical thought on cultural representations of diversity—over time and across places—and are therefore easily adaptable to other kinds of diversity. Consciously integrating awareness-raising activities into the curriculum allows L2 programs to contribute to a healthier instructional atmosphere surrounding difference. They contribute “to the success and lifelong learning of students with disabilities” and also ensure that all students understand that “discussions of lives lived fully (with impairments) should not be left to specialists” (Berberi, 2008, p. 4). As a result, students come to recognize disability as a social category rather than individual characteristic (Kudlick, 2003) and understand that disabilities are not something to “overcome,” but actually enable “artistic evolution” (Garland-Thomson, 2005, pp. 523-24).

First, however, students need to become aware of their own biases and learn to reimagine disability. To this end, they might analyze paintings of people who are visibly different as well as images created by a disabled artist, in some cases with ancillary textual information. In a course in which students read fairy tales, the instructor could consider including a werewolf legend and, after discussing the story, ask students to find information about hypertrichosis (excessive hair growth, often referred to as werewolf syndrome), porphyria (extreme photosensitivity, which makes it hard for sufferers to function in broad daylight), and people who have been called werewolves. Following their short presentations, students discuss the viability of theories that such tales may be, in fact, describing those who suffered from one of these congenital disorders.

Learners then analyze an image of someone who suffered from hypertrichosis: Lavinia Fontana's portrait of Antonietta Gonzalez (1595). Because of their congenital condition, Antonietta and other members of Gonzalez family were welcomed at the courts of Europe and received considerable social and scientific attention. Questions, learners may seek to answer as they view the portrait are: Given that portraits of Gonzalez family members are found in several European castles as part

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1. Images that work well for this comparative activity include Frida Kahlo's 1946 painting *Árbol de la esperanza, mantente firme* [Tree of Hope, keep firm], Diego Velázquez *El bufón don Sebastián de Morra* [Portrait of Sebastián de Morra] from 1646, or Jake and Dinos Chapman's 1995 sculpture of Stephen Hawking, *Übermensch* [Superman].

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of curiosity collections, what sort of life may Antonietta have led? Is the portrait sincere and sensitive or does it depict the girl as an abnormal being or dehumanized object? Which emotions is the artist trying to conjure in the viewer? Students who have been prepared for nuanced visual analysis are likely to see that Fontana's work is insightful, depicting a self-assured, intelligent young girl, not a freak.

Even if the painting is not approached through reading and discussion of a werewolf legend, it can form the entry point to a discussion of depictions of visible diversity in art and prompt comparisons to other artistic renderings of disability.<sup>1</sup> Students apply the same questions they used to analyze Fontana's portrait and, through comparing both images, reflect on the divergent ways disability has been constructed and represented. In groups, they decide what that could mean for the historical and cultural context, in which they were created.

Next, students compare two of Claude Monet's intensely impressionistic images, *Le bassin aux nymphéas* [The Water Lily Pond] (1899) *Le pont japonais* [The Japanese footbridge] (ca. 1920), from his garden in Giverny and describe the differences between the pastel hues of the first to the darker reds and browns of the latter. They read a short text that explains how color perceptions change with progressive macular degeneration and may be shocked to discover that some of the artist's most famous paintings resulted directly from his growing visual impairment. They also discuss that artists who have painted most of their lives can continue doing so from memory or investigate the contributions of other disabled artists, writers, composers or scientists they may know of.

Finally, students analyze *Christina's World* by Andrew Wyeth (1948). Initially, most students do not recognize the painting as the depiction of a disabled woman crawling through the grass toward her house on a hill. However, working back from the title, and again applying the kinds of questions they have asked before, students take a closer look and see the atrophied and twisted limbs, discuss that Christina in the painting, rather than serving as a passive visual object, is not someone to be pitied or feared, but is actively engaged with her world. This preparatory activity has primed students to think about disabilities in a more differentiated way. At the intermediate-low level or above, students are now better prepared to investigate works of art—either created by a disabled artist or depicting difference—and write or present more nuanced interpretations.

While the activities described above could be used in the K-16 setting, given the appropriate proficiency level, the following exercise is better suited for students at the college level. Before analyzing a set of paintings depicting the aftermath of World War I, students in an advanced literature and culture class first discuss how information technologies, scientific discoveries, bioengineering, plastic surgery, and prosthetics impact the lives of people with disabilities and provide current or historic examples they might know of. In this particular course, they have read statistical information about losses and injuries in World War I, short texts about life in 1920s Berlin, and biographical information about artists who perished (Marc, Macke—mentioned earlier), before interpreting images created by war veteran Otto Dix. Students divide into three groups, each analyzing one painting of severely disabled veterans: *Kriegskrüppel* [war cripples], *Prager Straße*

[Prague street], and *Die Skatspieler* [card players], all from 1920. The groups work on descriptions: The first image depicts a war veteran who sustained severe facial disfigurement; the second shows deformed men begging; and the third gravely disfigured veterans playing cards, one with his feet, another with his mouth because they no longer have arms or hands.

When students come back together as a class, the instructor projects each image as the groups present their descriptions. Then, they compare all three images with one another. Having applied the kinds of questions previously outlined for Fontana's and Wyeth's paintings, combining them with information they have gleaned from their readings, learners may describe how the veterans' damaged, incomplete bodies are held together by crude prosthetics and imagine what their lives might have been like.

As they discuss the artist's possible reasons for creating these particular images, they might find that Dix uses his art to illustrate the human cost of nationalism and mechanized warfare. Students are also likely to see the veterans as victims and outsiders who hide in back rooms or are ignored on the street. Given the background information they bring to the images, most students notice the iron cross for bravery pinned to one of the broken bodies, the crude letter device, which allows the jawless veteran to communicate, and the anti-Semitic flier next to the cripple on the street as the artist's denunciation of resurging nationalism in post-War Germany. Some also tend to interpret Dix's recurring depiction of mangled bodies as evidence his own mental anguish as a veteran and able-bodied survivor, while others might make comparisons to the situation of veterans in their own communities.

This section has provided examples of how visual analysis might help learners develop more nuanced thinking about visible and invisible disabilities. By interpreting representations of diversity through art and investigating an artist's possible intention, students may also be better prepared to engage with notions of difference in folklore, literary texts, and even film. As they apply similar types of questions to different works of art, they not only engage in all three modes of communication, but might also demonstrate that they comprehend, interpret, and analyze an image within its cultural context.

### **The role of images in L2 courses for professional purposes**

Conference sessions, textbooks, and university course catalogs show that language courses for specific purposes are increasingly part of college curricula and generally incorporate business with geographical and cultural content (Doyle, 2012). Since they typically appeal to a mix of majors from Business, Economics, Engineering, Public Health, and the Humanities, integrating art and other types of imagery helps support, as Anderson (2017) states, both conventional literacy skills and learners' abilities to access divergent concepts and information.

A first example for including art in a business-focused language course comes from Diaz (2016), whose Spanish program also incorporates art from the elementary level on. While her instructional setting allows her students to physically visit a museum, a virtual art gallery can stand-in as students research how museums make decisions as to which types of art are displayed, how art is acquired, and how it is

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marketed. She provides students with several skit scenarios ranging from discussions in an artist's studio with art critics, agents, a gallery owner, to an opening reception or art auction at a gallery with the artist, a wealthy art collector, and an overseas investor to an art museum, where employees discuss marketing strategies for newly acquired art and how to tie it to the museum's mission.

In a second advanced language course that focuses on sustainable food production, among other topics, students begin by analyzing and comparing several labels and logos for food products from German-speaking countries and the US. They discuss what the logos and colors try to communicate to the consumer about the products. Then the class works with two specific logos (here: Wyman's blueberries and Sun Maid raisins), some statistical information on blueberry and raisin production in Maine and California, and a photograph of a migrant worker village. They relate all of the information to the lithograph *Sun Mad* (Hernández, 1998) which unmasks the dangers agro-industry poses to migrant laborers' health, and further compare it to the painting *Asparagus Picker* (Soto Murphy, n.d.), which reveals the worker as faceless parts of the landscape [see Appendix C].

Adding an arts dimension to the discussion of food production and sustainability results in more thoughtful subsequent engagement with media reports on migrant labor in Switzerland's and the EU's agro-industry. Students are more prepared to analyze both positive and negative bias in reports and user comments in the current debate on recruiting migrant workers versus employing registered refugees (Deter, 2015; Sommerkamp, 2016). The final debate on sustainable food production, migrant labor, and corporate social responsibility is much richer and nuanced as a result.

### *Art and poetry*

As outlined earlier, visual analyses of the *Kindertransport* [children's transport] sculpture preceding engagement with literary texts about the Holocaust and Exile can contribute to students' deeper understanding of both the texts and art. At the intermediate-low proficiency level and higher, this pairing of image with text provides learners with multiple opportunities for interpersonal, interpretive and presentational communication practice. Since poetry, like art, employs imagery and symbolism, using both simultaneously further help students develop both their visual and textual interpretation skills.

In one activity, students read the poem "*Sachliche Romanze*" [Objective Romance] (Kästner, 1929) about a couple that breaks up in a café after an eight-year relationship. With a partner, they receive three images of couples in cafés and decide which one best illustrates the poem. Learners not only justify their choice through quotes from the poem, but since the poem is also one of the most famous examples of the German artistic movement referred to as *Neue Sachlichkeit* [New Objectivity], they also have to take the images' style into consideration.

A second image-based activity helps students better understand Petrarchist love poems, in which a beloved's body parts are likened to plants, fruits, minerals, and gemstones. Given the subject matter, this activity is better suited for college-level language students, who, before reading a sonnet by Hoffmannswaldau (1670/2012), analyze a painting of Hapsburg emperor Rudolf II as the god of seasons by Giuseppe

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Arcimboldo (1590). On their cell phones, they look up what the specific vegetables, fruits, and flowers the painter uses as body parts could mean and develop a hypothesis. As they then analyze the poem they might understand that the listing of delectable body parts suggests male consumption of the female body and explain how the choice of food, plants, or minerals also exemplifies the beloved's character. When students then read Ziegler's (1739/1994) poetic refusal to describe her appearance, listing only qualities of mind, they are more likely to understand her female protest against her male contemporaries' work.

The students' final assignment requires them to create their own allegorical food portraits referencing food items they feel best symbolize their identities. They either draw the portrait or arrange food in shape of an image, take a photo on their cell phones, and pass it on to a classmate who is tasked with interpreting the image. Students have a choice of writing a characterization, adapting the poem they have read to fit the image, or creating an original poem about the type of person they think their partner is. The resulting conversations about the images and interpretations tend to be lively and nuanced.

### **Conclusion**

Adding art-based dimensions to all kinds of activities at various proficiency and instructional levels allows students to develop substantial visual interpretation abilities in their L2. As students analyze, locate, and create images, some learners find it easier to understand textual information, whereas others become less apprehensive when they analyze a painting, photograph, or film. Warm-up activities based on art may also help lower learners' anxiety before they interpret paintings or complex texts. Asking students to describe a painting and apply the basics of color theory can move even novice learners toward more complex language use. They are more likely to understand how images convey bias and influence textual interpretation. As they create their own thoughtful combinations of text and images through digital narratives, slide presentations, and posters, learners think more deeply about the nature of visual communication. Finally, the principled inclusion of art also allows students to understand that visual representations deeply influence the construction of societal values. In other words, the students might better understand how the L2 cultural products reflect specific perspectives, values, beliefs, and influence cultural practices. Since the analytic skills acquired in an image-rich L2 curriculum transfer to the students' L1, the abilities they develop are essential for navigating world awash in authentic and modified visual information.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Gruppe [group] 1:

*Was ist passiert? Bitte erklären Sie, warum Rotkäppchen gesucht wird. Was hat sie getan? Schreiben Sie kurze Pressenotiz und erklären Sie!* [What happened? Please explain, why Little Red Riding Hood is wanted by the police. What did she do? Write a short news report an explain!]

*MÖRDERIN GESUCHT!* [Murderess wanted!]



€200,000 BELOHNUNG! [reward] INFORMATION: 089-64 45 99 EMAIL: [Polizei@waldhausen.de](mailto:Polizei@waldhausen.de)

#### Gruppe 2:

*Was ist passiert? Bitte erklären Sie, warum Rotkäppchen gesucht wird. Was hat sie getan? Schreiben Sie kurze Pressenotiz und erklären Sie!*

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### MÖRDERIN GESUCHT!



€200,000 BELOHNUNG! INFORMATION: 089-64 45 99 EMAIL: [Polizei@waldhausen.de](mailto:Polizei@waldhausen.de)

## Appendix B

### A. Analyse einer Skulpturengruppe [analysis of a group sculpture]

#### 1. Finden Sie Kommilitonen aus Gruppe A und beantworten Sie die Fragen zusammen [Find classmates from group A and answer the questions together]:

a. Hier ist ein kleiner Ausschnitt einer Skulpturengruppe: Was für eine Person ist das? / Wohin sieht sie? / Was fühlt sie? [Here is a small section of a group sculpture: what kind of a person is it? /What is s/he looking at? /What does s/he feel?]



b. Hier ist ein größerer Ausschnitt - Achten Sie auf die Körpersprache: Wo sind die Personen? / Wohin gehen sie? / Wie fühlen sie sich? Warum? [Here is a larger section—observe the body language: Where are the people?/ Where are they going? / How do they feel? Why?]



c. Beschreiben Sie die ganze Skulpturengruppe: Wo ist die Skulptur vielleicht?/ Wer soll sie sehen?/ Wer sind die Personen?/ Wohin gehen beide Gruppen?/ Woran erinnert das Monument vielleicht (warum)? [Describe the entire group sculpture: Where could it be? / Who should see it? / Who are the people in the sculpture? / What could this monument memorialize (why)?]



2. Jetzt sprechen Sie mit einem Mitglied von Gruppe B [Now speak to a member of group B]

Vergleichen Sie die Bilder und finden Sie einen Titel für die Skulptur. [Compare your images with hers/his and find a title for the sculpture.]

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**3. Hausaufgabe:** Recherchieren Sie “Kindertransporte aus Nazi Deutschland” —schreiben Sie einen kurzen Aufsatz und bereiten Sie ein kurzes Referat vor. [Homework: Research “childrens’ transports from Nazi Germany”—write a short essay and prepare a brief oral presentation.]

## Appendix C

**1. Vergleichen Sie die Logos für Blaubeeren und Rosinen mit den statistischen Informationen.** [Compare the logos for blueberries and raisins with the statistical information.]

- (a) 2015 wurden in Maine 101 Millionen Pfund Blaubeeren geerntet. Der Staat hatte 62 Millionen Dollar Einkommen und

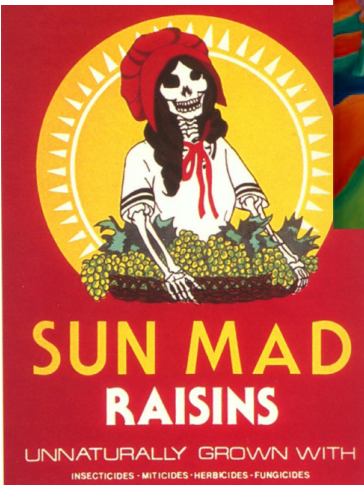


10,062 Erntehelfer, vor allem aus Mexiko, Guatemala und der Karibik. Ganze Familien leben während der Erntezeit in Hütten, die weder fließendes Wasser noch Heizung haben, dafür aber einen zentral gelegenen Wasch- und Kochraum. [In 2015, 101 million pounds of blueberries were harvested in Maine. The state made 62 million dollars and employed 10.062 agricultural workers, mainly from Mexico, Guatemala and the Caribbean. Whole families live in cabins without running water or heat during harvesting season, but they have access to centrally located cooking areas and group bathrooms.]

- (b) Fast alle Rosinen in den USA werden in Amerika produziert. Amerikaner konsumieren bis zu 2 Pfund Rosinen pro Kopf. Pro Jahr werden ca. 484,000 Tonnen von ca. 3,500 Farmen produziert. [The majority of raisins available in the U.S. are locally produced. Americans consume up to two pounds of raisins per person. Every year approximately 484,000 tons are produced on about 3.500 farms.]
2. Was sollen die Logos über die Produkte (=Blaubeeren/Rosinen) aussagen und wie passen sie mit den Produkten (nicht) zusammen? [What do the logos intend to convey about the products (=blueberries/raisins) and what do they (not) convey?]

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3. Sehen Sie das Foto von der Unterkunft für Blaubeerpfücker an und vergleichen Sie die Lebensbedingungen der Erntehelfer in dem Dorf mit der Lithographie Sun Mad von Ester Hernández und dem Gemälde von Consuela Soto Murphy Asparagus picker (Spargelpflücker). Wie stehen die Lebensbedingungen der Arbeiter im Kontrast zu dem Image, das die Firma über ihr Logo kommunizieren möchte? [Look at the foto of the migrant workers' cabins and compare the living circumstances to Ester Hernández' lithography "Sun Mad" and the painting "Asparagus picker" by Consuela Soto Murphy. How do art and the workers' cabins contrast with the companys' logos?]





# Reviews

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*Edited by Thomas S. Conner, St. Norbert College*

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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.

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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
- 

## Arabic

**Brosh, Hezi.** *Salamaat! Learning Arabic with Ease.* North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-8048-5015-5. Pp. 400. \$29.99.

The number of Arabic textbooks on the market has grown rapidly in the past five years, such that instructors and students now have a variety of choices they previously did not. The question, then, upon the publication of a new textbook is what distinguishes it from others available on the market. *Salamaat!*, a new text from Tuttle Publishing, is a fully functional textbook with familiar methods at a reasonable price. However, it is necessary to distinguish the actual format of the book from the claims made in its advertising.

At \$29.99, *Salamaat!* is less expensive than nearly all other Arabic textbooks available. It also includes all its audio material on CDs or in .mp3 files from the companion website for free—a feature most textbooks now offer, except for the ridiculous system of fees and licenses for Georgetown's *al-Kitaab* content. Its nine units purport to cover the first year of college Arabic, which it calls an “upstart language,” from the sounds and letters to basic topics like family, introduction, holidays and religion. Thus, a separate book for the Arabic alphabet is not required. The units do not have clearly identified themes, although general topics can be identified in each. Each unit consists of three or more dialogues (written and recorded on the CD), fill-in-the-blank and multiple-choice questions, grammar notes in boxes (some with exercises) and cultural points, also in boxes. The first four units also present the Arabic letters, and these have listening exercises on CD and writing practice on blank lines in the book.

As the title suggests, a major claim of the text is that it makes learning Arabic easy. Other than emphasizing at various points “Arabic is an easy language to study!” it is not clear how it is any easier using this text than others like it. Compared to how much Spanish or French a native speaker of English might acquire from a textbook of similar length, this

claim is questionable. The text makes several references to a distinct “teaching method,” but this method is never clearly explained. The introductory section for instructors is quite short (two pages) and only has general hints (“plan an intensive summer course in an Arabic-speaking country” and “plan a weekly quiz”). The Teacher’s Guide in Wafa Hassan’s *Arabic 1 and 2* texts is 274 pages long, by contrast. The only difference seems to be that this method involves learning the alphabet first. If so, that method is used by all serious books on the market today. The use of a dialogue-structured presentation is not new and has been superseded by task-based proficiency exercises. The introduction says that the book was written “to answer the need for a systematic textbook in Modern Standard Arabic,” but again no real detail on how the method differs from other books available is offered. Arguably, *Ahlan wa Sahlan, Arabic for Life* or the aforementioned *Arabic 1 and 2* are more systematic in that they are more clearly thematically structured.

With these caveats in mind, *Salamaat!* does offer a good deal of material, especially for an individual learner. The dialogues are very useful, and the audio versions recorded in clear Modern Standard Arabic *without* the case endings that make a text like *Ahlan wa Sahlan* hard to understand. The book focuses on Modern Standard Arabic without infusing Colloquial Arabic or formal Classical Arabic, which would be confusing to learners without close teacher supervision. Some of the grammar boxes explain difficult concepts clearly, but without much practice to integrate these points in a systematic way. Some of the cultural notes are quite helpful as well, although some are quite brief. The entry on “Muslim and Christian Arabs” is only four sentences long, with “There are in fact many Christian Arabs” being typical of the level of detail.

Despite the claim of teaching the alphabet first, the presentation of the Arabic letters and sounds here is spread over the first four lessons, rather than concentrated into its own section at the beginning, as in the most popular textbooks, like *Alif Baa*, *Ahlan wa Sahlan* and others. Thus, this text, like some others, presents dialogues completely in Arabic script without transliteration before the students have learned the letters in them. If this is a deliberate approach, it is not explained, and not likely to be beneficial to learners. A particularly good feature, on the other hand, is Dr. Brosh’s division of the writing spaces into 11 height differentials, thus allowing students to write letters more precisely than in other books that use two or three. The explanation of Arabic sounds is difficult in any text without direct contact between student and teacher. Written descriptions will always be approximate. Nonetheless, some in this book will strike Arabic speakers as strange and may be confusing. The letter *Alif*, typically referred to as a long vowel, is described here as “silent.” Later on, Dr. Brosh’s explanation of *alif* as a “lengthener” clarifies what he means, but this is still likely to confuse students, particular when they encounter unvoiced texts, as most are. Similarly, the description of short vowel sounds—*fatha* equating to the “a” in fat, *dhamma* as the “u” in blu—correspond more to long vowel sounds (although these are called “short vowels” in English, that designation is not based on the length of time the sound is held, as in Arabic). Sounds are much better explained on a video file and several popular videos on *Youtube* teach these.

Lastly, even though this is a first edition and some errors are expected, this book has a surprising number of typographical and editing errors. The introductory quote to the learner, for example, is in jumbled Arabic script, a larger problem as the text is expecting

students to absorb Arabic script before being formally introduced to it. Tuttle Publishing's mission is to "bring people together one P. at a time," a reference I did not understand.

Despite its shortcomings, *Salamaat!* is worth considering for individual learners, particularly for its affordability. It will provide an introduction to the Arabic language without the more expensive investment in the *al-Kitaab* or *Ahlan wa Sahlan* series. The claims of ease of learning, however, are not any more true for this book than for any other similar textbook.

David F. DiMeo  
Associate Professor of Arabic  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

**Familiar, Laila and Tanit Assaf, editors.** *Saud al-Sanousi's Saaq al-Bambuu: The Authorized Abridged Edition for Students of Arabic. Including additional online resources.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2017. ISBN: 97816261653850. Pp. 366.

**Familiar, Laila, editor.** *Hoda Barakat's Sayyidi wa Habibi: The Authorized Abridged Edition for Students of Arabic. Including additional online resources.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2017. ISBN: 9781626160026. Pp. 128.

Laila Familiar's two student editions of Arabic novels by Hoda Barakat and Saud al-Sanousi will be welcome resources for teachers of Arabic literature. These texts are part of a small but growing body of accessible, significant and student-friendly versions of Arabic literary works in a field that desperately needs authentic literature. Until recently, teachers trying to offer meaningful Arabic literary works for advanced level students have had to choose from presenting anthologies of excerpts of questionable literary significance or using textbooks of stories written specifically for non-native students. These two titles in what I hope will be an expanding selection of novels adapted for student use provide complete literary works that can be used "off the shelf" in advanced undergraduate courses.

The editors have chosen well in selecting two novels that carry a great deal of literary significance. Hoda Barakat is a leading Lebanese author whose work has won numerous literary awards, including the prestigious Naguib Mahfouz Prize. This novel describes the social dislocation of the Lebanese Civil War which has long been one of the most consuming issues for Arab authors due to Lebanon's one-time status as a center for cultural and social tolerance and progress. The second novel, which won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction, recounts quite a different experience. Kuwaiti writer Saud Al-Sanousi tells the story of the son of a Kuwaiti man and Filipina servant. As the situation of non-citizen workers in Gulf countries is rarely acknowledged, al-Sanousi's novel touches very sensitive ground.

According to the editors, these books are designed for mid- to advanced-level students with at least two and a half years of Arabic. The editors have abridged the novels to half their original length and made a similar reduction in the amount of vocabulary. The abridged versions were then approved by the original authors, which is the unique feature of these texts. Purists of literature can debate whether an abridged version counts

as “having read” the actual novel, but for teachers aiming to build advanced proficiency and introduce literature and culture studies, these two titles certainly fill a need.

The books include a biography of the author, the abridged text of the novel and nearly 100 pages of exercises for the classroom as well as homework. *Saaq al-Bambu* also includes four articles on subjects related to the content of the novel for further use, as well as a dictionary of literary terms with some explanations. The website also has links to audio and video resources. All this provides teachers of Arabic literature with a robust set of resources with which to build lessons.

Although the exercises are presented after the whole text of the novel, they are organized by section so that they correspond to manageable chunks of the text. Exercises include “before reading” questions, which focus largely on cultural information that a reader needs to understand the text. For example, a section involving Ramadan has questions about the nature of Ramadan activities and traditions. These are followed by discussion questions intended to be used before or after the students have read the selection, asking them to describe their impressions of a character or to interpret one of their statements. Additional exercises call for cultural research or focus on certain stylistic points. All the activities are in Arabic.

While teachers can take as much as they desire from the texts to use in class, they are structured in such a way that the entire novel could be taught using the resources provided. The format also provides a model that teachers could use to present other works, since it gives good examples of how to build activities and structure exercises around a passage. Many teachers of Arabic do not have a background in literature, and teaching methods in the Arab world differ greatly from how literature is presented in the U.S. that even those who try may struggle to teach an Arabic literature class. These texts will provide very valuable resources. Accessible, classroom- friendly Arabic Literature texts have not been available in the past the way they are in more commonly taught languages. The books reviewed here mark a major advancement in the teaching of Arabic Literature.

The editors have done a remarkable job bringing major works of Modern Arabic literature to students in an accessible format and doing so with the approval of the original authors. Ideally, a wide range of Arabic literary works will become available in this format; in reality, however, the authors available and willing to participate will be limited. Hopefully, the quality of these books and the response they generate from students and teachers will encourage other contemporary authors to make their works available as well.

David F. DiMeo  
Assistant Professor of Arabic  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

### Chinese

Liu, Yuehua, Tao-Chung Yao, Nyan-Ping Bi, Liangyan Ge, and Yaohua Shi. *Integrated Chinese I & II. Textbooks and Workbooks*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Cheng & Tsui, 2017. ISBN: 978-1- 62291-135- 6.

*Integrated Chinese* is a Mandarin Chinese language program widely used both inside and outside the United States. The fourth edition of *Integrated Chinese I and II* was published in 2017, eight years after the third edition.

Like in previous editions there are 10 lessons in each volume. *Integrated Chinese I* contains: Lesson 1: Greetings; Lesson 2: Family; Lesson 3: Time and Date; Lesson 4: Hobbies; Lesson 5: Visiting Friends; Lesson 6: Making Appointments; Lesson 7: Studying Chinese; Lesson 8: School Life; Lesson 9: Shopping; Lesson 10: Transportation. *Integrated Chinese II* provides an additional ten lessons. Lesson 11: The Weather; Lesson 12: Dining; Lesson 13: Asking Directions; Lesson 14: A Birthday Party; Lesson 15: Seeing a Doctor; Lesson 16: Dating; Lesson 17: Renting an Apartment; Lesson 18: Sports; Lesson 19: Travel; Lesson 20: At the Airport. Each lesson still consists of two dialogues. What is different is that the fourth edition has added visually rich supplementary modules to each lesson. The following three modules are completely new: (1) *Get Real with Chinese*. (2) *Chinese Chat*. (3) *Characterize It*.

A closer examination reveals that *Get Real with Chinese* has been added to the Vocabulary section. It uses authentic language material to train students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills in each lesson. For example, a picture of a weather forecast in Harbin is shown in lesson 11. The prompt is written as follows: "You are in line to board your flight to Harbin, and you open up the weather app on your tablet. What are the chances of snow during your trip? Can you identify any other details from the forecast?" I might have written the prompt differently in order to assess students' analytical skills. For instance, I might have written something like this, "What kind of clothes should you wear in Harbin? Why?" However, the goal is the same—to make students analyze a real-life situation by reading authentic materials and then verbalize their critical thinking. It is truly invaluable to have this kind of language authenticity and to combine it with the technology that young people use.

*Chinese Chat* has been added to the Grammar section. It is a smart segment that reflects how we live in a digital world. It uses new communication technologies, such as texting and micro blogging, to provide students with realistic scenarios. For instance, in Lesson 11 a color picture of four people's WeChat texts is shown. The task is written as follows: "The IC cast is discussing plans to go ice-skating on WeChat. Which of the characters are planning to go?" Tasks like this will not only help students learn the Chinese language, but will also expose them to the use of WeChat—a Chinese multi-purpose messaging, social media and mobile payment app, which is described as one of the world's most powerful apps by Forbes, given its wide range of functions and platforms. Obviously, with over 1 billion monthly active users in 2018, this app features everyday high-frequency vocabulary in China. Thus, the learning of Chinese culture is contextualized and intertwined with language use.

*Characterize it* has also been added to Language Practice section. It is a very instrumental exercise for learning Chinese because it teaches character structures by introducing radicals and character formation patterns. Students can learn, expand, and apply their knowledge about radicals and word meanings in an analytical way instead of using rote memory. For example, in Lesson 11, two Chinese characters are given: 冷 and 冰. There are four questions: (1) What do the characters mean? (2) What is the common radical? (3) What does the radical mean? (4) How does the radical relate to

the overall meaning of the characters? As we can see, these questions will assess learners' knowledge of the characters, attention to details, and their analytical skills. If students are interested in additional activities, they might download and use one of three Chengtsui Web Apps to explore further.

The fourth edition also revamped the segment titled "How About You." It is placed in the Vocabulary section to encourage students to personalize their learning. Questions now appear in both Chinese and English. Visual cues correspond to possible answers. Vocabulary items corresponding to the visual cues are listed in a separate index. This is such a great way to promote vocabulary expansion and retention.

In addition, the Culture Highlights section in previous editions has been changed into a section called Culture Literacy, and it includes a new portion titled "Compare and Contrast." Out of all the sections in this new edition, this section is my favorite. The colorful, culturally rich pictures, the informative key knowledge and points emphasized by various fonts with distinct sizes and colors and the visually appealing format of the pages give students with viewing pleasure. Secondly, additional cultural content related to the lesson themes can be found on the ChengTsui Web App.

It is worth mentioning that the Grammar section has also been revised. It now includes exercises tailored to each grammatical point covered. In this way, teachers and students can immediately assess learning effectiveness. Students can also access the ChengTsui Web App if they want to do additional practice exercises on any one of these grammar points.

Another positive change about the fourth edition is that the introduction section in each of the lessons in the previous editions has been completely redesigned. Now known as the Basics, it provides more pedagogical and cultural information. For example, in the very first lesson in *Integrated Chinese I*, the fundamentals for learning Chinese are provided in the Basics section. It begins with learning objectives, followed by a briefing on the differences between Mandarin and Dialects, and a very organized subsection offering a detailed explanation of Chinese syllabic structure, pinyin, and pronunciation accompanied by various exercises. After that, the Chinese writing system is introduced, which includes the formation of characters, basic radicals, basic character structures, and basic strokes. Finally, important grammar features are introduced. At the end of the Basics section, there is a list of useful expressions. It can be handy for any students trying to survive in an immersive Chinese language environment.

Last but not least, there is a new section in each lesson titled "Lesson Wrap-up." It has been thoughtfully designed and includes context-based tasks that typically prepare learners to communicate with native Chinese speakers in real life. The *Make it Flow* exercises in this section aim at helping students develop and apply effective strategies to organize information in a coherent and cohesive manner when producing Chinese language, namely, speaking or writing Chinese. As a result, novice and intermediate students might be able to avoid the common pitfall of producing isolated sentences and to increase their competence in rendering Chinese at a discourse level. The Can-Do Checklist is one of my favorite additions in the fourth edition. Students can use it to evaluate their learning effectiveness and measure their progress at the end of each lesson. It serves as an assessment tool, and self-assessment can be a powerful way to raise students' awareness and increase their intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy.

Similar to the third edition, the fourth edition of Integrated Chinese uses both traditional Chinese characters typically used in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau, as well as simplified Chinese characters used in mainland China. In the Volume 3 and 4 textbooks and workbooks, a combination of traditional Chinese characters and simplified Chinese characters is adopted.

Perhaps the most exciting change to this fourth edition for today's learners is the incorporation of innovative educational technology. Learners have the option to choose a print edition, which offers access to streaming audio (at [chengtsui.co](http://chengtsui.co)), or to subscribe to the Basic Edition or Essential Edition of the ChengTsui Web App. The difference between the Essential Edition and the Basic Edition is that the former offers access to the Workbook with Auto-grading and the Character Workbook as a download in addition to offering access to the following: audio for textbook and workbook, video of the lesson texts, vocabulary flashcards, additional grammar exercises, additional Chinese character practice, and additional cultural content. It is very helpful that the ChengTsui Web App also offers an Educator Edition in addition to the Student Editions.

The *Integrated Chinese series* come with a workbook companion. Again, just like in the textbooks, several pedagogical methodologies have been used to conceive the exercises and tasks. Each lesson starts with a page that requires students to check off the items as they cover them. The items listed include not only useful expressions but also cultural practices. In addition, there is a three-line space for students to write down what other useful expressions and cultural norms they would like to learn. This approach really personalizes students' learning as they progress through the lesson, which in turn, will enhance increase students' motivation. Various authentic materials are used to help students practice and enhance their real-life language competence. Rich visuals, such as illustration-based exercises, are used to prompt students to answer questions directly in Chinese without going through the process of translation.

When taking a closer look at Workbooks I and II, one will notice that each lesson is divided into two parts corresponding to the textbook lessons. There are five sections for each part of a lesson, namely, listening comprehension, pinyin and tone, speaking, reading comprehension, and writing and grammar.

The listening comprehension section includes two groups of listening exercises. The first group is based on the scenarios in the lesson, while the second group is based on audio recordings of two or more short dialogues or narratives. By doing these exercises, students will be able to reinforce what they have learned in the textbook. For example, in Lesson 20 in Workbook II, the first group of listening exercises include the following: A) Listen to the textbook dialogue 1 audio, then circle the most appropriate choice. B) Listen to the workbook narrative audio, then mark these statements "true" or "false." C) Listen to the audio. After hearing the first speaker, select the best response from four choices given by the second speaker.

The Pinyin and Tone section is an invaluable new addition. It consists of exercises that require students to identify characters with the same initials or finals and to differentiate the tones of characters that sound similarly. For example, in Lesson 20, the two exercises are presented in this way: (A) Identify the characters with the same initials (either "x" or "zh") and write them in pinyin. The characters given are: 行, 照, 重, 折, and 籍; (B) Compare the tones of these characters. Indicate the tones with 1 (first tone), 2 (second

tone), 3 (third tone), 4 (fourth tone), or 0 (neutral tone). There are four pairs of words. As Chinese is a tonal language, getting the tones right in speaking is extremely important for getting a clear message across when speaking. This section really help student assess their attention to detail and reinforce pronunciations and tones of Chinese characters.

The Speaking section is aimed at helping students use the new vocabulary and grammar learned in the lesson to have meaningful communications. For instance, in Lesson 20, the three exercises in the Speaking section are: (A) Answer the questions in Chinese based on Textbook Dialogue 1; (B) In Chinese, what do people usually say when they see friends off? (C) In pairs or groups, role-play seeing friend(s) off at a local airport. Make small talk right before the departure of your friend(s). The scaffolding helps students move from producing sentence level Chinese to paragraph level Chinese in a more systematic way. As a result, students' learning can be enhanced more effectively.

The Reading Comprehension section comprises exercises requesting students to match terms to given pictures, to answer specific questions, including true or false questions and multiple-choice questions based on readings assigned.

The Writing and Grammar section has a newly added exercise focusing on writing characters by analyzing the structure of a word's various components. In this section, students can reinforce their grammar and usage through brief exchanges, answer questions using specific grammatical forms, or complete sample sentences. Writing practice is designed to personalize students' production of mandarin Chinese and based on the speaking component of each lesson.

In short, the fourth edition of *Integrated Chinese I and II* textbooks and workbooks is a visually pleasant and content-rich, magazine-like Chinese textbook series suitable for novice and intermediate level Chinese students. It not only introduces interesting topics and authentic language, but also incorporates most of the "cool" technologies that we currently use on a daily basis in our own lives. The contemporary layout and thoughtful instructional design of these textbooks will help students enjoy learning Mandarin Chinese.

Judy Zhu

Associate Professor of Chinese

Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center

Monterey, CA

### **Publisher's Response**

Cheng & Tsui would like to thank Professor Zhu for her thoughtful review of *Integrated Chinese*. We are grateful that she highlighted so many of the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition's outstanding new features, and we would like to offer the following comments.

Since its initial publication in 1997, *Integrated Chinese* (IC) has become the leading Chinese textbook series in North American classrooms and around the globe. Though we have replaced the Level/Part terminology of the previous editions with the simpler Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4, long-time users of IC will find the series' scope and sequence largely unchanged.

As Professor Zhu correctly notes, one of the most substantial changes in the new edition is the inclusion of new supplementary modules, which are intended to boost



student engagement, spark student reflection, and provide additional language practice. We would also like to point out that the core content, too, has been updated to meet the latest ACTFL standards, and to reflect the changes that have taken place in China and the world since the publication of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, especially the diffusion of communication technology.

We are delighted by Professor Zhu's acknowledgment of our efforts to enhance traditional teaching methods with innovative educational technology. We especially appreciate Professor Zhu's excellent explanation of how the ChengTsui Web App™ brings the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of IC to life with interactive versions of the textbook and workbook, but it is worth emphasizing that the Web App is not just for students. Users of the Educator Version can assign exercises from the auto-graded workbook to their students and view automatically generated score reports, saving time and hassle. In addition, educators can access contextualized teaching tips and robust support materials like customizable assessments and sample lesson plans. One small clarification: while users of the print books do not currently have access to streaming audio, they do have access to free audio downloads that accompany the textbooks and workbooks via our website.

As of July 2018, all of the components in the new four-volume series are now available, including the textbooks, workbooks, character workbooks, complimentary audio downloads, e-teacher's resources, and Web App subscriptions. We encourage all interested educators to visit our website to view our 4<sup>th</sup> Edition sampler, request print copies for examination, or sign up for a free trial of *Integrated Chinese* on the ChengTsui Web App.

Liz Hanlon  
Marketing & Communications Assistant  
Cheng & Tsui

### **French**

**Amon, Evelyne, Judith Muyskens, and Alice C. Omaggio Hadley. *Vis-à-vis*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2019. ISBN: 978-0-07-328945-8. Includes: Instructor's Annotated Edition, Workbook/Laboratory Manual, Instructor's Manual, Testing Program, and Connect Online Access.**

Since the publication of the first edition of *Vis-à-vis* many years ago, this successful textbook has gone through many revisions and improvements to keep up to date with evolving language teaching methodologies and changing interests. In the seventh edition, many new ancillaries have been added, cultural information has been updated and online activities have been rethought to reflect the most recent technologies.

The *Vis-à-vis* program immerses students in a rich learning environment which combines language, grammar and culture. The acquisition of cultural competence is one of its most important aspects. Throughout, students are given many opportunities to explore the rich cultural context of the Francophone world. Each unit focuses on a French or Francophone region or city, such as Québec, New Orleans, Montreal, Paris, Giverny, French villages, Provence, Versailles and Mont Saint Michel or well-known characters, such as Samuel de Champlain, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, René Magritte, and others.

Some of the distinguishing features which have contributed to the textbook's success are:

- The format of new vocabulary presentation allows students to listen, record and practice words and expressions both inside and outside class.
- The interactive format of vocabulary and grammar activities, many of which are auto-graded, gives students instant feedback on their performance.
- Pronunciation activities which include a recording feature, sound discrimination and ample practice.
- Recordings of mini-dialogues blog characters exposes students to new grammatical structures in context in a clear and easy to follow fashion.
- Interactive grammar tutorials accompanied by a grammar quiz provide students with a clear explanation of grammatical concepts of varying difficulty.
- LearnSmart modules for vocabulary and grammar, an adaptive tool which identifies student weaknesses and presents an individualized study program based on the results.

Many additional features enhance the quality of this program. Personal online journal entries in “*Le blog de...*” supplemented by the “*Reportage*” and “*Bienvenue*” reading passages include a wide range of topics from fashion, food, internships, leisure activities, to multicultural France. “*Le videoblog de...*” further exposes students to authentic language spoken in different French-speaking countries: France, Tahiti, Martinique, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Belgium, and others. Students are encouraged to make comparisons between these cultures and their own culture. The “*Reportage*,” featured in previous editions of the book, have been expanded to include “*Micro-trottoir*,” a series of spontaneous, unrehearsed conversations and interviews conducted with a diverse group of native speakers. The Connect teaching and learning platform, developed and perfected by McGraw Hill, gives students full access to activities, audio and videos resources and Learn Smart vocabulary and grammar modules.

The textbook is divided into sixteen chapters, which makes the program easy to adopt for a two- or three-semester sequence. Each chapter follows a similar structure and includes four distinct, color-coded sections. In the first section the authors use a wide variety of spoken and written activities to introduce new vocabulary. Sections Two and Three are devoted to grammatical structures, introduced and presented in context and accompanied by multiple practice exercises. Section Four, “*Perspectives*,” introduces pronunciation, culture and written activities. Each chapter ends with a videoblog which integrates and synthesizes the material presented. From Chapter One, students are methodically guided through the strategies that facilitate comprehension of a written text. Pre-reading activities include recognizing cognates, predicting the content using the context, brainstorming topics based on a title and anticipating content by activating background knowledge, identifying referents for pronouns, scanning and skimming techniques, using visuals, photos, graphs, diagrams to anticipate the major themes of the text, express cause and effect, or qualify an observation or inferring an author's point of view. All these techniques will allow students to read and understand literary texts included in the textbook, such as excerpts from *Le Réclusion solitaire* de Tahar Ben Jelloun or poems “*Le chat abandonné*” by Paul Degray and “*Déjeuner du matin*” by Jacques Prévert. In order to improve student writing proficiency, two types of written

activities are included in the Workbook to guide students through re-using the lexical and grammatical content of the chapter. The “Journal intime” allows for free form of expression of students’ own experience and “*Par écrit*” emphasizes process writing.

Before learning basic expressions and structures in Chapter One, students can read bios and see pictures of the four Parisians who created blogs, Léa, Hussan, Juliette and Hector. Other native speakers who offer their commentaries on the blogs include Alexis Lafontaine, Trésor, Mamadou Bassène, Charlotte Cousin and Poéma Dauphin. The introductory pages also include short descriptions of eight French-speaking countries and a description of Paris.

The seventh edition of the textbook includes a number of new components. Scope and sequence changes have been made to vocabulary in Chapters Seven through Nine. Grammar presentations in Chapters Nine and Ten have been revised. An introduction to the *imparfait* tense was moved from Chapter Ten to Chapter Nine. Several new “*Reportage*” readings have been added in various chapters. Brand-new components “*Micro-trottoir*” and “*Sondage*” have been added to facilitate pair work, look at statistics about French life, make comparisons and draw conclusions. In each chapter students will also find “*Le parler jeune*,” lists of slang expressions such as “*kiffer*,” “*avoir la dalle*,” “*le troquet*,” “*un casse-dalle*,” “*ça baigne*,” “*une besta*,” “*un mec*,” “*à plus*,” and many others. At the end of the textbook, the authors have included a glossary of grammatical terms, verb charts, perfect tenses, a section on the *passé simple* tense, pronouns and a French-English dictionary. For instructors, the program offers audio- and video scripts, the Connect user guide, digital transparencies, the instructor’s manual, a testing program and writing prompts. The textbook and the accompanying workbook and lab manual are available in both printed and electronic forms.

*Vis-à-vis* is an innovative and flexible program which will help students develop communicative skills and cultural competence. The authors have done a very good job responding to feedback from comments submitted by many reviewers for secondary and postsecondary institutions. As a result, the seventh edition of an already very solid language program will undoubtedly continue to motivate and inspire beginning French students by providing a unique and compelling learning experience.

Andrzej Dziejdzic  
Professor of French  
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh  
Oshkosh, Wisconsin

### **Publisher’s Response**

McGraw-Hill is delighted to have the opportunity to respond to Andrzej Dziejdzic’s review of the seventh edition of *Vis-a-vis*.

In his review, Professor Dziejdzic begins by pointing out that *Vis-à-vis* has been continually updated in each new edition to keep up with the latest teaching methodologies as well as the latest technology. He describes the program as a “rich learning environment which combines language, grammar, and culture,” noting that “the acquisition of cultural competence is one of its most important aspects.” He provides a list of distinguishing characteristics of *Vis-à-vis*, most of which are digital features such as Connect (a teaching and learning platform), LearnSmart (an adaptive learning tool), and interactive French

grammar tutorials. He also touches on the unique “*Le blog de...*” culture section at the center of each chapter, which now features new “*Micro-trottoir*” person-on-the-street videos that show spontaneous answers to questions related to the chapter theme.

Professor Dzjedzic provides a comprehensive summary of the chapter elements, which will be useful to anyone considering *Vis-à-vis* for adoption. He says that with sixteen chapters, *Vis-à-vis* would be easy to implement for two or three semesters, and the consistent, easy-to-follow chapter structure makes it user-friendly. Professor Dzjedzic goes on to highlight some of the new and revised elements of the new edition, such as targeted changes to the scope and sequence of grammar, new readings, and the new “*Micro-trottoir*” and “*Sondage*” features. He also lists the helpful resources available to instructors.

Professor Dzjedzic ends his review by calling the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of *Vis-à-vis* an “innovative and flexible program...that will motivate and inspire.”

McGraw-Hill World Languages is committed to publishing high quality print and digital content for World Languages, and we are proud to include *Vis-a-vis* among our many successful programs. We again thank Professor Dzjedzic for sharing his review of *Vis-a-vis* with the readership of the *NECTFL Review*.

Katie Crouch  
Senior Portfolio Manager, World Languages  
McGraw-Hill

**Arganbright, Brian.** *Le Creuset des savoirs: Cours de rhétorique et de composition*. Lexington, KY: Seven Cities Publishing, 2017. ISBN-10: 0-692-86356-7. ISBN-13: 978-0-692-86356-5. \$47.50. Pp. i-vii; 428. For ordering information and to view sample pages: <https://www.sevencitiespublishing.com/view-sample-pages/>

Comprised of six chapters (each made up of five units) and an *atelier d'écriture* after every two chapters, *Le Creuset des savoirs: Cours de rhétorique et de composition* is an abundantly rich text at a very student-friendly price of \$47.50. Geared for a fourth- or fifth-semester French college/university course, it will also serve the AP French Language and Culture high school community well. Each chapter focuses on a theme (*Le Mythe de Tantale*; *Le Fil d'Ariane*; *En Symbiose*; *Puce à l'oreille*; *Ni vu ni connu*; and, *Sans trêve, sans relâche*), providing ample literary examples (e.g., Simone de Beauvoir's *Cahiers de jeunesse* for *Le Mythe de Tantale* and Boris Cyrulnik's *L'Autobiographie d'un épouvantail* for *Ni vu ni connu*) to inspire and motivate students. The structure of each chapter is *Unité 1* “*Lecture*,” *Unité 2* “*Stylistique*,” *Unité 3* “*Lecture*,” *Unité 4* “*Stylistique*,” and, *Unité 5* “*Cours de synthèse*.” Each unit within each chapter is accompanied by well-crafted in-class activities. Students will find the readings meaningful as they will be able to connect readings and activities to their lives or communities. Particularly relevant, especially given the current emphasis on service learning and volunteerism prevalent among today's students, the readings' corresponding activities are structured to foster a sense of social responsibility and civic engagement. For example, in chapter four, *Puce à l'oreille*, students are asked to work on a community engagement project where they identify a concern in their community and then conceive of a project that raises awareness and/or proposes a solution (237). In chapter six, *Sans trêve, sans relâche*, students are directed to reflect on the role of the humanities in a college/university education while

articulating a defense of the study of literature in forming global citizens: “Formez des comités d'étudiants qui ont pour tâche de proposer la revalorisation de l'étude de la littérature classique et moderne” (377).

The three *ateliers d'écriture* (*Dissertation* for *Chapitre 1, Le Mythe de Tantale* and *Chapitre 2, Le fil d'Ariane*; *Essai* for *Chapitre 3, En Symbiose* and *Chapitre 4, Puce à l'oreille*; and, *Récit* for *Chapitre 5, Ni vu ni connu* and *Chapitre 6, Sans trêve, sans relâche*) guide the student through three drafting stages, leading to the *étape de rédaction*. Within the drafting stages, the communicative activities encourage critical and analytical thinking, providing students with opportunities to work on task-based or problem-solving skills in class in a low-tech environment (print textbook in which students are strongly encouraged to write their thoughts, ideas, questions, etc.) where distractions are reduced to a minimum, and thoughtful face-to-face exchanges among students are enhanced. For example, students first formulate arguments with writing prompts: “*Qu'est-ce qui est à l'origine de la situation énoncée dans votre thèse? Quelles sont les conséquences de cette situation? Sur quelles valeurs ou sur quels principes reposent votre critique de la situation? Présentez un point de vue opposé?*” (259). In class, students share, compare and discuss their work and then apply similar forms of reasoning to a new topic. The stated goal for this activity: “*perfectionner la force des arguments*” (265).

Technology is provided through the free companion website [frenchgram.org](http://frenchgram.org) which is geared towards online grammar practice and vocabulary building activities to be done outside of class. Students develop their argumentative skills through numerous paragraph building assignments as well as two guided, process-oriented writing workshop chapters. Creative writing skills emerge through numerous free-write activities and the third writing workshop chapter devoted to an *écriture d'invention*. Furthermore, instructors will enjoy the customizable lesson plans where they are able to choose activities suited to their individual teaching styles or their students' learning styles. Activities range from language- to content-based, from serious to lighthearted.

In conclusion, students will be able to express themselves with more sophistication in French and have a heightened awareness of social issues that affect communities throughout the French-speaking world. Most importantly, students with varying competencies in French are on more equal footing because of the in-class activities that allow students who have thoroughly done the preparation work for class to practice what they have learned in class. Therefore, it is not just students who have the highest levels of French who dominate class discussions. In theory, if all students do the preparation work for each class, they should all be well-prepared to participate in significant ways.

Eileen M. Angelini  
East Carolina University  
Greenville, NC

### **Publisher's response**

It is a pleasure to respond to Dr. Angelini's review of Brian Arganbright's *Le Creuset des savoirs: Cours de rhétorique et de composition*. The review highlights several features of the book, including the way it engages students in different contexts ranging from one-on-one conversation, task-based projects, to performance-based activities. The techniques used in this book, as your review so accurately emphasizes, make students

think, reason, write and speak with empathy and conviction. As Dr. Angelini makes clear, the book raises social awareness and promotes community engagement, allowing students to take agency and build problem-solving skills in French.

The review astutely portrays the shift from grammar explanation toward critical thinking in French. To achieve this, there are a number of guided activities that help students deepen their understanding of the readings while cultivating a heightened awareness of themselves and their place in the world. Process-oriented writing activities also help students articulate the rhetorical moves they make in their papers. As Dr. Angelini points out, grammar is still an integral part of the learning process, it just happens outside of class through interactive grammar review activities on the free companion website.

As strong advocates for the study of French, it is our hope that through this book, students will see the study of French as a way to become global citizens who embrace social responsibility and civic engagement.

Erika Johnson  
Seven Cities Publishing

**Graingier, Claudine, and Nadine O'Connor di Vito.** *Comme on dit: première année de français*. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2018. ISBN: 1-59334-836-6. Includes: **Textbook, Instructor's Manual, Website Access Card**).

This new first-year French program, appropriately entitled *Comme on dit* (“As people say”), aims at developing speaking skills necessary to communicate in the target language and make friends from the French-speaking world. The program’s primary goal is to immerse students in the study of authentic language following the principles of an inductive methodology. By listening, observing and formulating predictions about the meaning and usage of lexical and grammatical items, learners can achieve a high level of proficiency. The authors indicate in the preface that the inductive method they chose is entirely based on native speaker discourse. All the materials come from the rich inventory of more than 200 hours of interviews and dialogues they have gathered over the years. Consequently, students are exposed to unscripted and unedited language university age speakers from Francophone countries use while they talk about their everyday life and their cultural environment. Various text types, ranging from short titles, proverbs, advertisements, signs, and posters, to longer excerpts from literary works, have not been created or adapted for the textbook, but all come from authentic sources.

The main two components of *Comme on dit* are the textbook and two different websites. The textbook includes all in-class exercises, vocabulary, grammar, and a wide variety of writing assignments. The first companion website—available for purchase—is an integral part of the program and includes grammar, reading, listening comprehension and voice-recording homework assignments students can complete in class or at home. The second website, *CommeOnDit.com*, can be used freely without an access code. It features audio and video materials that correspond to the textbook’s vocabulary and pronunciation exercises. Instructors also have access to a separate teacher’s edition of the textbook with filled-in answers for all of the activities from the student edition and additional marginal notes, hints and tips how to present the material in the most effective way and when to assign the website activities. Sample exams, grammar review

sheets, suggestions for warm up activities and a multiple-choice placement test have been included as well.

The textbook is divided into thirty units. Students begin their language study by learning basic expressions such as how to introduce oneself, say hello and good bye, describe one's nationality and ethnic background, express possessions, and then continually progress toward more challenging topics such as professions, physical descriptions of people and objects, food and eating habits, sports, clothes, music and other artistic and creative activities. At the end of each unit, learners can synthesize the skills they acquired by completing writing assignments on different topics, such as *Qu'est-ce que tu aimes comme films? Qu'est-ce que tu as fait pendant les vacances?* Upon completing a full year of study, their mastery of vocabulary and grammar should be sufficient to be able to communicate effectively while traveling to France or other French-speaking countries.

The textbook's thirty units are self-contained which makes *Comme on dit* a highly flexible program. It can be easily adopted for a two- or three-semester sequence. Instructors will find the pedagogical materials easy to follow and use as they prepare their lesson plans.

One of the main features that distinguish this program from other similar programs is its workbook format. This specific format allows students to be fully engaged and involved in every aspect of the language learning process. Various exercises guide students in their discovery of grammatical structures and vocabulary included in short authentic recordings entitled "Comme on dit" and in related short reading passages. Another characteristic feature of this textbook is its presentation of vocabulary. Instead of introducing topics with vocabulary specifically created to fit these topics, the authors opted to expose students to authentic spoken and written samples first, and then encourage them to observe, analyze and imitate native speech in gradually increasing number of contexts. By applying this approach, students can naturally develop the ability to compare and contrast, make analogical associations and dissociations, form and test hypotheses, and ultimately analyze and synthesize.

*Comme on dit* also does a first-rate job promoting a systematic and methodical practice of pronunciation. Students are presented with multiple opportunities to discover the specificity of French sounds and repeat and practice various intonation patterns. Specific rules, which apply to the pronunciation of various types of consonants or help differentiate between oral and nasal vowels, are all clearly explained and reinforced by repetition and sound discrimination exercises.

Even though the main focus of *Comme on dit* is communicative proficiency, the program equally emphasizes all other major skill areas—reading, writing, listening, speaking, and the development of cultural competency. It promotes the integration of the language skills with a solid lexical, structural and cultural basis, which is paramount in achieving a high degree of fluency and proficiency.

This innovative program provides students with the tools and skills to help them express themselves correctly and fluently on topics relevant to their daily lives and have meaningful interactions and conversations in French with their peers. Instructors will have a wide variety of choices from over 1,000 audio and video files and 350 interactive activities, including both automatically graded and teacher-graded exercises. The ultimate goal is to help students attain a competency level equivalent to Intermediate-Mid to Intermediate-High on the ACTFL scale. Extensive vocabulary and grammar practice

combined with reading passages from many different sources will prove invaluable in achieving this desired level of proficiency.

Andrzej Dziedzic  
Professor of French  
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, WI

**Germaine Choe, author; Nathan Lutz, editor; Nancy Meyers, illustrator.** *Language Together French Set 1: 10 Books with Online Audio for kids.* First edition. ISBN: 978-09971240-4-0. Paperback - Box Set. Shenzhen, China: MaxiPro LTD, 2017.

Online components at <http://www.languagestogether.net/> include Audio Narration, Vocabulary Charts and Translations. Audio eBooks available separately on Apple iBooks.

See the review of **Germaine Choe, author; Carolina Gómez, editor; Nancy Meyers, illustrator.** *Language Together Spanish Set 1: 10 Books with Online Audio for kids.* First edition. Paperback - Box Set. ISBN: 978-0-9971240-1-9. Terre Haute, Indiana: Moore Langen/RR Donnelly, 2016 — page 102.

### German

**Blanco, José A.** *Mosaik 1. German Language and Culture.* Boston, Massachusetts: Vista Higher Learning, 2018. ISBN: (teacher's edition) 978-1-68005-073-8. *Mosaik 2. German Language and Culture.* Boston, Massachusetts: Vista Higher Learning, 2018. ISBN: (teacher's edition) 978-1-68005-114-8. *Mosaik 3. German Language and Culture.* Boston, Massachusetts: Vista Higher Learning, 2018. ISBN: (teacher's edition) 978-1-68005-155-1.

*Mosaik 1, 2, 3* is a German language and culture program featuring three leveled texts with digital support. *Mosaik 1* is intended for students in their first year of high school German. The organizational structure of the series offers a pacing guide for the traditional 50-minute class, as well as a pacing guide for a block schedule sequence. Each text in the series of three has four chapters, including two subchapters A and B, which could be structured as eight distinct learning modules. Each chapter contains a focus and is divided into five segments: *Kontext*, *Fotoroman*, *Kultur*, *Strukturen* and *Weiter Geht's*. The chapters are also themed. In *Mosaik 1*, the themes are: *Hallo! Wie geht's?; Wie geht's?; In der Schule, Schule und Studium; An der Universität, Sport und Freizeit, Familie und Freunde; Johanna Schmidts Familie, Wie sind sie, Essen; Lebensmittel and Im Restaurant*. In the first segment, *Kontext*, students are introduced to the theme and practice speaking and writing. The second, *Fotoroman*, provides video vignettes in a series about four friends: George, Meline, Hans and Sabite, who are studying in Berlin. The video vignettes are intended to be used as homework practice in interpretive listening, as a class activity or as review of learned material. Each is designed around the content of the unit. The third component of the sequence is *Kultur*. In these capsules, students can explore the theme, doing readings and exercises with true/false or cloze pattern samples. Students are encouraged to explore the topic further on the supersite or on the internet. After *Kultur*, students move on to the segment titled *Strukturen*, which explains, in English, the structural elements, grammar and functions of language for that theme and includes practice drills. Instructors are encouraged to expand these activities with



interpersonal activities. *Strukturen* is the longest of five segments in each subchapter, the last of which is *Weiter Geht's*. This segment begins with a topic in geography and readings on related themes. Students are also encouraged to do expansion activities on the supersite and on the internet. This precedes extension activities in reading, listening and writing. Each chapter ends with a translated (German–English) list of vocabulary organized in themes.

*Mosaik* boasts integrated content by offering streaming videos, downloadable MP3 audio, online practice with automatic feedback, video chat capabilities, personalized vocabulary study, audio-sync readings, and an online student activity manual. Further, *Mosaik* contends that these specialized resources ensure successful implementation: online assessment in an editable format, audio and video scripts with translation in English, grammar presentation slides, editable lesson plans, IPAs with rubrics, a digital image bank, answer keys and “I Can” worksheets. In the walk-through, the aspects of what makes this series unique are highlighted and connected to the supersite, explaining how the series focuses on communication and ending with an overview of the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) World Readiness Standards. Instructors are encouraged to consider designing instruction in six steps: 1. context, 2. vocabulary, 3. media, 4. culture, 5. structure, and 6. skill synthesis. The series introduction also offers tips for differentiation, best practices and portfolio assessment.

*Mosaik 2* is organized in much the same way and features these themes: *Feiern; Feste Feiern, Kleidung, Trautes Heim; Zu Hause, Hausarbeit, Urlaub/Ferien; Jahreszeiten, Reisen, Verkehrsmittel und Technologie; Auto und Rad fahren, Technik und Medien*. The structure is the same as in the first text in the series and is followed by the third text which also consists of four chapters with subchapters titled: *Gesundheit; die Alltagsroutine: Beim Arzt; Stadtleben: Besorgungen, in der Stadt; Beruf: Im Büro, Berufe; Natur: In der Natur, die Umwelt*.

Although the individual World Readiness Standard is stamped on the page of the teacher edition, the series does not appear radically different from many other contemporary German learning text and digital series. The initial segment does provide a structural framework for the instructor to guide students to build their communicative skills, but the sections are densely packed and therefore demand an intense focus from the instructor to develop effective lesson plans. The pacing guide provides a general framework, but individual instructors will need to work thoughtfully to make the segments fit their individual classrooms. The second segment invites students to get to know four students studying in Berlin and the vignettes are linked to the structural themes of the chapters. Students develop their knowledge of the four students studying in Berlin through each chapter vignette. Although this is not an authentic cultural product, as it was designed expressly for learners of the language, it does evoke the life of foreign and local students in a major German city and could inspire young learners to consider the value of using German in the target culture. The second segment keeps the students in the interpretive mode longer than in the interpersonal mode and the instructor needs to design lessons that create a balance among the three modes of communication.

The text series is flexible in its design, allowing the instructor to use the activities on the supersite as they develop specific activities responding to the context of the classroom and the needs of their students. These could include a class activity, a work station, or a homework assignment. The section *Strukturen* is generally heavy, full of vocabulary and focused on grammatical structures. Working with a group of students in an instructional

setting using a lesson sample, it felt heavy to me as the instructor and contained too much material for a novice learner; however, the *Wiederholung* at the end of the section, including the T-clip zapping activity, provided strong support to the novice learners in the pilot group. The design of these activities asks instructors to check comprehension of the clips in English, but this would be feasible to do in the target language, in my opinion, especially in an immersion classroom. Along with the stamp on the pages in the teacher's edition, indicating the World Readiness Standard addressed, there is also a note indicating which Advanced Placement (The College Board) theme is linked to the content of that section. In the *Kontext* section, the communication activities are focused on vocabulary acquisition and repetition. Instructors must do their own work to make learning an immersive communication experience. Each instructor has unique learning goals for his or her students and the flexibility of the program makes it easy to move between the text and the supersite and allows for individual adaptation of the material. However, in the pilot lessons, using a sample of the scope and sequence of *Mosaik 1*, it proved to be more effective to start with the *Fotoroman* video vignette and then establish the communicative goals for the lesson cluster. This also allowed novice learners to have a voice in the goal design process and to take ownership of their learning.

There are ongoing discussions in the field, nationally, about the role of the target language and English in instruction, 90% versus full immersion, etc., but *Mosaik* translates vocabulary into English, thereby taking a position on the use of English in the classroom. In the lesson design suggestions in the pacing guides, often in the warm-up/activate section, students are encouraged to review previously learned material. It is unclear what is expected of students, exactly, and it would help the instructor to have samples of what other instructors have done by way of review activities. Similarly, in the introductory "front material" of each chapter the explanation of differentiation, best practices, and portfolio assessments seems very generic; it would greatly help the instructor to have samples of actual lessons prepared by instructors who use *Mosaik* in order to gain insight into how individual instructors differentiated specific activities, how best practice models informed their choices and how a finished portfolio looks at various levels of proficiency.

The themes of the chapters and subchapters are traditional and would fit most any language instructional setting. Instructors can use these as a starting point to move toward more imaginative lessons to spark creativity and to engage students on a deeper cognitive and social level. For example, in the second half of the segment *Kultur*, there is a section called *Porträt*, which does bring the learner into a sharper focus on some specific aspect – product or practice in the target culture. Instructors can build from these samples to also engage students in the cultural perspectives of the target culture.

For a general German language and culture course, the *Mosaik* series works to engage students in learning and supports the instructor to design effective lesson plans. The flexibility of the printed and digital material makes it a viable twenty-first-century resource for teaching German language and culture.

Christopher Gwin  
Lecturer in German Language and Culture  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA

## Publisher's Response

I am delighted to respond to Mr. Christopher Gwin's review of Vista Higher Learning's three-level high-school German series, *Mosaik: German Language and Culture*. I would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Gwin for pointing out so many of the features of the program that engage students and support teachers. He emphasizes the flexibility it offers via both the print and digital content, which allow for teacher customization, and he concludes that *Mosaik* constitutes a viable 21<sup>st</sup>-century resource for teaching German language and culture.

I was glad to find that Mr. Gwin points out on several occasions in his review the value of the publisher-produced *Fotoroman* video in terms of its instructional flexibility as well as pedagogical utility. As Mr. Gwin states, the episodes can be used as homework for interpretive pre-viewing, as a springboard for in-class activities, and as a source of review material. He remarks on how the *Fotoroman* evokes life in a major German-speaking city and inspires young learners to consider the value of using German in the target culture, both of which the program's editors had as goals.

Mr. Gwin also points out the many ways through which *Mosaik* integrates content: streaming video; audio; online Supersite activities with immediate, automatic feedback; Video and Partner Chats; and personalized vocabulary study. Moreover, I was glad to read his acknowledgement that the *Strukturen* grammar strand encourages teachers to expand on discrete activities by following up with interpersonal ones. With respect to culture, Mr. Gwin calls attention to the *Kultur* strand, where the *Porträt* reading focuses on a specific product or practice of the target culture upon which teachers can build to engage students in the corresponding cultural perspectives.

I was excited to find Mr. Gwin's reference to the *Mosaik* program's Front Matters, crucial pedagogical tools that are so often overlooked by teachers. He highlights the information and recommendations these pages contain for planning coursework and designing instruction as well as the available tips for differentiated instruction and best practices. Mr. Gwin also makes reference to the fact that the Front Matters provide a framework for supporting teachers in building students' communicative skills. I can attest to the great effort that the VHL editorial team put forth to develop these recommendations, and I was genuinely pleased to see an educator recognize their significance.

I must disagree, however, with Mr. Gwin's claim that the design of the *Zapping* TV clip activities asks teachers to check comprehension in English and that *Mosaik* invites the use of English by translating new vocabulary. While it is true that activity direction lines are generally in English through Unit 3 of Volume 1 in order to allow beginning students to express themselves on cultural topics, the direction lines switch to German in Unit 4 and remain in the target language through the end of the series. Suggested questions in teacher annotations also switch to German, and even when they appear English in the early units of Volume 1, these are merely suggestions, and the program never explicitly advocates the use of English in the classroom. Furthermore, while some vocabulary is taught via an English translation, much of it is conveyed through visual contextualization in illustrations.

I was also puzzled by Mr. Gwin's claim that in the *Kontext* strand the *Kommunikation* activities are focused on vocabulary acquisition and repetition. I would like to clarify, however, that communication activities throughout *Mosaik* present an array of situations

and formats. In the *Kontext* strand specifically, the goal of these activities is certainly vocabulary practice, but they nevertheless lead to meaningful linguistic exchanges. Therefore, students are going far beyond simply repeating vocabulary in drill-like fashion.

Overall, however, Mr. Gwin drew attention to the many strengths of the *Mosaik* series, affirming that it would fit any language instructional setting and that teachers can use these to spark creativity and engage students on a deeper cognitive and social level. My colleagues and I at Vista Higher Learning are grateful to him for his review.

Armando Brito  
Senior Consulting Editor  
Vista Higher Learning

## Japanese

**The Japan Foundation. *MARUGOTO: Japanese Language and Culture. Starter A1 (Coursebook for Communicative Language Activities). First Edition. Tokyo, Japan: Sanshusha Publishing Co., 2016. ISBN: 978-4-384-05752-2 C0081.***

**The Japan Foundation. *MARUGOTO: Japanese Language and Culture, Starter A1 (Coursebook for Communicative Language Competencies). First Edition. Tokyo, Japan: Sanshusha Publishing Co. 2016. ISBN: 978-4-384-05753-9 C0081.***

*Marugoto: Japanese Language and Culture* is a comprehensive series of course books for adult learners of Japanese. It was developed by the Japan Foundation (JF) based on the JF Standard for Japanese Language Education. The six levels of the JF Standard (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2) are not based on the complexity of the grammar or the number of words or kanji characters learners have acquired, but rather on tasks they can accomplish using Japanese. The six levels are specified by the JF Standard Can-Dos, which are examples of practical language activities related to situations where learners use Japanese. The entire series of *Marugoto* covers up to B2 in the JF Standard for Japanese Language Education. Starter A1 of *Marugoto* is designed to satisfy the needs of learners at the A1 level in the JF Standard for Japanese Language Education. Its descriptors include:

- Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.
- Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has.
- Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help. (Source: JF standard for Japanese Language Education 2010 Users' Guide Book, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

*Marugoto* literally means “whole” or “everything” and symbolizes the main concept of the series, to encompass both language and culture. Starter A1 of *Marugoto* offers two course books: *Katsudoo* (activities) and *Rikai* (competences).

*Katsudoo* (activities) is a course book for communicative language activities. This course book is for learners who want to start using Japanese immediately. Its objective is to develop practical communicative ability in everyday situations. Learners are engaged in extensive listening and speaking practices through this course book although some

reading and writing activities are occasionally included. One lesson can be covered in each 90-to-120-minute class. A total of twenty classes is required to cover all lessons as well as two sets of “Test and Reflection;” it can be completed by the middle of the course and Test and Reflection 2 can be completed by the end of the course.

*Rikai* (competences) is a course book for communicative language competences. This course book is for learners who want to learn “about” Japanese. Its objective is to study the features of Japanese necessary for communication. A learner will systematically study how Japanese is used in communication through its language structures, such as Japanese script, vocabulary, grammar, and sentence patterns. Learners are engaged not only in listening and speaking, but also in reading and writing. One lesson can be completed in each 120-minute class. At the middle and at the end of the course, a learner will do “Test and Reflections” 1 and 2, so a total of twenty classes is needed to complete this course book.

Either *Katsudoo* and *Rikai* can be used as a main text for a regular classroom course or for self-study. An instructor or a self-learner can choose either one of the course books based on his/her learning objectives. However, *Katsudoo* and *Rikai* use the same topics, so they can be used together, gradually and simultaneously to develop proficiency in all aspects of Japanese.

There are nine topics in each of the *Katsudoo* and *Rikai* course books: 1. Japanese (*Nihongo*); 2. Myself (*Watashi*); 3. Food (*Tabemono*); 4. Home (*Je*); 5. Daily Life (*Seikatsu*); 6. Holidays and Days off 1 (*Yasumi no hi 1*); 7. Towns (*Machi*); 8. Shopping (*Kaimono*); and 9. Holidays and Days off 2 (*Yasumi no hi 2*). Each topic is covered in two lessons. Although these two course books share the same topics, which are illustrated by many of the same photos, each course book has quite different goals and objectives. For example, for Topic 1 (Japanese), Lesson 1 in *Katsudoo* is about exchanging greetings and recognizing Japanese characters, whereas Lesson 1 in *Rikai* focuses on hiragana. Similarly, Lesson 2 in *Katsudoo* is about basic classroom expressions and writing names and country names in Japanese, whereas Lesson 2 in *Rikai* teaches reading and writing katakana. The two course books differ in orthography: a Romanized pronunciation guide is provided throughout *Katsudoo*, but it is provided only up to Topic 6 in *Rikai*. Furthermore, no kanji characters are used in *Katsudoo*, but over 60 kanji characters are introduced in *Rikai*. Furthermore, the difference in approach is quite obvious: *Katsudoo* focuses on communication in conversation contexts, whereas *Rikai* is more structured and comprehensive insofar as each lesson consists of vocabulary, conversation, grammar, reading comprehension and composition.

Both texts are supplemented by the *Marugoto* website: <https://www.marugoto.org/>. Just by signing up, all resources can be downloaded, and all related links can be accessed free of charge. The site offers audio files, task sheets for writing, a vocabulary index in three different languages (English, Spanish and Russian), a word book in twelve languages, a Can-do checklist in thirteen languages, as well as a phrase index. The site also includes a Teachers’ Page, which has teacher’s notes, and two 20-minute videos that introduce lessons in Sao Paulo, one for *Katsudoo* and one for *Rikai*. The site contains many resources.

Each course book is handy and affordable: 146 pages, 1,500 yen (\$13.50) for *Katsudoo*, and 198 pages, 1,700 yen (\$15.30) for *Rikai*. There are plenty of illustrations and photos

that represent daily life in Japan throughout the books, which is most inviting for learners. I believe that learners will have fun learning Japanese with *Marugoto*.

Chikako Nakamura

Instructor of Japanese

Department of Asian and Asian American Studies

Stony Brook University

Stony Brook, NY

## Latin

**Neumann, Jeanne Marie.** *Lingua Latina: A Companion to Roma Aeterna*. Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 2017. ISBN: 9781585108411. Price: \$31.00.

What is the best method for learning a foreign language? Based on my experience teaching Latin at the secondary and post-secondary levels, rote-memorization of endings and reliance on grammar tables is *probably not* the answer. And yet this method persists as the prevailing strategy in most Latin textbooks and classrooms. Hans H. Ørberg breaks this mold in his *Latina Lingua* series (*Familia Romana* and *Roma Aeterna*) by using the “Natural Method” to teach Latin through extended contextual readings and marginal notes. Gone are the grammar tables and technical jargon that dominate traditional textbooks; as you flip through the pages of Ørberg’s texts, you will *only* find dialogue-filled narratives enhanced by numerous, small, full-color illustrations and ample notes in the robust margins. The key to Ørberg’s pedagogical effectiveness is twofold: reliance on marginalia that guide learning by introducing vocabulary and provide bite-size snippets of grammar instruction, and an unwavering use of Latin in all aspects of the book. Amazingly, not a single word of English is used. (If you are wondering how vocabulary is introduced, those beautiful pictures are multi-functional; they aid students in learning by providing visual context for the story, as well as visual depictions of the new vocabulary.) It all adds up to a pedagogically powerful teaching tool by taking away the crutch of English and immersing the learner in Latin.

Both textbooks in the series attempt to be psychologically soothing by using muted color schemes with large fonts and generous margins; however, these do little to diminish the intimidation brought on by the complete absence of the comforting familiarity of one’s native English language. The gentle guidance of a patient and compassionate teacher will go a long way in alleviating the elevated stress levels that such a textbook might induce on the psyche of learners both young and old. So too will the use of the wonderful companion textbooks that accompany Ørberg’s *Lingua Latina* series, namely Jeanne Marie Neumann’s *Companion to Familia Romana* and *Companion to Roma Aeterna*.

In this review I will analyze Jeanne Neumann’s aptly titled *Companion to Roma Aeterna*, the second book in the *Lingua Latina* companion series. I will attempt to judge the book based on its merits not only as a tool for learning Latin but also as a functional companion to Ørberg’s *Roma Aeterna* textbook.

Neumann’s book begins with an outstanding introduction providing an overview of the methodology of *Roma Aeterna* and explaining the functionality of her own companion text. Both teachers and students will find this introduction a useful tool to help comprehend Ørberg’s non-traditional methodology. The body of the book is divided into two segments—*Pars*

*Prima* and *Pars Altera*—both arranged into the chapters that comprise *Roma Aeterna* (*Capites* XXXVI-LVI). The material in each chapter of *Pars Prima* is organized into five categories: *Rēs Grammaticae Novae*, *Rēs Grammaticae Fūsius Explicātae*, *Dēmonstrātiō Verbōrum*, *Recēnsiō*, and *Points of Style*.

Both *Rēs Grammaticae Novae* and *Rēs Grammaticae Fūsius Explicātae* contain lengthy discussions of grammatical material encountered in the corresponding *Roma Aeterna* chapter. *Rēs Grammaticae Novae* focuses on grammar that is new to the students, while *Rēs Grammaticae Fūsius Explicātae* expands upon grammar that was previously introduced in prior chapters. A brief example from Caput XXXVI illustrates the coordination between *Roma Aeterna* and Neumann’s *Rēs Grammaticae* segments. The reading on page 13 of *Roma Aeterna* contains the following line:

“...terrā marīque pāx facta est...”

Marginal notes provide the following assistance for the use of the ablatives in the phrase *terrā marīque*:

“terrā marīque (loc = abl) = *in* terrā marīque”

Neumann, in the *Rēs Grammaticae Fūsius Explicātae* for Caput XXXVI, provides the following supplementary aid:

**“Ablative of Place**

Although place where is usually expressed by the ablative with a preposition, in a few phrases in Latin, the preposition *in* is not used. One of these phrases is: *terrā marīque* (l.103, “on land and sea)”

While the marginal notes in *Roma Aeterna* provide adequate information to accurately read the ablative of place construction, Neumann’s discussion helps the learner understand the construction and its broader use in the language. This type of additional aid is typical in the *Rēs Grammaticae* sections.

The *Dēmonstrātiō Verbōrum* section of each chapter consists of lexical explanations of difficult words and phrases found in the chapter readings. This section is particularly useful for complex vocabulary concepts that cannot be adequately communicated through Ørberg’s brief marginal notes.

The *Recēnsiō* section functions as a review of previously learned material. Neumann typically reintroduces concepts learned from previous chapters and demonstrates their usage in the current chapter. For example, in the *Recēnsiō* for Caput XXXVI Neumann discusses the Genitive of Description first encountered in Caput XIX. First, she explains the concept; then she provides four examples of its use in the readings, two from Caput XIX and two from the current Caput XXXVI.

Lastly, the *Points of Style* section highlights stylistic features and techniques used by the authors of the chapter reading in *Roma Aeterna*. For example, in the *Points of Style* section for Caput XLVI, Neuman discusses indirect commands expressed in resolutions of the Roman Senate, as well as various stylistic features found in the language of Eutropius, including his use of *tamquam* and *quasi* and his formation of perfect and pluperfect passive verbs.

Whereas *Pars Prima* functions primarily as a traditional textbook, *Pars Altera* functions essentially as a traditional student commentary for the text of any given ancient author. Each chapter in the *Pars Altera* segment is split into three sections: *Ørberg’s Introduction*, *Auxilia*

*Legendi*, and *Vocabulā*. Each chapter begins with an introduction, written by Ørberg, that provides background information and context for the readings in corresponding chapter in *Roma Aeterna*. The *Auxilia Legendi* section contains line-by-line commentary on the grammar and vocabulary of the *Roma Aeterna* chapter readings. This commentary is supplementary to Ørberg's marginalia and generally does not repeat marginalia content, although it does frequently repeat the material in Neumann's corresponding *Pars Prima* chapter. Lastly, the *Vocabula* section contains a Latin-to-English lexicon of the vocabulary found in each chapter, divided according to parts of speech.

It was a bold decision to separate the chapter material between *Pars Prima* and *Pars Altera*, but the vastly different natures of the two segments justify the decision. And while it might be inconvenient at times to look up a given chapter's content first in *Pars Prima* and then in *Pars Altera* several hundred pages later, the inconvenience is minimal compared to the flexibility such format offers in a variety of academic settings.

In using Ørberg's *Roma Aeterna* students undertake the daunting task of reading Latin containing advanced and complex grammatical concepts without the aid of any English explanations or assistance. Neumann's companion text regularly serves as a welcome relief and periodically as a necessary crutch in the task. Using the two texts in coordination with each other is a highly effective method for learning Latin, maximizing the strengths and minimizing the weaknesses of Ørberg's "Natural Method." In the end it all boils down to this: *Roma Aeterna* will successfully teach students to read Latin, and *Companion to Roma Aeterna* will help those same students understand the complex grammatical and syntactical concepts that struture the Latin language.

Michael Holstead  
Adjunct Instructor of Classical Studies  
St. Norbert College  
De Pere, WI

### **Publisher's Response**

Hackett Publishing and Jeanne Neumann are very grateful to Michael Holstead and the *NECTFL Review* for this thoughtful review of *Companion to Roma Aeterna*. North American instructors of Latin interested in Hans Ørberg's unique and ingenious series *Lingua Latina per se Illustrata*, to which *Companion to Roma Aeterna* is such a useful ancillary, are urged to visit our website at [www.hackettpublishing.com](http://www.hackettpublishing.com) for more details.

Brian Rak  
Editorial Director  
Hackett Publishing Co., Inc.

### **Spanish**

**Germaine Choe, author; Carolina Gómez, editor; Nancy Meyers, illustrator.** *Language Together Spanish Set 1: 10 Books with Online Audio for kids.* First edition. Paperback - Box Set. ISBN: 978-0-9971240-1-9. Terre Haute, Indiana: Moore Langen/RR Donnelly, 2016.

*Language Together Spanish Set 1* components include ten books that present the following themes: Introductions/Family, Animals, Clothing, Colors, Face & Body, Fruit, Numbers, Shapes, Snacks, Toys. The ten books feature 100 thematic vocabulary



words, 50+ high frequency words, verbs and cultural phrases. Each book is 16 pages in length and available in Spanish, French, Mandarin Chinese and English/ESL. Online components include an Online audio center (narrated by native language speakers), Apple eBooks with audio and a Complimentary 23-page Teacher's Guide. The ten books come in a small box and can be purchased online for \$25.00 per set. *Language Together* offers education pricing when purchasing 10+ copies.

*Language Together Spanish Set 1* was developed by teachers and curriculum experts and features a unique Spot Color Immersion Method® that makes languages fun and easy for children. Based on extensive linguistic and classroom research, these *Language Together* stories build vocabulary and pre-reading skills for children up to the age of eight. Set 1 is suitable for preschool to early elementary students. The grade level at which your school introduces a language learning program would determine the best time to add these wonderful books to your reading list and class curriculum. *Language Together* books are designed to supplement any early language curriculum, whether it be FLES, immersion, bilingual, FLEX, after-school, weekend, or home school programs. The books support vocabulary, pre-reading and review for native and non-native speakers.

As the *Language Together* website states:

“At the heart of Language Together® is the Spot Color Immersion Method®, an approach that combines all the proven methods which teachers want with picture stories that use color purposefully to reinforce comprehension.” And, “Our Spot Color Immersion Method incorporates research from language experts such as Stephen Krashen, Steven Pinker, and Blaine Ray. Krashen and Pinker promote natural immersion over grammar and drilling. Ray invented TPR Storytelling in the 1990s, a story-based method which has gained rapid popularity among teachers worldwide. Moving step-by-step, these simple stories introduce high frequency words and phrases. Target vocabulary is woven into short stories that make kids laugh—and forget they are actually learning.”

The Set 1 Spanish series was first published in 2017. I was privileged to receive a complimentary copy through a colleague. I have since incorporated all ten books into my Spanish K-4 FLES curriculum. These books can be used in a variety of environments using different various teaching methods:

- Whole classroom read-alouds
- Thematic activities: warm up, drills, games etc.
- Oral presentation practice
- Small group and paired activities
- Free voluntary reading (language library supplement)
- Independent audio review
- Pre-reading and early literacy tool

*Language Together* has developed a multi-pronged approach that works well in the elementary level curriculum. It includes wonderful little treasures, including Immersion, Flashcards with a Story, content that helps students make connections faster through familiar scenarios, patterned repetition activities that provide structure and opportunities to practice, and an Audio model (with native speakers-online).

In addition to the ten-book pack, teachers receive a 24-page Teacher's Guide filled with much useful information, suggested uses as well as objectives and standards according to the ACTFL World Readiness Standards. This also includes Receptive Vocabulary Activities, Productive Vocabulary Activities and Extension Activities. It is a wonderful Guide for new teachers and offers creative enhancements for the seasoned teacher as well.

I have incorporated these books to fit all of the above suggested uses. Students love the stories because they are not too long and because pictures are extremely entertaining and clearly assist in the language learning process. Students feel incredibly accomplished after reading and presenting in class what they have learned by reading. Activities created around each themed book are proof positive that this method of language learning for young students has a high efficacy rate.

The book titled *¡Qué Rico!* is one of my favorites because it is all about snacks and most students love the food unit in every level I teach. The themed words, useful phrases and story line can be expanded upon beyond the pages of this little book. It teaches “*Me gusta...Me gustan...Me encanta...Es hora de comer,*” as well as the importance of washing your hands before eating all the delicious food items that can be added to an already ongoing class food list. This book is also a great way to begin a list and add to it throughout the curriculum unit on food.

*¡Abracadabra!* is one of my favorites of the ten books because my students love animals and magic. By learning the names of animals in this book, students can elaborate on color, size, habitat, number of legs or no legs, tails, ears, noses or snouts and use all the descriptive adjectives applicable to each animal.

*¡Qué Divertido!* covers wonderful play time at home or at school. This can carry over to learning additional games and toys and can spike a conversation between students about their favorite games and toys, again extending a list of single words or phrases beyond the walls of the classroom to the playground and home.

The *Language Together French Set 1* introduces the same ten themes. I have used these French books in after-school enrichment programs for language learners with the same success as I have had in my public-school classroom. Some of the titles of this set are: “*Chic et Chouette!*,” “*La Fête de Fruits*” and my favorite, “*Bon Appetit!*” The French set of books incorporates cultural words and phrases such as “*Zut!*,” “*Chouette!*,” “*Chic!*,” “*Génial!*,” “*Hourra!*” and many more. Both French and Spanish Sets have covered the cultural expressions in a fun and entertaining way that stimulates student repetition, participation and curiosity.

The choice of vocabulary words for each book has been thoroughly reviewed by the editors and researchers that contributed to the books. I found only one word in the Set 1 of the ten books that I had any reservations about based on my language training: the word “*el banano*” used for the word “banana.” I shared with the author that “*plátano*” was more appropriate and common in most Spanish-speaking countries. As we all know, words can vary in popularity and meaning from country to country. I looked into this a little deeper and found that some educators and speakers in some countries refer to “*el banano*” as the banana “tree” and not the actual fruit of the tree. Prior to publication the author had consulted with Real Academia and their goal was to select the most neutral word choices in their books, understanding that Spanish varies from one region to

another. That said, after further review and discussion within the company, the editors made the changes in time for the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

These books have enhanced my classroom teaching skills and have added so many connections from one theme to another as well as connections within a theme. My students ask to read the books. They enjoy reading and answering questions. They enjoy creating drawings and writing simple phrases. They enjoy making bulletin board storyboards. All this and so much more is a direct result of introducing these books into my curriculum on the 10 themed projects

This *Language Together Spanish Set 1* and *Language Together French Set1* are well worth the price because they provide enjoyment, fun and learning.

*The Language Together Spanish Set 2* and *Language Together French Set 2* are now out for purchase as of September 2018. The themes to be addressed in the French and Spanish Set 2 will be: Introduction/Delivery, Verbs, Food, Tableware, Art Supplies, Feelings, Nature, Jobs, Furniture and Bedtime.

Both programs are wonderful and a strong complement to any elementary school level world language program. Samples and a brief history of the company can be found at [www.language-together.net](http://www.language-together.net)

Cheryl P. Berman  
Spanish teacher  
Newington Public School  
Newington, NH

**Palo Boyles, Peggy, Myriam Met and Richard Sayers. *Auténtico 1*. 1<sup>st</sup> edition. New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2018. Includes: Student Textbook. ISBN-13: 978-0-328-93437-9. Pp. 521. Teacher's Edition. ISBN -13: 978-0-328-93442-3. Pp. 521. Leveled Vocabulary and Grammar Workbook Guided Practice. Pp. 324. Core Practice. Pp. 174. ISBN-13: 978-0-328-92374-8. Authentic Resources Workbook. Pp. 110. ISBN-13: 978-0-328-92396-0. Literacy Skills Workbook A.B.1.2 Pp. 198. ISBN-13: 978-0-328-92394-6. Digital Components Sampler Level 1.**

*Auténtico 1* is by far one of the most comprehensive language learning programs for novice-mid to novice-high-middle and high school first-time language learners. All components are interconnected and blend beautifully for teachers wanting to take full advantage of all that this program has to offer.

*Auténtico* incorporates “integrating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills with ease through the series’ pedagogical framework, assessment and instruction and the integration of print and digital resources” (T14). *Auténtico 1* supports the Global Can-Do Benchmarks across all levels and builds skills outlined on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Map for World Languages. The 5 C’s standards are clearly stated and built into each chapter. *Auténtico 1* promotes:

- Real-world tasks and authentic sources built into each chapter.
- Instruction that is learner centered.
- Technology integrated with instruction and assessment in text.
- Differentiation built-in to meet the needs of individual learners.
- Assessment focusing on what students can do with the language. (Entry-level, Formative and Summative)

- Assessment focused on what students can do with the language.
- Instruction and assessment of culture that focuses on the relationship between the products, practices and perspectives of the target language.
- Opportunities to use the language outside of the classroom are explored.

Chapter Organization and Chapter Sequence are presented in a way that affords students a variety of modalities to learn through audio, video, writing, speak/record, global maps, flashcards, etext 2.0, and games. Students can choose to incorporate all or some of these resources depending on their needs, abilities and/or preferences. This piece of the program is of critical importance to any language program that aims at the inclusion of all learners. *Auténtico 1* is the first series I have seen that presents a complete all-inclusive learners' approach. The differentiated instruction strategies includes students with learning disabilities, those with special needs and heritage speakers. "All students are capable of and can benefit from learning a second language" (T45).

*Auténtico 1* offers an incredible amount of support for both teachers and students. This is a wonderful addition to any textbook series. I find the support systems in place in *Auténtico 1* to be thorough and complete beyond any other textbooks familiar to me. Objectives for each chapter are clearly stated. Activities suggested are inclusive of the varied modalities offered. Lesson plans are complete and include a step by step daily Warm-up, Review/Present/Practice/Communicate, Warm-up/Homework Options. Each chapter and its page-by-page instruction include "Differentiated Instruction" suggestions and challenges. Each chapter also includes "Enrich Your Teaching" suggestions on 21st century skills, cultural notes, the end in mind, *mapa global interactivo* and project-based learning ideas to enhance the activities, assignments and overall classroom/homework experience for these young learners. All of this support offered to teachers and students reinforces the *Auténtico 1* goal of using Spanish in the classroom 90% of the time. This is not a lofty goal given the strategies, support, tasks and technology tools provided by the authors.

Authentic Resources, Standards Based (100% World Readiness Standards), Communication, Literacy Skills, Culture, Differentiation, Pre-AP, Heritage Speakers, Assessment and Teacher Support all have a strong and influential presence throughout the *Auténtico 1* textbook and all its ancillaries.

The *Auténtico 1* student textbook is fully middle-school friendly and not at all overwhelming because the pages are not overcrowded with repetitive activities. It is great for high school beginners' first exposure to Spanish language, too. The book is organized by themes and presents nine chapters with two sections (A and B) for each chapter. Themes include:

- *Mis amigos y yo*
- *La Escuela*
- *La Comida*
- *Los pasatiempos*
- *Fiesta en familia*
- *La casa*
- *De compras*
- *Experiencias*
- *Medios de comunicación.*

Each chapter includes *Vocabulario en contexto*, *Videohistoria*, *Vocabulario en uso*, *Gramática*, *Lectura*, *La cultura en vivo*, *Presentación oral*, *Auténtico*, and *Repaso del capítulo*. The sections of each chapter have clearly defined goals and objectives, clear directions, creative activities, authentic photographs, cultural comparisons and photographs of middle and high school students around the world engaged in authentic activities typical of their country. These are all very useful for any 12- to 16-year old trying to learn a new language for the first time. The content of each page appeals to young learners while at the same time covering a multitude of learning components for a successful experience in the classroom as well as outside the classroom.

In looking at *Capítulo 6A En mi dormitorio*, for example, the introduction states the objectives of communication and culture. It clearly states: “You will demonstrate what you know and can do” (270) and shares the vocabulary and grammar set for this chapter. There is an *arte y cultura* piece that promotes discussion possibly in Spanish and/or English. I believe these types of questions are more fulfilling when conducted in English for the purpose of cultural understanding and comparisons both at the middle school and high school levels.

The chapter continues with *Vocabulario en contexto* with a dialogue between friends about their bedrooms at home. Vocabulary is shared through photographs and an audio piece describing the photo on the page. An additional dialogue takes place between two friends and the first exercise is *El orden y el desorden*, asking students to correct *las oraciones falsas*. The chapter continues with additional comprehension exercises, such as *Las palabras opuestas*, *Escucha, Dibuja y escribe*, *Tu propio dormitorio* and various games, and writing and speaking-in-pairs exercises. The next section is titled *Gramática*. This section contains more explanations of pedagogy as well as exercises. This includes but is not limited to stem-changing verbs, pronunciation, root words, comparisons, and superlatives. However, if this section of each chapter is presented with sufficient learning time and is integrated with video samples that are well understood by the students, I believe these *Gramática* sections would be clear, manageable and thorough for use in both beginner middle school and high school levels.

This chapter continues with a *Lectura* section and *La cultura en vivo* followed by an oral presentation of a typical bedroom. The end of each chapter includes a *Repaso del capítulo* and *Preparación para el examen*. All chapters follow a similar layout to this one and therefore I find the student text is very student centered.

Every chapter offers a Go Online to practice–Pearson Realize component indicating whether it includes audio, writing, *mapa global*, video, speak/record, script, games, flashcards or etext 2.0 extensions to each subsection of any given chapter. This is an added incentive for students to explore on their own, in small groups or as a class with their teacher. I find this bridge to the other components of the *Auténtico 1* program very effective, practical and suitable for middle school and high school beginners.

The *Auténtico 1* Leveled Vocabulary and Grammar Workbook (Core Practice) has a wide variety of exercises that can be used in class, for homework or for assessment throughout each chapter. In my own classroom I selected several pages from this workbook to get an idea of student success and feedback. My 6<sup>th</sup> graders found these exercises to be clearly presented, not frustrating or overwhelming, and each page contained one exercise in a well-spaced format and a comfortable font. When the “Core Practice” half

of this workbook is complete, students flip the book over to reveal “Guided Practice” activities to strengthen, complement and reinforce their language skills either on their own, at home with parental guidance or teacher assigned work pages. This workbook is a comprehensive and thoughtful and fun way to enhance language learning.

The *Auténtico A B 1 2 Literacy Skills Workbook Volume 1* is filled with “thematically linked readings and skills-based practice activities and is ideal for all students of Spanish, including heritage speakers” (Program Overview 14). These multiple thematic readings are relevant, appropriate and strengthen and inspire deeper comprehension as students compare details and perspectives. Articles are no more than a page to a page and a half in length. Each theme offers two or three *Lecturas*. The activities following the readings may include one or all of the following:

*Vocabulario y comprensión*—multiple choice questions, *Escribir*—a writing analysis of the article including a writing task rubric, *Hablar y escuchar*—a speaking task with rubric.

In order to better understand the skill set needed for this workbook, I chose *Tema 3 La comida: Lectura 2* to present to my 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish students as part of our food unit last spring. These students have had Spanish since kindergarten and are novice-low to novice-mid level. The article was about exercise, health and young adults and was comprehensible to all my students.

The class was presented with the article and we read it together in Spanish with English translation as we worked through it. We discussed the multiple-choice questions and revised their comments and responses into Spanish for comprehensibility, language use and fluency. Students enjoyed the challenge. As a teacher I was able to experience the students’ successes and challenges, which in turn afforded me the opportunity to assess their level of literacy skills in communication development. This workbook is a full spectrum component to the *Auténtico 1* program when assessing exactly what the students “Can-Do” with the language.

Level 2 of this workbook seems best suited for novice-mid to novice-high, perhaps grades 8-12 depending on the years of study. This is a very comprehensive workbook and very well conceived in order to accommodate and advance the challenge, comfort, comprehension and advancement of all students.

The *Auténtico 1 Authentic Resources Workbook* is an integrated approach to language and culture. Students can explore the products, practices and perspectives through a wide variety of informative videos, video spotlights, webpages, video reports, radio interviews, informative texts, videoblogs, persuasive articles, infographics, podcasts, and radio broadcasts from an expansive network of international multi-media TV and news programs. These resources were created by native speakers for native speakers. Students will clearly experience the varied cultures of Spanish speakers through these materials.

Again, these themes were selected to relate to the textbook chapter content. Each chapter contains *Vocabulario clave*, listening and reading strategies, and level-appropriate viewing. Listening and reading activities, comprehension activities and culture questions relating to products and practices and reflection on the cultural perspectives all enhance student cultural understanding and language comprehension.

The *Auténtico Digital Components Sampler* gives a brief overview of the multitude of possibilities of Pearson.Realize. This program allows access to instructional resources and interactive tools in one place! When using the *Auténtico* content, teachers are able

to add content, modify it, rearrange it, or link it. There are places to set up classes and manage student rosters, share and collaborate to a single student, a group, or class. All lessons can be personalized with weblinks, assignments or multimedia you may wish to add to enhance the content you are teaching.

While exploring the Pearson.Realize, I found it easy to navigate and access lessons and resources for each chapter. The “tiles” indicate what the lesson structure consists of and is comfortable to navigate through the various tools. There is a wonderful “Speak and Record” tool for student practice on interpersonal and presentational skills. Etext tools allow teachers to quickly create bookmarks, annotations, and to leave notes for their students and presents an A-Z glossary.

The online component also provides students with the opportunity to express their cultural reflections and comparisons. Multiple entries in Spanish or English can be saved and all notes entered can be viewed by teacher and student. This component is best for upper-level courses and Pre-AP material. Teachers will especially like the ability to personalize learning for their students. Teachers can rearrange content, add their own links and information, and upload resources.

In this Realize course, teachers can also assign tasks to individual students, groups or classes. In the online *Auténtico* folder teachers will find additional materials that match and support the themes and content of *Auténtico*. The DK Dictionary eText allows students to see and hear additional thematic/topic vocabulary, which is a great way for them to enhance their interpersonal and presentational communication activities/skills.

Finally, the Assessment and Instant Checks provide feedback to students and teachers regarding vocabulary and grammar knowledge, using auto-graded exercises. Overall, this digital component surpasses many currently available on the market thanks to its thorough presentation of multiple offerings. For classes where all students have daily internet access, this component is an indispensable tool.

*Auténtico 1* is a language learning program that beautifully blends print and digital resources. Spanish language proficiency and cultural understanding are promoted throughout the textbook and the PearsonRealize components. Students connect and stay engaged as teachers create a successful program thanks to the overall flexibility of *Auténtico 1*. PearsonSchool.com, and the *Auténtico 1* authors and contributing writers have done an outstanding job, creating what I believe to be a successful pathway to Spanish language learning for beginner to mid-novice-level students.

Cheryl Berman  
Spanish Teacher  
Newington Public School  
Newington, NH

### Other

**Fairclough, Marta, and Sara M. Beaudrie, editors.** *Innovative Strategies for Heritage Language Teaching. A Practical Guide for the Classroom.* Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-62616-338-6. Price \$104.95 (hardcover) or \$34.95 (paperback).

*Innovative Strategies for Heritage Language Teaching. A Practical Guide for the Classroom* is a collection of eleven essays focusing on the theoretical and applied aspects of heritage

language (HL) teaching and learning. The volume is coedited by Marta Fairclough and Sara Beaudrie, and there is also a foreword by Ana Roca and an afterword by Guadalupe Valdés. The editors explain that the volume presents insights into the research on HL education and aims to take HL education a step forward. The authors discuss the maintenance, retention, and development of literacy among HL speakers, consider the current challenges that HL education faces, and offer solutions that can be implemented in any classroom. Ana Roca, in her foreword, indicates that the volume's goal is to determine what the optimal conditions are for HL education and establish what it takes to offer these conditions and foster the best educational practices at all levels. Although several articles focus on Spanish, the teaching of other minority languages such as Korean, Chinese, or Arabic is also discussed.

*Innovative Strategies for Heritage Language Teaching. A Practical Guide for the Classroom* can be best used in graduate courses in linguistics and language education. The volume is also an exceptional tool for both new and experienced practitioners as well as teacher development programs. New practitioners can learn about the unique characteristics and variability of HL learners or how to build a new HL program. Overall, the issues discussed will be of interest to anyone involved in HL education since the authors consider issues as fundamental as pedagogical approaches, best practices, curriculum design, assessment, technology, and community involvement. Moreover, both new and experienced teachers will benefit from the concrete practical suggestions included in most essays. Teacher development programs will also benefit from this volume since some of the issues previously mentioned are of the utmost importance in the training of future HL instructors and Lacort's article specifically discusses core issues and topics in HL teacher development programs.

The volume is divided into two sections. Part I, which includes five essays, focuses on the foundations of HL teaching. Topics included in this section range from understanding the diverse needs of HL learners and the role that sociolinguistics should play to how to design a HL program. Part II, which includes the remaining six essays, deals with strategies, techniques, and approaches in HL teaching. All these articles discuss innovative pedagogical approaches and provide ample samples and suggestions.

The first half of the volume looks at some theoretical issues that are at the core of HL education and their pedagogical implications. Eve Zyzik recognizes the difficulty of characterizing HL learners given their diverse circumstances and needs and proposes a prototype model of the HL learner that takes into account the implicit knowledge of the language that these learners normally have. She also discusses the pedagogical implications of this prototype: materials originally designed for second language (L2) learners have limited applicability in the HL classroom but L2 methods and materials that target vocabulary will be easily transferable to the HL classroom. In his article, Glen Martínez discusses the academic and identity challenges that often characterize HL students and underscores the role of the community in HL education. He states that HL goals should focus both on individual competencies as well as on community impact and inclusion. Next, Jennifer Leeman and Ellen Serafini argue that sociolinguistics should play a fundamental role in curricular design and implementation. HL students should acquire critical language awareness and actively engage in questioning dominant language ideologies. For example, they provide specific examples of how to examine the history of bilingualism in the HL classroom. Sara Beaudrie's essay focuses on the design, development, and evaluation of an HL program. She details the steps involved in the process and includes details from several HL programs. In the final chapter



of Part I, Manel Lacorte looks at HL teacher preparation programs and discusses the seven key aspects of his “ecological model”, which include ideological, cultural, socio-affective, linguistic, curricular, and pedagogical aspects.

While the first half of the volume considers more theoretical and philosophical issues, the second half looks at specific strategies, techniques, and approaches. Maria Carreira opens this section proposing a macro-based or top-down approach to HL teaching. In this approach, grammar and vocabulary are taught as dictated by function or context. She provides specific examples of activities involving top-down processing skills and finally discusses how to balance macro and micro-based techniques in mixed classrooms, which are common occurrences. Marta Fairclough explains the differences between second language (L2) and second dialect (D2) acquisition, which refers to the process of acquiring the standard variety of the minority language. She proposes using a sociolinguistic approach combined with the use of contrastive techniques such as translation. Maria Luisa Parra takes into consideration the complex sociocultural and political circumstances of HL learners and advocates integrating critical pedagogy principles, as proposed by P. Freire, with sociolinguistic topics. She provides examples of topics that can be critically analyzed such as cultural images and stereotypes, HL use in the media, and HL use in public spaces. In Chapter 9, Malena Samaniego and Chantelle Warner look at one of the challenges of HL education: how to develop secondary discourse genres without degrading the nonstandard and vernacular varieties of HL speakers. The authors propose a multiliteracies approach and provide readers with a sample lesson based on a TV commercial from Argentina that illustrates how all this can be accomplished. The last two chapters focus on two key issues in the field of education: assessment and the use of technology in the classroom. Gabriela Ilieva and Beth Clark-Gareca present the differences between foreign-language and heritage language learners and call for different assessment models. An integrated assessment model is included in this essay. In the final chapter, Florencia Henshaw focuses on the role of technology in the HL classroom. She discusses both the advantages and pitfalls of using computer-mediated communication and offers some tools that can be best suited for HL learners.

*Innovative Strategies for Heritage Language Teaching. A Practical Guide for the Classroom* is an excellent compilation of essays by leading HL practitioners and researchers. It presents an overview of the field of HL education, proposes some innovative approaches and also suggests topics for future research. As G. Valdés states in the afterword, this volume “makes unique and essential innovative contributions to the field of HL learning.”

Isabel Álvarez  
Professor of Spanish  
University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh  
Oshkosh, WI

**Lang, James M.** *On Course: A Week-by-Week Guide to Your First Semester of College Teaching.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-674-04741-9.

*On Course* was designed to be a handbook for beginning college instructors; but because it was presented at an orientation for instructors new to Loyola University Maryland, my interest was piqued. The early pages of James Lang’s text explain that he

deviates a bit from the fifteen-week set up in the table of contents and hopes that more seasoned professors might benefit from reading this relatively compact volume.

I certainly did. The volume is designed to accompany professors through a semester in any subject. I will highlight the tried and true advice that Lang presents and how I found immediate relevance to teaching foreign languages.

Lang begins by stressing the importance of envisioning the end of a course in designing students' progress. He emphasizes that their progress is marked by the syllabus, course objectives and learning outcomes. His delineation between course objectives (what the instructor will do during the course) versus learning outcomes (what the students will be able to do at the end of the course) gave me a chance to pause and reflect on how all four language skills need to be integrated into each day of class. Lang provides the reader with a detailed list of what needs to be included in any syllabus.

Lang makes reflections of his own, especially on the first day, offering advice on how to engage with the material from the very first day of the semester. He observes that "Determining how students can participate in the course, and make their voices heard in and outside of the classroom, should factor into every decision you make in your pedagogy, including decisions you make about the first day of the semester" (28). Linking participation, pedagogy and setting the tone on the first day gives all professors much to plan. Where foreign languages are concerned, my thoughts turned to our traditional set up of a semi-circle that bolsters participation and is usually instituted on the first day. Lang suggests asking students to write down and hand in three questions that they would like to have answered by the last day of the semester. I imagine such an exercise would produce many cultural questions. Lang even suggests a way to learn students' names on the first day: greet them individually at the door, which also fosters a sense of community.

*On Course* contains chapters on teaching with technology, giving lectures, and facilitating discussions, and teaching with small groups. Lang wisely advises his readers to "Vary your teaching methods. No single teaching technique should constitute the sole pedagogical method in any classroom; the most effective teachers are those who use multiple approaches..." (64). In current teaching assistantships graduate students are guided to do exactly that, both in creating a routine for students and building a series of pedagogically varied activities within that routine. I believe this type of structured variance is what Lang refers to in his discussion of Week 1, where he emphasizes the interconnection between participation and pedagogy. The tone beginners and seasoned professors need to set on the first day brings this interconnection to fruition in the form of successfully completed learning outcomes over the course of the semester and on the last day.

When it comes to assignments and grading, Lang reminds his readers of the importance of explaining the link between a given assignment and its learning outcome. He recommends grading with rubrics because they offer more flexibility within the process of evaluation in addition to reemphasizing the most important elements (and therefore skills) of the assignment. The humanities do not often grade on a curve; Lang explains that grading on a curve fosters a false sense of competition and defeats the purpose of assigning grades, which should be used as teaching tools. He recommends using one or more of the following three methods: percentages, letters and points but stresses the

importance of transparency. Grading is an area in which many novice teachers find it useful to experiment. Lang's advice on transparency is very sound as is creating a one-week deadline for handing back assignments, with thoughtful but not an overwhelming number of comments.

For those interested in delving deeper into the pedagogical questions behind Lang's theories, he has included chapters titled "Students as Learners" and "Students as People," corresponding with Weeks 7 and 8.

Of particular interest are his chapters on work/life balance and how maintaining it reenergizes our efforts in the classroom. Lang discusses the importance of using gaps in time to plan ahead (but not too far ahead), write up research ideas (two pages at a time), and complete service obligations. Such advice and techniques can help prevent burnout. Variations on pedagogical approaches can also help prevent burnout, as Lang points out. Again, he brings his advice full circle to the start of the semester. He suggests "five experiments": posters, field trips, ink-shedding, mock trials, and case studies to help reenergize the class. All of these can be utilized in a foreign language classroom, depending on the level.

He closes *On Course* by addressing common problems that arise, student evaluations, and how to wrap up the semester. He stresses the importance of ascertaining what the students learned, how they learned it and what the instructor did to help them learn.

*On Course* is helpful to novice and seasoned professors alike. Lang beautifully articulates his observations and advice. The only change necessary is a rewriting of the table of contents so that it better reflects the actual structure of the book.

Pamela Shuggi  
Affiliate Instructor of Spanish  
Loyola University Maryland  
Baltimore, MD

**Hildebrandt, Susan A., and Pete Swanson.** *Understanding the World Language edTPA: Research-Based Policy and Practice.* Charlotte, NC: IAP-Information Age Publishing, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-68123-578-3.

The aim of *Understanding the World Language edTPA: Research-Based Policy and Practice* is to provide readers with a comprehensive guide to the new teacher performance portfolio. The authors discuss the portfolio's required components, federal and state policies concerning teacher evaluation, and research and hands-on experience from their own respective programs. The target audience for this book includes educators who work in world language (WL) teacher education programs and are interested in better understanding edTPA requirements and, in turn, committed to helping their teacher candidates succeed as future WL teachers.

This book consists of eight chapters. In Chapter 1, "What is edTPA?," the authors provide background information and historical context for the edTPA—a comprehensive performance assessment that seeks to evaluate teacher candidates in three areas: planning for instruction; instructing and engaging students in learning; and assessing student learning. A discussion about the issues of teacher effectiveness and teacher candidate assessment follows. Chapter 2, "Getting Started with Program and Course Suggestions,"

focuses on several areas: recommendations for preparing teacher candidates to succeed on the edTPA; resources from the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) to support teacher candidates in their understanding of the edTPA; discussion of the roles that colleges of education and language departments have in the edTPA process; technology use as it is related to creating and submitting the edTPA portfolio; and suggestions for integrating the edTPA into the methods course and the entire WL teacher preparation program.

In Chapter 3, “Contexts for Learning,” the authors provide suggestions for the critical task of selecting a school and focal class for the WL teacher candidate. The chapter then turns to a discussion of students: heritage language learners, English Language Learners, and students with learning plans (IEPs and 504 plans). The authors conclude by addressing how teacher candidates should approach diverse classrooms in a positive manner. Chapter 4, “Beginning at the End,” focuses on assessment. Backwards design, writing effective and measurable instructional objectives, the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines*, Integrated Performance Assessments, and feedback are among the topics discussed in this chapter. The authors ground their discussion of assessment practices within a sociocultural approach to language teaching and assessment.

In Chapter 5, “Planning for Teaching and Learning,” the authors begin by revisiting their earlier discussion on writing performance objectives. The remaining sections of the chapter focus on the planning process for creating lessons with meaningful cultural contexts, the *World-readiness Standards for Learning Languages*, the three modes of communication, and high-leverage teaching practices. The chapter concludes with a case study. In Chapter 6, “Instructing and Engaging Students in Learning,” the authors turn their attention to the second edTPA task, whose focus is on the instructional process. In doing so, they address several core WL concepts thought to contribute to successful learning, such as creating a secure learning environment, considering learners’ characteristics and assets when planning learning experiences, and using feedback strategies that simultaneously promote language acquisition while not contributing to learner anxiety. Reflective practices that support teacher candidates in their pedagogic development are discussed, as well as the five rubrics associated with Task 2. The chapter concludes with final thoughts and recommendations for preparing this task.

In Chapter 7, “Activities for the Methods Classroom,” the authors offer in-class activities that instructors can use in WL teacher education courses to help teacher candidates meet edTPA requirements. Activities include using Bloom’s Taxonomy as a framework to guide K-12 students to higher levels of language learning and production, case study analysis, and using Tweets to promote teacher candidate reflection about the connection between second language acquisition theory and practice in the classroom. Resources from SCALE and Illinois State University are also presented. Chapter 8, “Concluding Thoughts,” outlines general concerns surrounding the edTPA as described in the literature on teacher education (e.g., inherent challenges of establishing a standardized measurement of effective teaching or student teaching placement challenges). WL specific concerns are then discussed: target language usage, meaningful cultural context, and lack of models to support program faculty and teacher candidates. In response to these concerns, the authors offer suggestions for making edTPA a better reflection of WL teacher effectiveness (158).

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Written by two experts in the field, this authoritative, well-written book is a must-read for language educators who work with WL teacher candidates. This book will not only help teacher educators prepare WL teacher candidates to meet the demands of the edTPA, but it will also support them in making important curricular changes to their teacher preparation programs.

Todd A. Hernández  
Associate Professor of Spanish  
Marquette University  
Milwaukee, WI

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Thomas S. Conner, Review Editor

St. Norbert College  
De Pere, WI 54115-2009  
[tom.conner@snc.edu](mailto:tom.conner@snc.edu)

920-403-3102

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## Checklist for Manuscript Preparation

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