

## Developing intercultural competence via semi-directed cross-cultural interviews

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### Abstract

An intermediate-level French conversation class module, Francophone Interviews, is designed to advance university students' oral language use and foster their development of intercultural competence. The module involves four phases: (a) class discussion on conducting cross-cultural interviews, (b) collaborative development of interview questions, (c) student-initiated one-on-one interviews with native francophones, and (d) oral reporting of interview findings in student presentations. The module addresses student learning outcomes for the course, while solidly placed within the Five Cs framework. Additionally, the module inspires communicative language use in a real-world context that meaningfully engages foreign language students in a personalized and learning experience.

### Background and Context

In spite of widespread acceptance of the national Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2008) as a curricular framework for many foreign language (FL) programs across the country, relative vagueness lingers on how best to address the Cultures standards.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1978, Robinson introduced the notion of the “magic-carpet-ride-to-another-culture syndrome” as a false conjecture that study of a foreign language consequentially results in understanding of the

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target culture(s). Yet today, there is growing discussion in the field of FL education advocating for the development of models for the teaching and assessment of students' attainment of cultural competence (Schulz, 2007). Recurrent across the spectrum of programs are mismatches between current classroom practices and programs' stated positions on the teaching of culture. Byrnes (2010) points out that the profession experiences continued dissatisfaction with the outcome of its efforts to address culture in the curriculum, yet there are nonetheless emergent

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proposals to move the agenda forward. Most particularly, FL educators are seeking ways to facilitate learning experiences that genuinely address the perspectives underlying the practices and products of the cultures being studied. That is, FL teachers are eager to pursue approaches that go beyond the level of compare/contrast and that advance learners' awareness and understanding of the interaction between and among cultural practices, products, and perspectives. The Francophone Interviews Module (FIM) is a course assignment that represents one program's efforts to penetrate the veneer of cultural elements and customs by delving deeper to facilitate a learning experience that fosters intercultural competence.

To plan for instructional delivery and classroom implementation of a course assignment such as FIM, there is need to bridge the gap between the broad, yet elusive nature of the Cultures goal: "Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures" and the needed specificity of measurable student learning outcomes for an assignment. An abbreviated and adapted version of Byram's (1997) seminal model of intercultural competence was thereby used as a framework for articulating specific student outcomes for the FIM to bridge that gap.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Byram's model was used to frame the project in two other ways: (a) as an instructional point of departure and guidance for the course instructor in facilitating student development of meaningful and appropriate interview questions as well as in evaluating the content of student presentations; and (b) as substance for post-project questionnaire items to elicit student feedback reflecting their personal and academic learning experiences during implementation of the module.

As others have also observed, Fantini noted that intercultural communicative competence represents a "complex of abilities" (2005, p. 1). This complexity is clearly illustrated by the detail manifest through the twenty-nine objectives in Byram's model of intercultural competence. Despite an inevitable complexity necessitated when articulating a construct that within itself hosts a constellation of notions, there is nonetheless a simplicity in the essence of intercultural competence, if one considers a straightforward look at social interaction. That is, human interchange fundamentally relies on languages, and "the experience of otherness" through languages and their associated cultures is a basic requisite to attainment of intercultural competence (Cohen-Emerique, 1993). The FIM brings together content and context to cultivate intercultural competence in language learners. Intercultural competence is defined here as a multifaceted

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ability—including knowledge, skills, and dispositions—which is critical for effective interaction with members of other cultures and which reflects a deliberate awareness of differences and similarities and a conscious de-centering that considers others' perspectives without accentuating foreignness or stereotyping (Byram, 2003; Byram, 2010; Colles, 1994; Elola & Oskoz, 2008; Fantini, 2005; Scarino, 2010). The content is interview questions mediated with language, and the context is interpersonal exchange via cross-cultural interview.

## Classroom Delivery and Implementation of the FIM

With respect to classroom delivery, the FIM has four phases. The first phase of the module involves in-class and online discussion on the nature of a cross-cultural interview. The second phase includes individual and group in-class activities and homework tasks related to the development of interview questions. The third phase involves students independently scheduling and conducting their one-on-one interviews. And finally, the module culminates with in-class presentations that report on the interviews. Concurrent with students' completed revisions of their interview questions at the end of phase two, the instructor models a final oral presentation, based on an interview with a native francophone conducted in the same manner and aligned with the same criteria for evaluation by which students will be assessed. Although a sequential approach is necessary for dealing with the time management demands inherent in any course delivery, implementation of the module is fluid; and within reasonable parameters, the timing of the phases is gauged by student readiness and responsiveness to teachable moments. Moreover, the locus of control with the FIM shifts over time, beginning with teacher-facilitated discussions that merge into increasingly student-directed work in the form of various student collaborative tasks, and culminating with an independent learner reflective activity.

The goal and objectives of the module are shared with students from the outset. The broad goal of the FIM is to advance oral proficiency in French and to promote intercultural competence. The objectives addressing this goal are as follows:

- a. Students will create and utilize interview questions that employ a breadth of vocabulary and expressions to meaningfully navigate a cultural exchange;
- b. students will plan and carry out one-on-one interviews with a francophone individual; and
- c. students will prepare and deliver oral presentations based on the content of their interviews, in which they narrate and describe in major time frames, using connected discourse of paragraph length.

**Step one.** Over the course of approximately four class sessions, a portion of class time is dedicated to articulating the nature of the upcoming interview assignment, including an overview of the four-phase module, suggestions for making contact with native speakers of French, and general expectations for participation in individual and group tasks both inside and outside of class. The instructor shares information on campus resources for identifying native

speakers of French, such as international student organizations, a conversation partners program for international students, and the native speaker tutors working in the foreign language resource center. Students offer additional suggestions from their own experience on how to make contact with native speakers on campus or in the community. Typically, numerous students indicate that they already have someone in mind to interview, even at this early juncture.

In addition, a simple step-by-step process is proposed for getting started, especially for students expressing insecurity about confidence in spoken French language skills, and those experiencing inhibitions about approaching someone with whom they have not been previously acquainted. Also, to facilitate students' planning, the instructor provides them with specificity regarding a time span of dates when interviews should be conducted and dates when oral presentations will be delivered. To explicitly reinforce the message of courtesy norms and cultural sensitivity, the following two points are repeated and discussed during each class session leading up to the student oral presentations. Advice: (a) be open to unanticipated answers; and (b) be adaptable to other possibilities in terms of questions or topics. Over time, students develop growing insight and generate more reflective feedback in response to these prompts.

**Step two.** As a brainstorming activity, class members share initial ideas of topics for the interviews, reflecting personal interests. The topics are recorded as a point of departure for possible interview questions, and students are given the out-of-class assignment for each to post a submission to the online working document of possible interview questions. The instructor collates the posted submissions, and the next step involves ongoing and collaborative development of the list of possible interview questions as an in-class activity. Students are encouraged to consider the nature and content of questions not only in response to their own interests, but also taking into account appropriate topics for speaking with a new acquaintance and considering the viewpoints of an acquaintance that may be unknown or largely unfamiliar to the interviewer. Complementary to question development, an additional component of step two involves a preliminary discussion centered on cultural sensitivity and courtesy that is framed around the following points, all of which hinge on an intentional open-endedness: (a) When asking questions about daily life or traditions, extend the questions by inviting the interviewee to share perspectives or attitudes behind the customs and traditions; (b) we are generally inclined to focus on surface similarities and differences between cultures; in the interview go further by exploring more deeply any historical, geographical, or societal explanations that might provide some basis for the similarities and differences; (c) keep in mind that there are many viewpoints that may explain patterns of daily life, customs, or cultural products; and (d) our responsibility as global citizens is to remain open-minded to unknown or unexpected possibilities and discover something about our diverse world.

**Step three.** Along with continued input and clarification on the list of evolving interview questions being developed during step three, collaborative discussion techniques are employed to expand upon the evolving topic of how to effectively conduct intercultural interviews. (The two points of advice

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mentioned above as well as the subsequent pointers on cultural sensitivity and courtesy are recycled.) Students are given opportunities in class to rehearse asking the proposed interview questions to classmates. Similar to the ethnographic interview approach reported by Bateman (2002) and Robinson-Stuart & Nocon (1996), students receive explicit guidance on “probing a point” by extending initial questions with follow-up related questions and reactions to the interviewee’s comments. To the extent possible, the instructor assigns students to pairs where personal interests are likely to be less similar in order to inspire more natural curiosity and to facilitate development of question-asking skills. Class discussion on using linguistic structures that convey courtesy is supported with explicit examples, such as the use of the conditional tense for politeness and attenuation and structuring open-ended questions that invite extended responses beyond yes/no. Students practice using the list of interview questions as a guide to expand discussion of topics that prove fruitful and as a prompt to support the flow of conversation when language competency or confidence eludes them.

**Step four.** For the final phase of question development, the instructor shares the near-final version of possible interview questions, which are grouped thematically. Class discussion ensues on the flexible usability of the groupings according to the interviewer’s and interviewee’s interests, the degree of familiarity between the two individuals (from brand new acquaintance to previously established relationship), and in response to the conversational flow of the interview. Even given the many dynamics of the interview, including all the potential nuances of intercultural exchange, the influence of subtleties between the interviewer’s and interviewee’s personalities, and the variability of competence and confidence in the interviewers’ French oral proficiencies, students demonstrate an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the interview dynamic over time as the FIM evolves. Such development is exhibited during this fourth step as students offer final suggestions to clarify question wording or potential extension and alternate questions in the various thematically-organized categories. Finally, the collaboratively developed interview questions are posted on the course website for student use. (See Appendix A.) During step four, the instructor discloses the evaluative scoring rubric to be used in assessing student presentations. (See Appendix B.) It is at this point that the instructor models the oral presentation, expecting the exemplar to function as an invitation for students to proceed.<sup>3</sup> Here again, students and instructor cooperatively review the advice and pointers on cultural sensitivity and courtesy norms. Students are invited to share specifics on how they anticipate acknowledging and adhering to the suggested tenets of cultural sensitivity and courtesy.

**Step five.** The FIM culminates with prepared individual student presentations. Students use a visually-supported presentation program, such as PowerPoint, to enhance delivery of their oral presentations, adhering to general guiding principles for effective visually-supported presentations. Presentations are guided by a specified time allotment of seven to ten minutes. Students listening to their

classmates' presentations receive participation points for contribution of meaningful and responsive questions posed afterward.

### Assessment of the FIM

**Student Learning.** One of the more challenging aspects of the FIM is the assessment of student learning. Herein the module positively contributes to current dialogue among language educators, heeding the call for instructional approaches that focus on the nexus of language and culture to advance learners' intercultural understanding and competencies (Johnson, 2009). In fact, Magnan (2008) goes so far as to suggest that the profession prioritize either or both the Cultures and Communities standards as critical to advancing communicative competence, as understood by the Communication standard. That is, as we accept that the notion of communicative competence be broadened as intercultural communicative competence, which implies a commitment to teaching and learning about authentic cultural notions, there is a requisite of both linguistic and social (practices, products, perspectives) knowledge—an interdependent Communication and Cultures, if you will. Moreover, genuine intercultural communicative competence is advanced in the meaning-making that "... resides in the dialectic formed between communities and individuals"—hence, an interdependent Communication and Communities (Magnan, 2008, p. 358). The FIM responds to these calls within the profession as a multifaceted learning experience that merges Communication, Cultures, and Communities and that culminates in an authentic, holistic, and meaningful applied task.

However, the FIM faces a familiar dilemma inherent to assessment of learning—the conundrum of quantifiably measuring a multidimensional and variable construct such as intercultural competence. A notable strength of the FIM is the way in which the module's repertoire of activities obliges students to be actively involved participants as they build on their existing knowledge and understandings, while interpreting and constructing meaning. However, there is risk of diminishing the processes of interpretation and construction of meaning by tying these processes to curricular objectives (or outcome statements, such as we have come to know these planning organizers during recent decades of criterion-referenced measurement for accountability) and potentially undercutting the essence of the concepts we are asking students to explore (Morgan, 2007).

To the extent that the driving purpose of the FIM is to facilitate learning experiences that hold potential for cultivating intercultural competence in students, the assessment component of the FIM is designed to mirror the developmental nature of intercultural competence as a multifaceted ability. Clearly, intercultural competence cannot be evaluated in terms of "either you have it or you don't," and its progression cannot be effectively measured in discrete-point terms. Nonetheless, the use of a descriptive evaluative rubric provides useful guidance to both students and instructor. For students, the FIM incorporates an evaluative rubric

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*The FIM adheres to the principles of constructivist learning theory, taking into account the active participation of students in creating their own meaning as they learn.*

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for the final presentation, which students use for guidance as they design and prepare their final presentations (See Appendix B). For the instructor, the evaluative rubric brings focus to the task of interpretive evaluation. The criteria and performance descriptors provide guidance in attributing point values to a diverse range of student performance of qualitative variability.

Unquestionably, it is difficult to quantify variable student performance that is personalized and diverse. Moreover, efforts to gauge the development of intercultural competence are necessarily challenging since its nature is complex and multifaceted. However, the assessment component of the FIM stands up to the challenge. Although the process of student evaluation may be thorny and consistent clear-cut paths for navigating roadblocks are elusive, the FIM presents authentic and meaningful opportunity for students to advance their intercultural competencies. Furthermore, instructor engagement in the complicated process of assessing such student growth leads to increased insight into qualitative assessment.

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The single print assessment instrument employed for the FIM is the oral presentation evaluative scoring rubric, but this is not to say that this final presentation grade stands alone as the sole evaluation of student work during the FIM. Rather, according to quantity and quality of products generated, students earn points throughout the span of the module—points that are granted for participation in class discussions and mock-interview class activities, contribution to online discussions, significant input to each stage of interview question development, and participation as engaged listeners during classmates' presentations. With respect to evaluation of the final presentation as well as each of the other module components, each of these several measures of assessment results in assigning points to student performance.

**The instructional module.** The discussion turns now from a focus on assessment of student learning in the FIM to assessment of the FIM itself, as a course module. Findings from a preliminary evaluation of the FIM as a course module addressing intercultural competence suggest that the module holds potential for cultivating intercultural competence in intermediate-level language learners in the my own university setting.<sup>4</sup> Although not in the context of an empirical study, anonymous student feedback was collected via questionnaire to gain insight into the use of Byram's objectives as an organizing principle and to buttress anecdotal findings on the effectiveness of the module. (See Appendix C.) Because the questionnaire items have not been validated, the findings generated from student feedback are strictly limited to the institutional context, perhaps even the narrow circumstance of this particular course and course instructor. These preliminary findings, nonetheless, generally indicate that students indeed have experiences during the FIM that mirror features of intercultural competence. It should be noted that the FIM has not, to date, been implemented as a pre-/post-experimental study, and no baseline measure of students' pre-existing levels of intercultural

competence has been ascertained, so developmental growth or change strictly cannot be speculated upon, given these questionnaire data.

Results from the questionnaire items reflect that both (a) Bryam’s (1997) five goals and twelve objectives addressed in the FIM show an overall average of 72% of responses indicating *agreement* and (b) other items representing accepted tenets of intercultural competence show an overall average of 72% of responses indicating *agreement*. That is, students respond that they personally agree with the particular experiences or features of intercultural competence highlighted in those thirty-six questionnaire items. (See Table 1.) Again, in the absence of any statistical analysis, these results, at face value, indicate that the majority of students report having experiences during the FIM that reflect characteristics of intercultural competence. These limited preliminary findings invite further investigation of a more structured nature, which could provide additional insight into the assessment of student learning related to intercultural competence, to be addressed in the Discussion section.

**Table 1.** Student Agreement on Intercultural Competence Questionnaire Items

Byram’s Goal Areas (I-V) and other Intercultural Competence Notions Addressed	Which Items?	Average of Agree* Responses	
I. Attitudes	7, 8, 9, 10, 38	68%	72%
II. Knowledge	11, 12, 13, 14	67%	
III. Skills of Interpreting & Relating	15, 16, 17, 18	67%	
IV. Skills of Discovery & Interaction	19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26	78%	
V. Critical Cultural Awareness	27, 28, 40	81%	
Not specifically linked to Byram’s Goals/Objectives, but generally representative of literature on intercultural competence	3, 4, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39	72%	

\* Note: Both 4-agree and 5-strongly agree responses are tallied together.

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Student feedback on the two open-ended questionnaire items further buttress this preliminary general finding. They generated correlated responses testifying to positive personal experiences regarding intercultural competence when asked, “*What did you personally gain from the Francophone Interview assignment?*” and their comments point to awareness of their own culture and its impact on their views of others (Bateman, 2002).

“This was my favorite assignment! It was the most work but worth it. I personally gained insight on not only another culture but my culture and why I don’t have to be the *typical American*.”

“I know a little more what other countries think of the U.S. I learned about how people had to adapt to a new culture. I want to learn about more cultures.”

“I gained confidence when having a conversation in French. I learned that different values correspond with different cultures.”

“I was able to understand the French culture better and was able to relate to it and make connections to my Mexican culture. I also saw very interesting differences between the American and French cultures, which allowed me to appreciate diversity and differences.”

“I was able to personally talk about an outsider’s view of the United States and also give my thoughts about their country of origin.”

“I learned how to better communicate with a person who I am not accustomed to talking to in French. I learned many cultural differences and how Americans are perceived.”

“Simply seeing my culture through the eyes of a foreigner; it is quite enlightening and very interesting.”

“I enjoyed the assignment and it helped me with my other interviews and presentations. Once I did a presentation in French, all other presentations and interviews in English did not scare me.”

“The ability to conduct better interviews: I have a better idea of what kind of questions to ask and how to improvise during an interview to make it more conversational.”

“I like learning about other cultures and what their opinions are. I think it is important to know the facts before judging others. Stereotypes are not always true. I learned to be open towards others even more.”

“I personally gained a wonderful opportunity getting to know my interviewee. She was very interesting and she made me want to visit her native country.”

## Discussion & Pedagogical Implications

Given the positive anecdotal student reactions and the promising findings from the preliminary questionnaire that document their experiences with the FIM as featuring characteristics of intercultural competence, the FIM shows promise for more deliberate investigation. Although this report states that the two main goals of the FIM are development of oral proficiency and intercultural competency, this discussion focuses primarily on the latter. Certainly, the nature of a conversation class and the requisite oral exchange of the interview task and reporting-out assignment imply significant opportunity to advance oral skills, and there are explicit oral assessment features included in the FIM evaluative rubric as well. However, with respect to the stated emphasis on intercultural competence, I am most interested in the comprehensive and representative assessment of student learning in that domain. Thus, there is reason to question the true alignment of the module's assessment plan to the nature and purpose of the FIM. In sync with the spirit of the FIM, triangulation of multiple methods of assessment could strengthen the module. If the notion of intercultural competence is a multifaceted and variable construct and its attainment requires active engagement of the intercultural learner, there should be aspects of the module's assessment that come from appraisals, apart from those of the teacher. What do students have to say about their intercultural learning vis-à-vis the FIM? In what ways do students believe that they have discovered new perspectives on (or interpretations of) their own and another's culture? How might students communicate an increased awareness or a changed perspective of self and others? What types of opportunities might allow students to elaborate on their development of ability to identify ethnocentric perspectives in their own or another culture? How might students describe abilities they have developed to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices? How can students be given the opportunity to explain the ways they deal with knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction? What types of opportunities can be provided for students to clarify how they were able to develop an explanatory system for the concepts or values of events they learned about from their interviewees? In sum, what measures can be implemented for students to analyze their learning experiences? Scarino (2007) offers some inspiring ideas for assessment types (e.g., journals, observations, story-telling, in-focus discussions, student-to-student dialogues) that give students voice, highlight their perspectives, and more aptly appraise "learning as an active process of knowledge construction and sense-making" (p. 4).

Dovetailing with this identified need for greater student voice is a relative obstacle with respect to management of the FIM, which the instructor has encountered over time. The nature of this management challenge further supports the incontrovertible need to grant students increased agency in their learning process. From the outset and throughout the various phases of the module, students periodically ask numerous questions seeking specific directives and incremental guidelines on conducting the interview and delivering the final presentation. Of course these student concerns are addressed and their questions are answered, but there lingers the matter of why these type of queries persist. It might be suggested

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that student anticipation, and at times anxiety, about the lack of concrete steps spelled out in discrete terms mirrors limited experience with this nature of assignment, perhaps even limited experience with the amorphous nature of intercultural interaction. Herein lies the compelling pedagogical challenge. With deliberate intention about preserving a supportive learning environment that fosters positive affective connections and inspires motivation, there is a prime opportunity to further engage students in consideration of self-awareness, flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity as dispositions supporting intercultural competence—even as they encounter the personal discomfort of an indeterminate task in their personal roles as students who desire academic success and affirmation. Moreover, there promises to be a fruitful yield in dispositional development related to intercultural competence when students can consciously reflect upon and process their learning experiences, with the added benefit of diffusing some anxiety and strengthening self-efficacy.

Bateman's (2002) study incorporating ethnographic interviews offers an approach that could aptly address FIM management concerns while augmenting the my intention to cultivate learner agency through student-directed learning experiences. The active listening aspect of the ethnographic approach calls for interviewers to engage in reflection of their own cultural beliefs. Incorporating this self-assessment and the structured classroom activities and student tasks associated with it, as outlined by Bateman (2002), may serve to reduce student anxiety over the indeterminate by providing increased structured tasks that foster agency and inspire confidence.

The promising prospects for further investigation into the FIM and its increased potential in contributing to the growing dialogue in the profession surrounding intercultural competence is hopeful. Notwithstanding the ambitious yet sincere professional commitment to contribute in preparing today's students as global citizens equipped with intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes, this discussion would be incomplete if I failed to address my own professional growth experience as a result of engaging with this FIM. Designing, developing, implementing, and advancing the FIM to facilitate student learning generated rich substance for invaluable reflection on the voyage as teacher, learner, and intercultural citizen.

## Notes

1. Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures. **Standard 2.1:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied. **Standard 2.2:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied. (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2008)
2. Byram's (1997) model for teaching, learning and assessment of intercultural competence comprises five goal areas and twenty-nine objectives. The twelve

objectives addressed in the FIM project, as excerpted from Byram's model, are denoted with an asterisk (\*).

I. **Attitudes** (*savoir-être*): curiosity & openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.

Objectives:

- a. willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or to profit from others.\*
- b. interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices.\*
- c. willingness to question the values and presuppositions in cultural practices and products in one's own environment.
- d. readiness to experience the different stages of adaptation to and interaction with another culture during a period of residence.
- e. Readiness to engage with the conventions and rites of verbal and non-verbal communication and interaction.

II. **Knowledge** (*savoirs*): of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.

Objectives (knowledge of/about):

- a. historical and contemporary relationships between one's own and one's interlocutor's countries.
- b. the means of achieving contact with interlocutors from another country (at a distance or in proximity), of travel to and from, and the institutions which facilitate contact or help resolve problems.
- c. the types of cause and process of misunderstanding between interlocutors of different cultural origins.
- d. the national memory of one's own country and how its events are related to and seen from the perspective of other countries.
- e. the national memory of one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own country.
- f. the national definitions of geographical space in one's own country, and how these are perceived from the perspective of other countries.
- g. the national definitions of geographical space in one's interlocutor's country and the perspective on them from one's own.
- h. the processes and institutions of socialisation in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country.\*
- i. social distinctions and their principal markers, in one's own country and one's interlocutor's.
- j. institutions, and perceptions of them, which impinge on daily life within one's own and in one's interlocutor's country and which conduct and influence relationships between them.\*
- k. the process of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country.\*

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III. **Skills of interpreting & relating** (*savoir comprendre*): ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.

Objectives (ability to):

- a. identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins.\*
- b. identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present.\*
- c. mediate between conflicting interpretations of phenomena.

IV. **Skills of discovery & interaction** (*savoir apprendre/faire*): ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

Objectives (ability to):

- a. elicit from an interlocutor the concepts or values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena.\*
- b. identify significant references within and across cultures and elicit their significance and connotations.\*
- c. identify similar and dissimilar processes of interaction, verbal and non-verbal, and negotiate an appropriate use of them in specific circumstances.
- d. use in real-time an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different country and culture taking into consideration the degree of one's existing familiarity with the country, culture, and language and the extent of difference between one's own and the other.\*
- e. identify contemporary and past relationships between one's own and the other culture and society.
- f. identify and make use of public and private institutions which facilitate contact with other countries and cultures.
- g. use in real-time knowledge, skills and attitudes for mediation between interlocutors of one's own and a foreign culture.

V. **Critical cultural awareness/political education** (*savoir s'engager*): an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

Objectives (ability to):

- a. identify and interpret explicit or implicit values in documents and events in one's own and other cultures.
- b. make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria.\*
- c. interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptances of

those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes.\*

3. Findings from the student researcher in a faculty and undergraduate student collaborative study suggest that instructor modeling of expected student performance generates enthusiasm in students to prepare their own performances (Hoyt & Greenway, 2010).
4. The use of “intermediate-level” to characterize the context of the FIM is program-specific. The French conversation class is one of three skills level courses in my institution. Enrollees in the course are typically French majors and minors who have presumably reached ACTFL oral proficiency levels in the range of Intermediate-Low – Intermediate-High (in the program's lower division courses or elsewhere) and are expected to attain a proficiency rating of Intermediate-High by the culmination of the skills-level courses (ACTFL, 1999).

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## Appendix A. Cultural Interview Questions

Questions de base: [General questions:]

1. *Quelle est votre nationalité? / Quelle est votre origine? / De quel pays venez-vous? / D'où venez-vous?* [What is your nationality? / What is your heritage? / What country are you from? / Where are you from?]
2. *Depuis quand vivez-vous aux États-Unis? en état X?* [How long have you been in the United States? in State X?]
3. *Pourquoi vous êtes venu(e) aux États-Unis? / Pourriez-vous parler des circonstances de votre déménagement aux États-Unis?* [Why did you come to the United States? / Could you speak about the circumstances surrounding your move to the United States?]
4. *Comment vous vous identifiez? Comme Français(e), Québécois(e), Sénégalais(e), etc... ou Américain(e) ... ou autre?* [How do you see yourself? As French, Quebecois, Senegalese, etc... or American ....or other?]
5. *Avez-vous des préférences soit de chez vous, soit des États-Unis? / Quels sont les aspects que vous préférez de chaque pays (culture)? / Qu'est-ce que vous aimez aux États-Unis?* [Do you prefer your home country or the United States? / What are the aspects of each country (culture) that you prefer? / What do you like about the United States?]
6. *À votre avis, pourquoi pensez-vous qu'il soit important qu'on apprenne une langue étrangère?* [In your opinion, why do you think it is important to learn a foreign language?]

7. *Comment (Dans quelle manière) trouvez-vous que la langue anglaise reflète la culture américaine?* [How (in what ways) do you find that the English language reflects the American culture?]
8. *Qu'est-ce qu'on fait pour passer le temps dans votre culture? Quels sont les passe-temps populaires?* [How do people spend their time in your culture? What are the popular pastimes?]

*Questions de comparaisons culturelles:* [Cultural comparisons questions:]

1. *Quelle est la plus grande différence que vous avez trouvée entre la culture américaine et votre culture? / Quelles sont vos expériences avec ces différences? / Avez-vous rencontré des difficultés à cause des différences culturelles?* [What is the biggest difference you have found between the American culture and your culture? / What experiences have you had regarding these differences? / Have you encountered difficulties as a result of these differences?]
2. *Que pensez-vous des coutumes américaines? / Quelles sont les différences entre les mœurs des Américains et les vôtres? / Croyez-vous que la façon de vivre aux États-Unis est différente de la vôtre?* [What do you think of American customs? / What are the differences between American values and yours? / Do you believe that lifestyle in the United States is different than yours?]
3. *Si vous avez vécu dans plusieurs pays, quel pays est-ce que vous trouvez plus ouvert aux cultures différentes?* [If you have lived in several countries, which country have you found to be the most open to different cultures?]
4. *Comment la nourriture de chez vous est-elle différente de celle des États-Unis? / Quel plat de votre pays vous manque le plus? / Quel plat est-ce que vous aimez aux États-Unis?* [How is the food from your country different from American cuisine? / What dish from your country do you miss the most? / What American dish do you like?]
5. *Quelles sortes de traditions favorites avez-vous? / Quelle est la tradition de chez vous de laquelle vous êtes le plus fier (la plus fière)?* [What kinds of favorite traditions do you have? / What tradition from your country makes you feel the most proud?]
6. *Quelles sont des opinions des Américains que vous aviez avant de venir aux États-Unis? Est-ce que vos opinions ont changé? / Que pensez-vous maintenant des Américains?* [What opinions did you have about Americans before coming to the United States? Have your opinions changed? / What do you think of Americans now?]
7. *Y a-t-il des croyances spécifiques à votre culture? / Avez-vous des croyances personnelles spécifiques à votre culture? ...quelles sortes de croyances? Aux États-Unis, nous avons une «telle et telle» croyance de ... avez-vous quelque chose comme cela?* [Are there beliefs that are particular to your culture? / Do you have personal beliefs that are specific to your culture? ...what types of beliefs? In the United States, we have “such and such” belief about ... Do you have something like that?]

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Questions au sujet de l'adaptation à une nouvelle culture: [Questions on adapting to a new culture:]

1. *J'adore la culture française (ou sénégalaise, ou québécoise, etc...). Pourriez-vous parler de vos impressions de la culture américaine? Quelle est votre impression de la culture américaine? / Pourriez-vous partager deux traditions spécifiques que vous aimez de la culture américaine et deux traditions que vous n'aimez pas? / Est-ce qu'il y a des traditions que vous aimez particulièrement ou que vous n'aimez pas tellement chez les Américains?* [I love the French culture (or Senegalese, or Quebecoise, etc...). Could you talk about your impressions of American culture? What is your impression of American culture? / Could you share two particular American traditions that you like and two that you don't like? / Are there American traditions that you particularly like or that you don't especially like?]
2. *De quelle(s) manière(s) vous êtes-vous adapté(e) aux États-Unis? / Quand vous êtes arrivé(e) aux États-Unis, est-ce que vous vous êtes adapté(e) facilement, ou pas facilement? / Quelles stratégies avez-vous utilisées pour vous adapter? / Quels sont les obstacles que vous avez rencontrés? Avez-vous rencontré de la difficulté en apprenant l'anglais?* [In what ways have you adjusted to the United States? / When you arrived in the United States, did you adapt easily or not so easily? / What strategies have you used to acclimate? / What kinds of obstacles have you encountered? / Have you encountered difficulty in learning English?]
3. *Qu'est-ce qui vous manque le plus de votre pays d'origine?* [What do you miss most about your homeland?]
4. *Avec quelle fréquence rentrez-vous dans votre pays d'origine? / Qu'est-ce que vous attendez pendant vos visites?* [How often do you return to your homeland? / What do you look forward to during your visits?]
5. *Comment est-ce que vous êtes traité(e) différemment aux États-Unis comparativement à votre pays d'origine? / Avez-vous souffert des préjugés parce que vous êtes d'un pays francophone? / Racontez-moi s'il vous plaît votre histoire. Comment vous vous êtes senti(e)?* [How are you treated differently in the United States compared to your home country? / Have you experienced discrimination because you are from a French-speaking country? / Tell me a little bit about your story. How do you feel?]

*L'essentiel est de ne pas mettre quelqu'un dans l'embaras; plutôt, on désire mettre «notre personne» à l'aise.* [What is essential is that you do not make someone feel uncomfortable. Instead, we desire to put “our person” at ease.]

- *Une question ouverte est préférable à une question «oui / non», parce que les questions «oui / non» impliquent une idée préconçue, comme s'il y a les réponses figées. Une question ouverte invite une discussion libre de la complexité de vie.* [An open question is better than a “yes/no” question, because “yes/no” questions imply an assumption, as if there were set answers. An open question invites free dialogue about the complexities of life.]

- Une question ouverte est préférable à une question qui cite ou nomme les sujets. Par exemple, la question: «Quelles sont les difficultés politiques et économiques chez vous?» présente la position de l'interviewer qu'il y a ces problèmes. Cette question «Quelles sont les difficultés politiques et économiques chez vous?» aussi identifie les sujets précis pour la personne interviewée. Il est mieux de permettre à la personne interviewée d'identifier le sujet, de choisir la direction de la conversation. [An open question is preferable to a question that states or names the topic. For example, the question: "What are the political and economic problems in your country?" portrays an assumption to the interviewee that these problems exist. This question "What are the political and economic problems in your country?" also specifically identifies the topic for the interviewee. It is better to allow your interviewee to identify the topic, to choose the direction the conversation will take.]

**Appendix B. Scoring Rubric for Cultural Interview Presentations**

Étudiant(e) de FREN3302: \_\_\_\_\_

Personne interviewée: \_\_\_\_\_ Son origine: \_\_\_\_\_

	4-5 Critères clairement adressés ou au delà des attentes	2-3 Critères adressés	1 Ap- prochant les critères	0 Pas accep- table/ critères non- traités
<b>Contenu</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ présentation contextualisée</li> <li>♦ résumé général des réponses</li> <li>♦ durée appropriée (7 à 10 minutes)</li> <li>♦ exemples / spécificité pour illustrer les thèmes</li> </ul>				
<b>Analyse</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ impression personnelle</li> <li>♦ ce que vous avez appris / ce que vous avez trouvé intéressant</li> </ul>				

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<p><b>Présentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ débit aisé</li> <li>◆ évidence d'une bonne préparation</li> <li>◆ voix, gestes, et matériel d'appui convenables</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Vocabulaire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ usage des mots et expressions visés pour le thème particulier</li> <li>◆ pas d'anglais</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Prononciation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ compréhensible aux auditeurs</li> <li>◆ rythme, accent, intonation convenable au français académique / français standard</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Aspect linguistique: Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ l'usage correct du discours indirect</li> <li>◆ précision grammaticale</li> <li>◆ accord des sujets/verbes, genres, nombres...</li> <li>◆ temps verbaux employés correctement</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Aspect linguistique: Fonction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ l'usage des divers temps verbaux convenables</li> <li>◆ la narration (longueur des paragraphes)</li> <li>◆ la description (discours lié)</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Divers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ créativité</li> <li>◆ impression globale</li> </ul>				

**Barème:**

35-32 pts = A+

31-28 pts = A

27-20 pts = B

19-14 pts = C

13-7 pts = D

FREN3302 Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Person interviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ His/her heritage: \_\_\_\_\_

	4-5 Criteria clearly addressed or beyond expectations	2-3 Criteria addressed	1 Approach- ing the criteria	0 Not accep- table/ criteria not addressed
<b>Content</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ contextualised presentation</li> <li>◆ general summary of responses</li> <li>◆ appropriate length (7-10 minutes)</li> <li>◆ examples provided to support the themes</li> </ul>				
<b>Analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ personal impression</li> <li>◆ what you learned / what you found interesting</li> </ul>				
<b>Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ ease of delivery</li> <li>◆ evidence of solid preparation</li> <li>◆ voice, gestures, and suitable resources for support</li> </ul>				
<b>Vocabulary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ use of appropriate words and expressions targeted for the particular theme</li> <li>◆ no English</li> </ul>				
<b>Pronunciation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ comprehensible to your listeners</li> <li>◆ rhythm, accent, intonation suitable to academic French (Standard French)</li> </ul>				

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<b>Linguistic aspect: Grammar</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ correct use of indirect discourse</li> <li>◆ grammatical accuracy</li> <li>◆ agreement of subjects/verbs, genders, numbers...</li> <li>◆ verb tenses correctly applied</li> </ul>				
<b>Linguistic aspect: Function</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ use of various and appropriate verb tenses</li> <li>◆ narration (paragraph-length discourse)</li> <li>◆ description (connected discourse)</li> </ul>				
<b>Miscellaneous</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ creativity</li> <li>◆ overall impression</li> </ul>				

### Scale:

35-32 pts = A+

31-28 pts = A

27-20 pts = B

19-14 pts = C

13-7 pts = D

## Appendix C. Anonymous Student Feedback Questionnaire

### Questionnaire for FREN 3302 Students: Francophone Interviews Assignment

Please mark you responses according to the following scale:

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
strongly disagree	disagree	don't know	agree	strongly agree

*FI = Francophone Interviews*

*FI assignment = the whole sequence of (1) question development, (2) preparing & conducting interviews, (3) and reporting-out on interviews in class presentations.*

1. The FI assignment exposed me to authentic practices of a francophone culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
2. The FI assignment exposed me to authentic perspectives of a francophone culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
3. The FI assignment gave me the opportunity to explore intercultural themes.  
1      2      3      4      5
4. The FI assignment gave me the opportunity to analyze intercultural themes.  
1      2      3      4      5
5. The FI assignment challenged me in my use of French in oral exchange.  
1      2      3      4      5
6. The FI assignment built my confidence in use of spoken French.  
1      2      3      4      5
7. The FI assignment generated more openness in me related to my beliefs about my own culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
8. The FI assignment generated more openness in me related to my beliefs about another's culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
9. The FI assignment instilled interest in me for discovering other perspectives / interpretations of my own culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
10. The FI assignment instilled interest in me for discovering other perspectives / interpretations of another's culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
11. As a result of the FI assignment, I increased my knowledge about the general processes of societal interaction in another culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
12. As a result of the FI assignment, I increased my knowledge about the general processes of individual interaction in another culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
13. As a result of the FI assignment, I increased my knowledge about the general processes of socialization in another culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
14. As a result of the FI assignment, I increased my knowledge about institutions which influence daily life in another culture.  
1      2      3      4      5

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15. The FI assignment provided an opportunity for me to develop some ability to interpret an event from another culture and relating it to my own culture.  
1            2            3            4            5
16. The FI assignment provided an opportunity for me to develop some ability to identify ethnocentric perspectives in an event from my own or another culture and explain their origins.  
1            2            3            4            5
17. The FI assignment provided an opportunity for me to develop some ability to identify areas of misunderstanding in an intercultural interaction.  
1            2            3            4            5
18. The FI assignment provided an opportunity for me to explain such areas of misunderstanding in terms of each of the cultural systems present.  
1            2            3            4            5
19. As a result of the FI assignment, I increased my ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices.  
1            2            3            4            5
20. As a result of the FI assignment, I increased my ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.  
1            2            3            4            5
21. As a part of the FI assignment, I was able to elicit from my interviewee the concepts or values of events.  
1            2            3            4            5
22. As a part of the FI assignment, I was able to develop an explanatory system for the concepts or values of events that I learned about from my interviewee.  
1            2            3            4            5
23. As a part of the FI assignment, I was able to identify significant references within and across cultures.  
1            2            3            4            5
24. As a part of the FI assignment, I was able to extract the significance and connotation of these references within and across cultures.  
1            2            3            4            5
25. As a part of the FI assignment, I was able to use an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in real-time to interact with my interviewee.  
1            2            3            4            5
26. As a part of the FI assignment, I was able to appropriately take into consideration my own level of familiarity with the country, culture, and language of my interviewee as compared to my own country, culture, and language in real-time to interact with my interviewee.  
1            2            3            4            5

27. As a result of the FI assignment, I have grown in cultural awareness and am better able to evaluate perspectives, practices, and products of my own and another culture.  
 1            2            3            4            5
28. As a part of the FI assignment, I was able to interact and mediate in intercultural exchange, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptance.  
 1            2            3            4            5
29. The FI assignment contributed in some way(s) toward my ability to consider the amorphous nature of culture.  
 1            2            3            4            5
30. The FI assignment contributed in some way(s) toward my ability to separate facts from cultural assumptions and beliefs.  
 1            2            3            4            5
31. The FI assignment contributed in some way(s) toward my ability to shift perspectives in some of my views.  
 1            2            3            4            5
32. The FI assignment contributed in some way(s) toward my ability to differentiate between personal discomfort and intellectual disagreement.  
 1            2            3            4            5
33. The FI assignment contributed in some way(s) toward my ability to interpret the complexities of messages.  
 1            2            3            4            5
34. The FI assignment contributed in some way(s) toward my development of a tolerance for ambiguity.  
 1            2            3            4            5
35. The FI assignment contributed in some way(s) toward minimizing judgmental attitudes in me.  
 1            2            3            4            5
36. The FI assignment contributed in some way(s) toward my ability to be flexible.  
 1            2            3            4            5
37. As a result of the FI assignment, I have gained confidence in participating in cultural/ linguistic communities (apart from my own) outside the classroom.  
 1            2            3            4            5
38. As a result of the FI assignment, I am more interested in participating in cultural/linguistic communities (apart from my own) outside the classroom.  
 1            2            3            4            5
39. As a result of the FI assignment, I am more able to participate in cultural / linguistic communities (apart from my own) outside the classroom.

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- |   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 40. As a result of the FI assignment, I acquired some techniques of enquiry related to learning about cultures other than my own.             |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. In listening to my classmates' presentations of their interviews, I noted correlations among interviewee responses.                       |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. In listening to my classmates' presentations of their interviews, I noted correlations in how we interpreted our interviewees' responses. |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

What did you personally gain from the FI assignment?

Any other comments? Please feel free to share!

