NECTFL *REVIEW*

**A Journal for K – 16+
Foreign Language Educators**
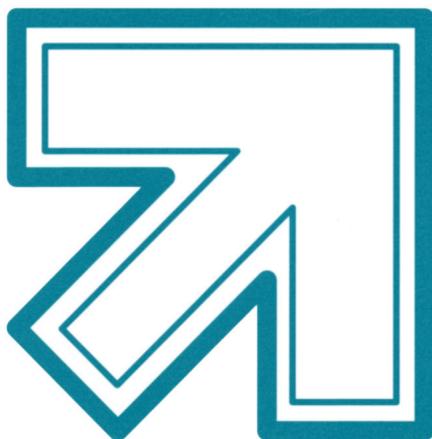
**Northeast Conference
on the Teaching of Foreign Languages**

Number 75   **January 2015**

NECTFL—responsive leadership and innovative professional development for over 60 years!

NECTFL is a not-for-profit proactive regional association of world language educators dedicated to the belief that all Americans should have the opportunity to learn and use English and at least one other language. The NECTFL mission is to anticipate, explore, respond to, and advocate for constituent needs; offer both established and innovative professional development; and facilitate collegial exchange on issues of importance to the field.

What Makes Our Organization Great:

➡ **Commitment to sustaining the profession**

➡ **Cutting edge programs**

➡ **Responsive outreach**

➡ **Professional development credit**

➡ **Great networking opportunities**

➡ **Connecting before, during, and after events through webinars and wikis**

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Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

NORTHEAST CONFERENCE
on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

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January 2015

What happens when a vibrant, forward-thinking, and well-established professional association like NECTFL decides it can do a better job of fulfilling its mission?

Some things don't change…

- NECTFL still serves its members and the field at large through advocacy, leadership development, and continuing education opportunities — such as this outstanding issue of The NECTFL Review and our unique webinar series!

- NECTFL's Board of Directors continues to work to identify and reward excellence, to partner with our state associations and exhibitors on projects of mutual benefit, and to explore the needs of our diverse constituencies.

- NECTFL keeps abreast of news in world language education and in the broader realm of teaching and learning, communicating through social media and other outlets to promote our shared cause.

Some things do change…

- NECTFL suspended the annual conference for one year (no conference in spring 2015), and we are seeing the value of "flipping" an event — just as many have seen the value of flipping their classrooms! We have found the time to engage in sustained needs assessment and have uncovered important aspects of our colleagues' changing work realities.

- NECTFL has created new Board committees to focus on promising initiatives: check out our website, like us on Facebook, and open our e-blasts when they are sent so you know about summer program scholarship opportunities, free webinars, and other programs for new teachers, fellowships, new membership perks, and more!

- NECTFL is exploring the distinctive approaches we have taken in the past to serve you — workshops in your own school or district, opportunities to reflect on practice through storytelling, focus group interviews, and outreach programs — as well as new approaches for the future: virtual coffeehouses, networking and mentoring for future teachers, and "NECTFL-approved" online resources (webinar recordings, lesson plans, templates, links, and more).

Stay tuned…! And let us know what you think by clicking on one or more links of your choice below:

- I'll take **your survey** to let you know what works for me in professional development.

- I'll tell you **my story** – it may inspire a younger colleague or encourage a student to become a teacher.

- I'll describe **the challenge I'm facing** – please share it with your experts and ask them to send me their feedback.

From the 2015 Chair

January 2015

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

On behalf of the entire NECTFL Board of Directors, I would like to take this time to wish you all a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year. Each new year bring new adventures and challenges and as educators each new year, month, day, and moment brings us closer to a better understanding of what students need and how we as educators can address those needs. The New Year is always a great time for resolutions, re-energizing our lives and our classrooms and continued dedication to our profession as educators.

NECTFL continues to be in full swing to carry out initiatives, programs, and communications with all the states and educators in our region. The NECTFL website is being continuously updated with new elements. I encourage one and all to visit the NECTFL website (**www.nectfl.org**) frequently and re-new your membership or join in order to take full advantage of programming designed specifically in response to your needs. Please also help us understand those needs even better by filling out our online survey or telling us your stories. John Dewey said, "If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow." Keep up with the latest webinars, teacher resources, research/articles, and programs unique to NECTFL for the most up-to-date initiatives and offerings in foreign language education.

NECTFL is also on Facebook! Please visit us at: Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and "LIKE" our page. In this NECTFL "year of change," we want to reach as many constituents as possible throughout the region and beyond.

Again, I thank you for your interest and dedication in the teaching of foreign language. May you all continue through this academic year energized with forward thinking into the future.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Berman
2015 NECTFL Chair

From the Managing Editor

Welcome to the tenth online edition of the *NECTFL Review*. This January 2015 issue of our journal contains three articles that will appeal to world language educators in addition to reviews of textbooks and materials. You can read the articles and reviews online or download either individual articles or the entire journal in PDF format at http://www.nectfl.org/publications-nectfl-review.

As you already know, the NECTFL Board of Directors has decided to suspend the annual conference for 2015. Throughout this year...and into the future, the Board of Directors will continue to develop new projects and initiatives and expand existing programs so that NECTFL can better serve its constituents. We anticipate that our annual conference will reappear in 2016 and will continue to provide you with numerous opportunities for networking and interaction.

The three articles in this issue focus on culture—critrical cultural awareness, critical ethnography, and conversational interactions. The first two articles focus on the Spanish classroom and the third article discusses the exchange of opinions in French, but the the conclusions and activities can be applicable to any language classroom.

Theresa Catalano and Kristen Nugent, in "Critical cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom," write about preparing learners to interact appropriately and effectively while participating in intercultural relationships. They focus on critical cultural awareness and encourage language teachers to design learning opportunities that guide learners in observing clear connections between what they learn in the classroom and real-world issues, at the same time exercising critical thinking skills throughout the process. Their article summarizes the literature on critical cultural awareness and presents practical lessons for secondary- and university-level world language classrooms, enabling students to gain cultural and linguistic knowledge at the same time

Isabel Moreno-López, in her article, "Critical activities in the Spanish classroom: A qualitative study," analyzes the implication of integrating activities based on critical pedagogy into the curriculum of a Spanish language classroom using a critical ethnographic research methodology. In her study, Moreno-López used out-of-class activities, multicultural activities, analyses of written and visual texts (textbooks and mass media), mini-ethnographic projects, and personal journals in English. She states that the integration of such activies helps build a cohesive speech community, challenges the participants' cultural values, and guarantees the relevance of the course content.

In the third article, "Opinion exchange in French conversational interaction," Elizabeth M. Knutson, presents a qualitative study analyzing the interactional environment of opinion exchange, based on a corpus of seven informal conversations between native speakers of French. Knutson says that while previous research has highlighted a predilection for diverging views in French conversation, her data reveal considerable mitigation in the expression of opinions and disagreement. She also examines the frequent use of impersonal expressions in the data and contrasts it to textbook presentations of opinion exchange.

Our Reviews Editor, Tom Conner, again shares reviewers' insights on new works in Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Spanish, and world language pedagogy. In each issue of the *NECTFL Review,* readers will find a wide range of textbooks and other materials for a variety of languages and areas relevant to the study of world languages. Please get in touch with Professor Conner at **tom.conner@snc.edu** if you are interested in becoming a reviewer.

We invite you to visit the NECTFL website [**www.nectfl.org**] and see what the organization is about and what it is doing. Now, NECTFL is on Facebook, and we urge you to visit us there at Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages; please Like us! Also, feel free to send me an e-mail letting me know what you think of the journal—the articles, the reviews…whatever you would like for me to know and whatever you might want to see changed.

Cordially,

Robert M. Terry
Managing Editor & Articles Editor

Call for Articles

The NECTFL *Review* encourages articles of interest to instructors, researchers, and administrators at all educational levels on theory, research, and classroom practice in language teaching. Articles dealing with pedagogical strategies, materials and curriculum development, language teaching technology, the teaching of literature, assessment, community awareness projects, and international studies would be equally welcome; the foregoing list illustrates the range of concerns that might be addressed in submissions. We welcome manuscripts from teachers at all levels, pre-K through university, and from teacher educators.

Guidelines for Preparation of Manuscripts

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

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

1. We use the most recent **APA [American Psychological Association] Guidelines**, and not those of the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please use the latest edition (6th ed., 2010) of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or the *Concise Rules of APA Style* as your guide. For models of articles and references, examine The NECTFL *Review*, recent issues of the *Modern Language Journal* or *Foreign Language Annals*. These journals follow the APA style with minor deviations (and those being primarily changes in level headings within articles). Citations within articles, bibliographical entries, punctuation, and style follow the APA format very closely. You can visit the following web sites, which give you abbreviated versions of the APA guidelines:
    a. APA Formatting and Style Guide: **http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/** — this excellent site offers guidelines for using the 6th edition of the APA guidelines.
    b. APA 6th Edition, Wake Forest University: **http://zsr.wfu.edu/research/guides/apa.html**
    c. APA — **http://www.apastyle.org/**. This is the very source...the APA, with all sorts of help and assistance.
    d. Writer Resources: APA: **http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/citation/apa/** — this is yet another great site from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to guide you through the APA style.
    e. APA Style Essentials: **http://psychology.vanguard.edu/faculty/douglas-degelman/apa-style/** — this handy reference guide based on the APA sixth edition comes from the Vanguard University of Southern California.
    f. APA Reference Style Guide: **http://library.nmu.edu/guides/userguides/style_apa.htm** — this site from Northern Michigan University offers a quick overview of styles from the APA sixth edition.
2. Submit your article electronically to **rterry@richmond.edu**. Please follow these guidelines carefully to expedite the review and publishing process. Note: In order for an article to be processed and sent to outside reviewers, authors must complete the online **Author/Article Information form**.
    a. Use a PC- or Mac-compatible word-processing program —Microsoft Word 2007 or 2010 for PC; 2008 or 2011 for Mac. You can save your file as either .doc or .docx.
    b. Do not use the rich text format.
    c. Use Times New Roman 12-point or Minion Pro 12-point and only that one font throughout.

    d.   Use italics and boldface type when necessary, but do not use underlining.

3.   Please think carefully about the title of your article. Although "catchy" titles are permissible, even desirable in some cases for conference presentations, the title of your article should be more academic in nature, allowing the reader to determine at once what subject the author(s) will be addressing. It should be brief, preferably without subtitles, and *no longer than 12 words*.

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

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

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

    a.   On the first page of the submitted article, authors should provide the following information:

        i.   The title of the article

        ii.   Names and titles of the author(s)

        iii.   Preferred mailing addresses

        iv.   Home and office phone numbers

        v.   E-mail addresses

        vi.   For joint authorship, an indication as to which author will be the primary contact person (not necessarily the first author listed on the manuscript itself).

    b.   The first page of the manuscript itself should have the title only, followed by the abstract, then the text.

    c.   It is essential that there be no direct references to the author(s) in the manuscript to be read by the reviewers. Any "giveaways," such as references to a particular institution, when it is obvious that the institution is that of the author, should be avoided as well.

    d.   If your article is accepted for publication, you will be able to make the necessary changes in the final manuscript. For the present, however, authors should refer to themselves in the third person as "the author(s)" and refer to studies or projects at "X Middle School" or "X University."

    e.   The APA guidelines suggest ways that authors can achieve this necessary degree of anonymity. We do understand, however, that references to certain websites may necessarily reveal the identity of the authors of certain articles.

7.   Include a short biographical paragraph (this will appear at the bottom of the first page of the article, should it be published). Please include this paragraph on a separate page at the *end* of the article. This paragraph should include the following information (*no longer than 4-5 lines*):

    a.   Your name

    b.   Your highest degree and what school it is from

    c.   Your title

    d.   If you are a teacher, indicate what level(s) you have taught in your teaching career: K-12, elementary school, middle school, high school, community college, college/ university, other.

e.   Your credentials.

Example:

Charles Bovary (Ph.D., Duke University) is Professor of French and Foreign Language Pedagogy at the University of Montana. He teaches/coordinates …. His research …. He has published ….

8.   Please note that the typical length of manuscripts averages approximately 20-25 double-spaced pages, including notes, charts, and references. This does not mean that a slightly longer article is out of the question.

9.   Authors should read the manuscript very carefully before submitting it, verifying the accuracy of the citations (including the spelling of names, page numbers, and publication dates); the accuracy of the format of the references; punctuation, according to the APA Guidelines; spelling throughout the article.

10. Please consult the **Checklist for Manuscript Publication**. Promising articles have been rejected because authors did not spend enough time proofreading the manuscript. Proofreading includes not only reading for accuracy but for readability, flow, clarity. Using the Checklist will help ensure accuracy. Authors are encouraged to have several colleagues read the article before it is submitted. Whether you are a native speaker of English or not, please ask a colleague whose native language is English to proofread your article to be sure that the text sounds idiomatic and that punctuation and spelling are standard.

11. In order for an article to be processed and sent to outside reviewers, authors must complete the online **Author/Article Information form**. This form is used to match the author's description of the article with the appropriate reviewers according to (1) instructional level; (2) areas of interest; (3) the type of content; (4) relevant language(s); (5) keywords that best describe the article content [no more than four should be indicated].

Checklist for Manuscript Preparation

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

☐   Please remember to use the spell check and grammar check on your computer before you submit your manuscript. Whether you are a native speaker of English or not, please ask a colleague whose native language is English to proofread your article to be sure that the text sounds idiomatic and that punctuation and spelling are standard. Otherwise good articles have been rejected because the writing style has very obvious non-native features and elements that detract from the message.

☐   Any portions of text in a foreign language must be followed immediately by an English translation in square brackets.

☐   Do not submit an article that includes tracking. If tracking has been used in the writing of the article, verify that every change indicated in tracking has been accepted or rejected and that the tracking box and any marks in the margin have been deleted.

☐ Remember that in the APA guidelines, notes (footnotes or endnotes) are discouraged — such information is considered to be either important enough to be included in the article itself or not significant enough to be placed anywhere. If notes are necessary, however, they should be endnotes.

    ☐ Do not use automatic footnoting or endnoting available with your word processor. Use raised superscripts in the body of the text and regular Arabic numerals in the notes at the end. Automatic endnotes/footnotes present major problems as an article is prepared for publication.

    ☐ Do not use automatic page numbering, since such numbering is often difficult to remove from a manuscript and has to be removed before the article is prepared for eventual publication.

☐ Please double-space everything in your manuscript.

☐ Use left justification only; do not use full justification anywhere in the article.

☐ The required font throughout is either Times New Roman 12 pt. or Minion Pro 12 pt.

☐ There should be only one space after each period.

☐ Punctuation marks appear inside quotation marks. Quotation marks, question marks, and exclamation points appear inside the quotation marks only when they are part of the actual quoted material. Otherwise, they should appear outside of the quoted material (as, for instance, when the author of the article is asking a question or reacting strongly to something).

☐ In listing items or in a series of words connected by *and, but, or*, use a comma before these conjunctions.

☐ When providing a list of items, use double parentheses surrounding the numbers or letters: (1), (2), or (3) or (a), (b), and (c).

☐ All numbers above nine must appear as Arabic numerals ["nine school districts" vs. "10 textbooks"]; numbers below 10 must be written out.

☐ Please remember that page number references in parentheses are not part of the actual quotation and must be placed outside of the quotation marks following quoted material.

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

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

☐ Please note the differences between the use and appearance of hyphens and dashes. Dashes (which should be used sparingly) should appear as the correct typographic symbol (—) or as two hyphens (--). If your computer automatically converts two hyphens to a dash, that is fine. APA guidelines, as well as those for other style manuals, suggest that commas, parentheses, and other marks of punctuation are generally more effective than dashes.

☐ Please observe APA guidelines with respect to the use of initials instead of the first and middle names of authors cited in your list of references. Also note the use of the ampersand (&) instead of "and" to cover joint ownership in both parenthetical

and bibliographical references. Use "and," however, to refer to joint authorship in the body of your article.

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

☐ Please remember that according to APA guidelines, the References section does not consist of a list of works consulted, but rather of the list of works you actually use in your article. Before you submit your manuscript, verify that each reference in the article has a matching citation in the References section. Then be sure that all items in the References section have been cited within the article itself. In unusual circumstances, authors may include as an appendix a separate selected bibliography of items useful to readers, but not among the sources cited in an article. Please double check all Internet addresses before you submit the manuscript.

☐ Be judicious in using text or graphic boxes or tables in your text. Remember that your manuscript will have to be reformatted to fit the size of the published volume. Therefore, a table with lines and boxes that you set up so carefully in your 8 ½" × 11" manuscript page will not usually fit on our journal pages.

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

❏ First page — with the article title, names and titles of authors, their preferred mailing addresses, home and office phone numbers, FAX numbers, E-mail addresses, and an indication as to which of the joint authors will serve as the primary contact person [also, times in the summer when regular and E-mail addresses may be inactive];

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

❏ The text of the article

❏ Notes; References, Appendices — in this order

❏ The short, biographical paragraph (no more than 4-5 lines).

☐ Authors must complete the online **Author/Article Information form**. This form is used to match the author's description of the article with the appropriate reviewers according to (1) instructional level; (2) areas of interest; (3) the type of content; (4) relevant language(s); (5) keywords that best describe the article content [no more than four should be indicated].

Call for Articles

The NECTFL *Review* encourages articles of interest to instructors, researchers, and administrators at all educational levels on theory, research, and classroom practice in language teaching. Articles dealing with pedagogical strategies, materials and curriculum development, language teaching technology, the teaching of literature, assessment, community awareness projects, and international studies would be equally welcome; the foregoing list illustrates the range of concerns that might be addressed in submissions. We welcome manuscripts from teachers at all levels, pre-K through university, and from teacher educators.

The NECTFL Editorial Review Board ——————

Our sincere gratitude to the following individuals who have agreed to serve as reviewers of manuscripts submitted for publication in the *NECTFL Review.* We cannot fulfill our mission without them!

Critical cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom

Kristen Nugent, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*
Theresa Catalano, *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Abstract

Preparing learners to interact appropriately and effectively while participating in intercultural relationships is a key component of foreign language curricula. The notion of critical cultural awareness, which is embedded within the framework of intercultural communicative competence, encourages language educators to craft learning opportunities that guide learners in observing clear connections between classroom lessons and real-world issues while exercising critical thinking skills throughout the process. Although research by Byram (1997, 2012) has demonstrated the importance of critical cultural awareness, few studies have illustrated how critical cultural awareness can be developed in a classroom setting while working to achieve language proficiency. This paper summarizes the literature on critical cultural awareness and presents practical lessons for secondary- and university-level foreign language classrooms, thus enabling students to gain cultural and linguistic knowledge at the same time.

Research in the milieu of modern foreign language curricula often promotes the framework of intercultural communicative competence as an effective way to prepare learners for appropriate intercultural interactions .

Research in the milieu of modern foreign language curricula often promotes the framework of intercultural communicative competence as an effective way to prepare learners for appropriate intercultural interactions

Kristen Nugent (M.A., Middlebury College) is a Ph.D. student in Teaching, Learning, and Teacher Education at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has taught French at the K-12 and community college level. She currently teaches instructional technology and foreign language teaching methods at the university level. Her research interests range from incorporating intercultural communicative competence into the foreign language classroom to preparing preservice teachers for success in urban classrooms.

Theresa Catalano (Ph.D., University of Arizona) is Assistant Professor of Second Language Education/Applied Linguistics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has taught ESL, Italian, and Spanish at the elementary, middle, community college, and university levels, and currently teaches ESL and foreign language methods courses, intercultural communication, and linguistics. Her research focuses on language pedagogy and teacher education, and the link between language, ideology, and the oppression of minority groups.

(Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2007; Kramsch, 2004; Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). In general, the literature draws from Byram's Model for Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997), which presents, defines, and clarifies the importance of preparing students with the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed to participate in intercultural relationships of equality. The justification for an intercultural component in foreign language curricula is represented as a response to the transformation of local and global communities due to immigration, which necessitates that learners be better prepared for appropriate participation in intercultural conversations (Kramsch, 2004; Sinicrope et al., 2007; Stewart, 2007).

It is surprising however that the component of critical cultural awareness, which was originally positioned at the center of Byram's Model for Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997), is missing from much of the literature related to this intercultural learning framework. According to Byram's (1997) model, when

> *...when the acquisition of a foreign language is enhanced by critical cultural awareness (CCA), students leave the classroom equipped with the skills needed to participate in local and global communities due to a deeper level of cultural awareness and understanding.*

the acquisition of a foreign language is enhanced by critical cultural awareness (CCA), defined as "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" (p. 53), students leave the classroom equipped with the skills needed to participate in local and global communities due to a deeper level of cultural awareness and understanding. In addition, students who are given the chance to explore CCA in the language classroom attain proficiency in the skill of evaluation (Byram, 1997), feel more connected to the material because they can see how the notion of awareness connects to real-world issues (Kramsch, 2004; Osborn, 2006), and gain experience exercising critical thinking skills, thereby raising the level of intellectual stimulation in the foreign language classroom (Osborn, 2006). Although there are some intercultural scholars who address the notion of CCA in relation to intercultural learning (Baker, 2012; Byram, 1997, 2012; Byram & Guilhelme, 2000; Fantini, 2007; Kramsch, 2004; Moreno-Lopez, 2004), much of the literature fails to address the awareness aspect of the intercultural communicative competence paradigm. Furthermore, although Houghton (2013) specifically addresses critical cultural awareness by depicting ways to direct students in managing stereotypes, he overlooks including language practice during awareness-raising lessons.

According to researchers in the field of foreign language education (Byram, 2012; Kramsch, 2004; Osborn, 2006), there is a need for more discussion regarding the incorporation of CCA in foreign language curricula. The purpose of this article is to add to this discussion by synthisizing the literature on CCA. Additionally, the social and psychological dimensions of CCA will be explored so that practicing educators can see how the integration of an awareness component into their curriculum creates possibilities for learners to experience a deeper connection to its content. Finally, this paper will culminate with some ideas for lessons that develop CCA in order to connect theory to practice for the classroom teacher.

Intercultural Communicative Competence and Critical Cultural Awareness

Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is a framework for intercultural learning that prepares foreign language students for meaningful interactions with those from other cultures by addressing the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed for effective intercultural communication (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2007). The literature on intercultural communicative competence focuses heavily on the notion of preparing learners to interact appropriately and effectively with people from diverse linguistic systems, backgrounds, and worldviews (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006; Fantini, 2007; Sinicrope et al., 2007). In order to prepare students for intercultural interactions, teachers are encouraged to design foreign language lessons that ask students to reflect on their beliefs about the target culture in conjunction with opportunities for students to participate in active inquiry regarding the products, practices, and perspectives of another culture (Byram, 1997; Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002; Council of Europe, 2001; Deardorff, 2006; McGee, 2011; Merryfield, 2008; Moore, 2006; National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2013; Smith, 2013). Once attitudes and knowledge have been addressed, students should participate in tasks that promote the intercultural skills needed for participation in reciprocal relationships with individuals from different cultures (Byram, 1997). Teachers can incorporate an intercultural stance into the curriculum by providing opportunities for learners to practice skills in analysis, interpretation, communication, and interaction in relation to the products and practices of the target culture (Byram, 1997).

> *Intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is a framework for intercultural learning that prepares foreign language students for meaningful interactions with those from other cultures by addressing the attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed for effective intercultural communication*

Within the framework of intercultural communicative competence, Byram (1997) defines critical cultural awareness as "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" (p. 53). When teachers attend to CCA as a component of intercultural learning in the foreign language classroom, learning tasks must provide opportunities for students to practice the skill of critical evaluation. In order to accomplish this task effectively, educators must consider developmentally appropriate ways of scaffolding learning so that students learn how to evaluate the practices, products, and perspectives of the target culture. For this reason, a necessary first step in the process toward building CCA is that students must be given time to identify and reflect upon their preconceived ideas, judgments, and stereotypes toward individuals from the target culture. According to Byram (1997), students will undoubtedly bring their predetermined ideas into intercultural conversations. It is therefore the intent of classroom activities that encompass CCA to guide students in considering the origins of these preconceived notions and provide assistance in determining whether or not these judgments are rational or unsound (Byram, 1997).

CCA is characterized by a concern with ideology (Byram, 1997), which can be defined as "a system of ideas which drives behavioural choices" (Holliday, Hyde, & Kullman 2010, p. 261). Byram (2008) clearly asserts that one of the goals of CCA is to unmask student ideologies while providing opportunities for learners to "critically evaluate ideological concepts that could possibly lead to intercultural conflict" (Yulita, 2013, p. 205). In order to do this, instructors should provide students with words and phrases needed to prevent conflicts that take place in intercultural interactions due to stereotyping and bias. For example, a teacher may model using language such as "some" Spanish speakers or French citizens "tend to" so that broad generalizations are avoided. As students move toward CCA in the foreign language classroom, the objectives that follow are accomplished (Critical Literacy Winter School, 2006, p. 1). Students will

- see things from different perspectives;
- examine the origins and implications of worldviews, values, beliefs, and attitudes;
- analyze the construction of knowledge, cultures, identities, and relationships;
- make connections between global and local contexts; ask questions about the world, themselves, and others; and
- question what is presented as universally true.

> As foreign language learners move toward critical awareness, teachers should craft activities that encourage students to consider new values and beliefs based on facts uncovered during the research process.

As foreign language learners move toward critical awareness, teachers should craft activities that encourage students to consider new values and beliefs based on facts uncovered during the research process (Galloway,1998). The ideal format for this type of intercultural learning is described as cooperative investigation in which learners work together to control the direction of their learning while the teacher operates as a guide throughout the process of discovery (Byram, 1997; Byram & Guilhelme, 2000; Byram et al., 2002; *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, 2001; Furstenberg, 2010; Kearney, 2010; Kramsch, 2004; Lee, 1998; Moore, 2006). This is important because it is not the teacher's role to push a personal viewpoint on the learners, rather the teacher should create an open environment of inquiry so that students can discover the origins of judgments or stereotypes independently (Byram & Guilhelme, 2000). According to Houghton (2013) one important role of teachers of foreign languages is to facilitate communication across cultural barriers, and "one of the most challenging barriers to be overcome is the stereotype" (p. 1). Developing CCA is one way in which teachers can encourage students to deconstruct stereotypes and prejudice in the classroom.

Once learners have spent time examining their beliefs, the second step in the process toward critical cultural awareness begins when students engage in tasks that encourage thoughtful and rational evaluation of perspectives, products, and practices related to the target culture (Byram, 1997). During this second step,

students draw from research practices acquired during the knowledge phase of intercultural communicative competence in order to defend, with proof of rigorous inquiry and thoughtful reasoning, their beliefs about the target culture. As a deeper understanding of the target culture is achieved, learners' beliefs will undoubtedly change and evolve resulting in a more profound understanding of a foreign culture (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). Moreover, it is important to note that the consideration of students' native culture is a vital component of the process toward CCA in that students are encouraged to be equally consistent when judging the practices of their own culture once they have learned proper techniques for evaluating the practices of the target culture (Byram, 1997; Chapelle, 2010).

The final step in developing CCA is to create real or simulated opportunities for interactions with individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds and worldviews (Byram, 1997). This presents opportunities for students to practice communicating and negotiating beliefs with those who may not necessarily share their worldview. Moreno-Lopez (2004) promotes this component of CCA through connecting the school environment to the local community as she describes building awareness in the Spanish classroom by preparing students to complete mini-ethnographic studies with members of the Latino community. Byram (1997) urges foreign language educators to include CCA in curricula "not just for purposes of improving effectiveness of communication and interaction but especially for purposes of clarifying one's own ideological perspective and engaging with others consciously on the basis of that perspective" (p. 101).

Social Dimension of Critical Cultural Awareness

Tasks promoting CCA present opportunities for students to use higher-order thinking skills in order to become more aware of the ideological component underlying intercultural interactions. For teachers hoping to include a critical evaluative component in foreign language curricula, the notion of CCA can be regarded as being comprised of two distinct dimensions: social and psychological (Byram, 2012). The social dimension presents an opportunity for students to analyze and reflect on the social aspect of language and culture, thereby connecting the notion of communicative competence to intercultural competence (Byram, 2012). Byram (2012) posits that students in a French classroom can compare the language variations that take place in specific social situations in France, Francophone Africa, and Canada. One result of this type of lesson is that learners begin to see that languages work differently depending on the context and users (Byram, 2012). This type of lesson also helps learners visualize how cultural values and beliefs play a crucial role in the types of interactions that occur in different societies even when the same language is being used. Teachers can add a culminating element to this type of study by asking learners to consider the role language differences play in their own country.

> *Tasks promoting CCA present opportunities for students to use higher-order thinking skills in order to become more aware of the ideological component underlying intercultural interactions.*

> The social dimension of CCA also guides learners in considering the effect of language and cultural differences in smaller communities at home and abroad.

The social dimension of CCA also guides learners in considering the effect of language and cultural differences in smaller communities at home and abroad. As teachers create opportunities for students to consider the variations in languages and cultures as seen in the French example above, this same teacher can also craft experiences for studying language and culture differences in smaller communities in France. For instance, a classroom can embark on a research study of the way that the French language has been transformed in Paris due to immigration. Learners can search for ways that different cultural groups have adopted the French language and how this affects traditional social actions in Parisian society. Furthermore, students can consider how French culture and language transform the culture of newcomers living in France. Kramsch (2004) echoes this sentiment when she says that, "This does not mean they [teachers] can no longer teach the standard national language and national traditions, only that these symbols of national identity have become multiple, hybrid, changing, and often conflictual" (pp. 43-44). So, as foreign language teachers encourage learners to acquire the standard national language alongside the standard traditions, time can also be spent contemplating how these traditions have evolved over time due to the influence of other cultures and languages. Again, by focusing on the dynamic and ever-changing culture of a foreign country, teachers can present opportunities for reflecting on similar occurrences in the students' native country. Osborn (2006) encourages teachers to incorporate activities that reflect back on local communities so that students can see the connection between their language learning experience and their daily lives.

Psychological Dimension of Critical Cultural Awareness

> The second dimension of critical cultural competence, the psychological dimension, asks students to consider the connection between language and identity.

The second dimension of critical cultural competence, the psychological dimension, asks students to consider the connection between language and identity (Byram, 2012). German language students can study how language affects identity differently in Germany compared to Austria by looking at what native speakers consider to be typical German and Austrian characteristics (Byram, 2012). Byram (2012) posits that it is worthwhile for students in a foreign language classroom to consider how language, whether native or foreign, affects an individual's personal and social identity. Moreover, foreign language educators can respond to multiculturalism in societies by helping students examine the complexity of identity for immigrants living in foreign countries (Kramsch, 2004).

In order to add a necessary personal element to the psychological dimension of CCA, teachers can ask students to consider their personal identity transformations as foreign language learners (Byram, 2012). Building on the German example above, students can explore how they view themselves as German speakers or

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how others perceive them when they speak German (Byram, 2012). Students, who become aware of their own identity transformation as a result of language and culture studies, are more open to considering the impact new cultural and linguistic experiences have on others. Byram's (2012) suggestions for incorporating the psychological dimension into learning based on CCA are vague and he admits that his ideas regarding the psychological dimension of CCA are lacking and that foreign language teachers need more guidance in creating opportunities for learners to reflect on the connection between languages and identities.

The activities that follow provide examples of ways to incorporate learning that addresses critical cultural awareness in the secondary or university foreign language classroom. It is important to note that some teachers will be able to conduct the entire activity in the target language, while others will not. This will depend on many factors such as the general climate in the classroom, the proficiency level of the teacher and students, and the age, abilities, and cognitive development of the students. The literature on intercultural communicative competence clearly states that when deep cultural understanding and awareness are the goals, some portions of intercultural lessons will prove more powerful when conducted in the native language of the students (Byram, 1997; Furstenberg, 2010; Kramsch, 2004; Osborn, 2006; Schulz, 2007). However, as will be demonstrated in the examples that follow, teachers can create multiple opportunities for students to engage with the target language in concert with profound discussions and inquiry related to critical cultural awareness.

Critical Cultural Awareness Activities for the Foreign Language Classroom

Beginning to Intermediate Language Learners: Nationalities and the World Cup

Every four years, billions of soccer fans worldwide spend time watching the World Cup finals organized by FIFA (*Fédération Internationale de Football Association*). Following the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, FIFA claimed that half of humanity tuned in for at least one match during the month-long tournament in which 32 national teams competed for the honor of being named the world champion of soccer (Stromberg, 2014). The World Cup provides a compelling context for foreign language teachers interested in considering how CCA can be explored through the lens of a global soccer match.

In the foreign language classroom, a teacher may connect to information about the World Cup during a unit on sports by taking students to the FIFA website (www.fifa.com) to search for information about the most recent World Cup tournament. By clicking on the language icon located at the top of the page between the shopping cart and magnifying glass, students can change the language of the website to the target language. The World Cup website (http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/index.html) provides a world map depicting the countries involved in the most recent games. Teachers can access this map by clicking on the Teams icon located near the top of the page. With the map projected, the teacher can begin to teach the names of countries and the names of nationalities connected to each country using the map as a backdrop while holding up flashcards displaying the

names of the countries and nationalities written in the target language. During this input phase of the lesson, the teacher can begin to ask questions, either in the target language or the native language of the learners, about the different countries involved such as:

1. On which continent is Algeria found?
2. Has anyone ever visited Italy?
3. What language do citizens of Switzerland speak?
4. Do you think people from Iran live in France? Why or why not? What is their nationality if they were born in Iran but live in France? What is their nationality if they were born in Iran but live in the United States?

During the input phase, the instructor takes time to gather some background knowledge from the students along with their attitudes about other countries and on the topic of worldwide immigration. This connects to real-world conditions that result in multiculturalism in societies and helps students to begin to examine identities and differing worldviews (Kramsch, 2004).

Students can then form small groups and continue to explore the website cooperatively. Depending on the language classroom, students can move to the page for a national team or teams that match the foreign language being studied. For the purpose of this example, a lesson for a beginning and/or intermediate French classroom will be described from this point forward. Learners in a French classroom will begin by studying the players portrayed on the website while completing specific tasks in their small group such as:

1. Look at the names of the players on the French team. Choose three players as a group and conduct a Google search, in French or English, to find out more about them. Were the chosen players born in France or elsewhere? Were they born in France to French parents or were they born in France to parents from other countries?
2. Do you think the players who were not born in France consider themselves to be French? Why or why not? Do you think French citizens and soccer fans consider them to be French? Does it matter?
3. What do you think the attitudes of the players born in France are toward players that were born or who lived a significant amount of time in other countries? How much do you think race plays a factor in these attitudes?

Learners should be given time and space to explore, consider, analyze, research, and discuss with their group before moving back to the large group in class. During class discussion, ideas should be shared freely and openly, but students must remain respectful and provide rationale for any judgments made. This begins to fulfill Byram's (1997) evaluative component of CCA and promotes the notion that judgments must be backed up with rationale.

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An effective homework activity in relation to this discussion involves asking the learners to read an article from *The Washington Post* (Gehring, 2014), which juxtaposes the diversity of the French national soccer team with anti-immigrant politics in France. For teachers of German, this article addresses the same situation in the German context. The teacher can make this activity simple enough for younger learners by simply asking them to report back the main beliefs the French hold toward immigrants in regular life compared to their feelings toward immigrants playing on the national soccer team. This will provide enough information for a discussion on the way that situation and perspective can alter ideologies. Furthermore, teachers may want to engage the students in a discussion about racism in target language and home societies. For more mature learners, a more in-depth discussion related to the article can take place.

Once the class has finished considering and discussing the homework, the teacher can return to the FIFA website and project the team members for the United States national soccer team. In relation to the article about immigration in France, the teacher can ask students to consider their beliefs toward immigrant players on their own national soccer team. Specifically, learners can look at identity and what it means to be an American by completing the following task:

> Do a Google search of the American squad and investigate the origins of three U.S. players. How does this team compare to the French team? Do you think U.S. players who were born outside of the United States are considered American? Why or why not?

As Byram (1997) explains, a major goal of critical cultural awareness is to encourage learners to question their own histories and to become more engaged in their own society. By connecting the foreign language curriculum to the real-world situation of the learners, teachers devise lessons that have a greater impact on the learning that takes place in the classroom. This also encourages students to transfer the skills acquired during lessons addressing CCA to situations that may occur in their own society.

In order to bring the French language back into the lesson, the teacher can prepare opportunities for students to discuss the countries of origin and nationalities of the players from the French soccer team. This can be done by projecting a photo of a player onto the screen while asking students to describe his nationality and origins using some sentence frames and a key vocabulary word bank. The language guide may resemble the following:

1. *Il est (du, de la, de* _____*(lieu).* [He is (from) _____(place).]
2. *Il est* _____*(nationalité).* [He is _____ (nationality).]
3. *Il est né et il a grandi (au, en)* _____ *(lieu), mais sa mere est (du, de la, de l')* _____*(liieu) et son père est (du, de la, de l')* _____ *lieu).* [He was born and grew up (in) _____ (place), but his mom is from) _____(place) and his dad is (from) _____ (place).]

The vocabulary word bank may resemble the following:

Places	Nationalities
la France [France]	*français* [French]
la Martinique [Martinique]	*martiniquais* [Martiniquais]
l'Italie [Italy]	*italien* [Italian]
l'Algérie [Algeria]	*algérien* [Algerian]
l'Afrique (L'Afrique de l'ouest) [Africa (West Africa)]	*africain* [African]
la République du Congo [Democratic Republic of Congo]	*congolais* [Congolese]
la Guinée [Guinea]	*guinéen* [Guinean]
le Mali [Mali]	*malien* [Malian]
l'Angola [Republic of Angola]	*angolan* [Angolan]
le Sénégal [Senegal]	*sénégalais* [Senegalese]
l'Espagne	*espagnol* [Spanish]

Next, the teacher can set aside time to focus on Patrice Evra (or another player currently on the national team) as a specific example from the French team of someone who has a complex background. Students will find that Evra was born in Senegal, but moved to Belgium as a young child. When he was three, his family settled in France. As students recall his story from the Internet, they may begin to question whether Evra considers himself Senegalese, Belgian, French, or Senegalese-French (or perhaps he considers himself Juventino, since team identity is often a large part of a soccer player's personal identity). Through this example, students can begin to see that assigning identity is a complicated social construct, and that peoples' experiences affect the way they self-identify. Additionally, the teacher can open up the conversation to consider how people with similar backgrounds often choose different ways to be identified, thus dispelling stereotypes and helping learners to view those that speak other languages as individuals. It is highly encouraged that the teacher devote some time during the following day's lesson to complete this same exercise while focusing on the American soccer team in order to demonstrate that nationality and identity are complex in the home culture as well. Students should also be given time to share their own nationalities and histories in French as a way to personalize the lesson and connect with the psychological dimension of CCA.

As a final formal assessment for this unit on the World Cup, students can create a drawing, poster, video, or online poster using glogster.com or mural.ly about their discoveries regarding immigration, identity, nationalities, and their specific beliefs in relation to the topic. The teacher can ask students to include comments related to beliefs about diverse players on national sports teams, the nature of identity, and the ever-changing demographics of local and global communities, thereby encouraging learners to think about global topics on a deeper level. This final component creates space for learners to reflect and document their ideological stance supported by information gathered during inquiry sessions in class.

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Intermediate to Advanced Language Learners: Breaking Down Stereotypes

One way to develop critical cultural awareness in the intermediate to advanced foreign language classroom is by directly addressing stereotypes through the examination of critical incidents, defined by Fielder, Mitchell, and Triandis (1971) as puzzling intercultural situations involving some type of conflict (Lebedko, 2013). Since the topic of appropriate behavior with peers at school in the target culture is often presented and discussed in foreign language classrooms, the following activity will describe how to include CCA in a similar unit for a Spanish classroom. In order to make the lesson more meaningful for students who may not have the opportunity to live abroad, the scenarios will concentrate on interactions that take place in the home culture.

Each critical incident will be written in Spanish so that the learners will have the opportunity to engage with vocabulary from the unit of study. Once students have been given an introduction to vocabulary and cultural information for appropriate behavior with peers in a Spanish-speaking culture, students are grouped into pairs and given the following critical incident card, which would be in the target language but has been translated into English for the purpose of this example:

Critical incident number one.

> Tyler: Hey, I'm having a party tonight. You're from Mexico. Do you want to come and show my friends how to dance salsa?
>
> Juan: I don't know salsa. I know *cumbia*, *quebradito*, and a little *brinquito*.
>
> Tyler: I've never heard of those. I thought all Latinos knew how to salsa.
>
> Juan: No, they don't, and not all Latinos can dance either.

In pairs, the students work together to figure out the linguistic and cultural meaning of the conversation using their textbooks, dictionaries, and online Spanish resources. This addresses the knowledge phase of intercultural communicative competence as students are given the opportunity to explore information pertinent to the subject matter being studied. Once students return to the whole group setting, the teacher will choose a pair group to role-play the incident in front of the class. Following the presentation, comprehension questions will be posed in Spanish in order to check for understanding of the content of the critical incident. Following the discussion, the teacher can show students representations of some of the dances mentioned in the role-play from YouTube in order to extend the discussion further. Students are then assigned a different partner, and are asked to repeat the same procedure as described above with the new critical incident.

Critical incident number two.

> Andy: Hey Melissa, I need some help on my project for Spanish class. I'm supposed to interview someone who is not from the U.S. and speaks Spanish. Can I interview you?
>
> Melissa: Sorry, but just because I speak Spanish doesn't mean I am from another country. I was born in the U.S. and I am a U.S. citizen.
>
> Andy: Oh, but you speak Spanish so I thought you were from Mexico.

Melissa: I'm American, but my parents are from Colombia. You know, not all Spanish speakers in the U.S. are from Mexico, and not all Latinos speak Spanish.

After students repeat the same procedure from above with critical incident number two, they will take their seats as the teacher projects the questions listed below for students to ponder (adapted from Lebedko, 2013, p. 263). Learners will take some time to write down some possible personal responses for each question. Depending on the language level of the students, the teacher can include some sentence frames in order to scaffold the lesson so that students are able to compose their answers entirely in the target language. The questions and sentence frames may resemble the following:

1. *¿Cómo te sentirías si tú estuvieras en una situación similar?* [How would you feel if you were in a similar situation?]
   Me sentiría _____. Me gusta/No me gusta cuando_____. [I would feel _____. I like/ I don't like it when _____.]
2. *¿Alguna vez has estereotipado a otros?* [Have you ever stereotyped others?]
   Sí/No. Por ejemplo, una vez _____. [Yes/No. For example, one time _____.]
3. *¿Eras consciente de la repercusión de los estereotipos acerca de las personas?* [Were you aware of the impact of stereotypes on others?]
   Sí/No. Yo (no) era consciente / era consciente pero no sabía que _____. [Yes/No. I was (not) aware / I was aware, but I didn't know that _____.
4. *¿De qué eres consciente ahora después de reflexionar acerca de estas situaciones?* [What are you aware of now after reflecting on these situations?]
   Ahora soy más consciente de que_____. [Now I'm more aware of _____.]
5. *¿Qué has aprendido acerca de los latinos con estos dos ejemplos?* [What did you learn about Latinos from these two examples?]
   He aprendido/ Aprendí que _____. [I learned _____.]

Once the students have had some time to consider the reflection questions individually, they will move to small groups for discussion, followed by a whole-class conversation regarding stereotypes. This lesson provides space for learners to access higher-order thinking skills while encountering the social dimension of CCA as learners begin to reflect on the powerful effects of ideological beliefs in social interactions. There are several extension activities that teachers could choose to develop at the end of this lesson, depending on availability of resources, time, and language ability of the students. One option would be to continue the conversation during the next class session by having students examine videos about:

- how citizens of Spain view Mexicans
  (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGxKGdqdoSA)
- stereotypes of Latin Americans in the media
  (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ca-S1ZxVrk).
- typical stereotypes of Americans
  (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESeItF9MWp8)

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This would give teachers an opportunity to juxtapose stereotyping of foreign cultures to common stereotypes of Americans. This fulfills the notion of promoting self-awareness in the intercultural communicative competence paradigm, as learners are encouraged to reflect on their own culture alongside exploration of the target culture (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006).

In order to create a powerful culminating lesson for this study related to critical incidents, teachers could organize a question and answer session with a panel of guest speakers from different Spanish-speaking countries and regions. In order to prepare for the panel, learners can write questions in Spanish to ask during the session. The teacher plays the role of moderator, who would be in a position to guide the discussion and create connections to the information students have gathered related to stereotypes. The goal of this session would be to illuminate the diverse experiences, perspectives, and beliefs of Spanish speakers, thus reinforcing the fact that stereotypes often simplify culture and discount the multi-layered nature of cultural identity. In addition, this activity gives students the opportunity to interact with Spanish speakers, thereby positively impacting the learners' perceptions of Latinos, and further developing their critical cultural awareness. Finally, since most of this lesson would be conducted in the target language, students are able to advance both their aural and oral language skills by practicing Spanish vocabulary and grammar language control in an authentic setting.

Conclusion

If foreign language educators want to create powerful lessons that encourage students to think at deeper levels about the intercultural interactions that take place in their real lives, critical cultural awareness as an expansion of intercultural communicative competence must become an important component of the curricula. This paper has shown that the social and psychological dimensions of CCA guide teachers in addressing how the social context of language and culture affects interactions while identity influences perspectives and beliefs. As a result, students who become more aware of the nuances that underlie culture will become better prepared to engage appropriately and effectively in intercultural relationships.

> *If foreign language educators want to create powerful lessons that encourage students to think at deeper levels about the intercultural interactions that take place in their real lives, critical cultural awareness as an expansion of intercultural communicative competence must become an important component of the curricula.*

The research-based activities presented in this paper depict ways to further language development as opportunities are provided for learners to engage the target culture at a deeper level while connecting classroom learning to situations that occur in the global community. It is recommended that practicing language teachers consider connecting critical cultural awareness to themes that are already being explored in the regular foreign language curricula. In making minor adjustments to lessons that already function successfully for language learners, teachers can make small strides today that will positively impact students as they

move toward becoming participating members of society. Although teachers may initially feel that including critical cultural awareness in the foreign language classroom "requires much effort and skill" (Bandura, 2013, p. 180) as students are encouraged to become aware of "perceptions of representatives of other cultures" (Bandura, 2013, p. 180), it is nonetheless vital to focus on the positive results of preparing students to enter into intercultural relationships with a greater awareness of the multifaceted nature of culture.

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Critical activities in the Spanish classroom:
A qualitative study

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Abstract

The goal of this study is to analyze the implication of integrating activities driven from critical pedagogy into the curriculum of a Spanish language classroom using a critical ethnographic research methodology. The activities used in this course were out-of-class activities, multicultural activities, analyses of written and visual texts (textbooks and mass media analyses), mini-ethnographic projects, and personal journals in English. My guiding hypothesis is that using activities driven from critical pedagogy early in language instruction helps to build a cohesive speech community, challenges the participants' cultural values, and guarantees the relevance of the course content. The fieldwork for this study was conducted in a 4-credit second semester of a two-semester Intermediate Spanish sequence. Data were collected through participant observation and the review of primary documents (students assignments). Findings show that relating the course content to students' realities and analyzing mainstream interpretations of culture facilitated the development of critical thinking skills, helped deepen students' understanding of the target groups, and encouraged students to identify their own cultural values and believes. Data suggests that a cohesive speech community aids reserved students establish their voices within the learning community.

One of the goals of critical pedagogy is to create engaged, active, critically thinking citizens, that is to say, political subjects who can participate as decision-makers in the organization of their socio-cultural realities

While critical pedagogy has several roots, it is most strongly associated with Paulo Freire, who during the 1960s conducted a national literacy campaign in Brazil that promoted knowledge through the critical examination of existing social conditions (Freire, 1970). One of the goals of critical pedagogy is to create engaged, active,

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critically thinking citizens, that is to say, political subjects who can participate as decision-makers in the organization of their socio-cultural realities (Freire, 1970, Giroux, 1992). Critical pedagogues approach language as a necessary resource in the negotiation and performance of social identities (Leeman, Rabin, & Roman-Mendoza, 2011).

Critical pedagogy has been adopted throughout the United States and abroad since the 1960s with minority students using this pedagogy as a tool to empower them with a voice and critical thinking skills (Freire, 1970; Hooks 2003; Shor, 2012). Also, authors have tried for decades to address students' negative attitudes toward the Spanish language and target cultures studied in the Spanish classroom (Leeman et al., 2011; Schwartz & Kavanaugh, 1997).

By engaging in a critical ethnographic research project based on my own teaching, this study analyzes the implication of integrating activities driven from critical pedagogy into the curriculum of the second semester of a two-semester Intermediate Spanish sequence taught at a medium-sized public research institution. The activities used were out-of-class activities, multicultural activities, analyses of written and visual texts (textbooks and mass media analyses), mini-ethnographic projects, and personal journals in English. In this study, I use these activities to help students better understand the Spanish language class and target cultures while learning a language.

> *Critical ethnography attempts to identify strategies for empowering individuals and ultimately works toward social change.*

Critical ethnography attempts to identify strategies for empowering individuals and ultimately works toward social change (Kincheloe, 2003). When related to second language acquisition (SLA), critical ethnography has usually been applied to enhance heritage Spanish speakers and minority students (for instance, Latino students in the U.S.) to give them the tools to function as decision-makers in the society in which they live (Morrell, 2002; Trueba & McLaren, 2000). However, in the area of SLA in the U.S. there is a need for applying critical ethnography to facilitate cross-cultural awareness toward the target cultures. My guiding hypothesis is that using activities driven from critical pedagogy early in language instruction helps to build a cohesive speech community, challenges the participants' cultural values, and guarantees the relevance of the course content.

Critical Research

> *Critical research encourages self-reflection as a tool for identifying the ways that social constructs such as gender roles or racial attitudes are shaped by the perspectives of the dominant classes.*

Critical research encourages self-reflection as a tool for identifying the ways that social constructs such as gender roles or racial attitudes are shaped by the perspectives of the dominant classes. Within the field of education, critical researchers challenge interpretations of school practices in which teachers are perceived as mere transmitters of prepackaged material and students are seen as passive consumers of knowledge (Kincheloe, 2003).

Critical activities in the Spanish classroom

Educational issues are political and ethical in character because the teacher, the institution where teaching takes place, and the educational system as a whole are driven by political and cultural values. This is to say that what teachers and institutions choose to do in the classroom and what they include or leave out of the curriculum are fundamentally political decisions. For instance, including a work by Toni Morrison in the syllabus and teaching it without making any reference to race and gender is not an interrogation of the biases conventional canons establish, but only a superficial attempt to maintain a liberal appearance (Hooks, 1994). In the same way, studying aspects of Latino cultures in the U.S. Spanish language classroom without critically exploring the differences and similarities across cultures might result in overgeneralizing and stereotyping.

Until recently, socio-cultural issues in the language classroom have not been addressed (Block, 2007). A consequence has been a widespread lack of teacher preparation for critically approaching cultural issues (Milner, 2003; Nieto, 2002; Walsh, 1996; Wink, 2000; Wolk, 1998). As a result of this lack of preparation, teachers often fear that approaching teaching from a critical standpoint makes their work less "objective" and therefore less valuable. Hooks (1994) explains that the lack of traditional formality associated with fostering critical classrooms, in which students acknowledge each individual's political point of view, frequently is perceived by some teachers and students as a lack of seriousness. However, such a perception is a step to questioning one's own world-view in order to understand that of others, which can eventually raise cultural awareness. According to Freire (1985) "educators must ask themselves for whom and on whose behalf they are working [because] there are no neutral educators" (p. 180).

The very tight relationship that exists between personal values and practice within this inquiry approach inevitably raises questions about objectivity. As Carspecken (1996) emphasizes, the fact that critical researchers acknowledge that they are value-driven does not mean that the researcher's values will determine the results of the study. On the contrary, acknowledging that no educator or researcher is neutral helps to examine the data in context.

Finally, in critical research, theory and practice are tightly interconnected. Critical theorists in the field of education invite teachers to become researchers and to develop their own inquiry based on their personal practice (Carr & Kemmis, 2003). Therefore, teacher/researchers are encouraged to develop their own action research in schools as a form of inquiry.

Critical Pedagogy in the Spanish Classroom

Critical theory and practice guide this project because it can frame the language classroom as a progressive space for learning about foreign cultures. Data for this research project were collected through participant observation and the review of primary documents. In this study, I was a complete member-observer (full participant) because, as the teacher, I was a member of the classroom community. I observed a second semester of a two-semester Intermediate

> *Critical theory and practice guide this project because it can frame the language classroom as a progressive space for learning about foreign cultures.*

Spanish sequence that I taught (a total of 45 classroom hours), and maintained daily field notes. Furthermore, copies of all students' written assignments were gathered for use as primary documents; these provide helpful information not only on students' language learning progress but also on their cross-cultural and critical thinking development. Finally, I videotaped class debates in English and oral activities in Spanish, primary data sources that assist in the triangulation of the data. In order to achieve credible findings the researcher has to analyze all of the data collected, as well as triangulate different types of evidence, which entails assessing data from different sources to achieve valid results (Oliver-Hoyo & Allen, 2006).

Participants and Course Curriculum

The fieldwork for this study was conducted in a 4-credit second semester of a two-semester Intermediate Spanish sequence composed of 17 female and 12 males students.

To design the curriculum of the class, I was asked by the departmental to use the established syllabus as a guideline to guarantee that the students attending this section would cover the same level of grammar as students attending other sections. Therefore, students studied the grammar using the same textbook used by the department, but then they applied the newly acquired grammatical structures in activities driven from critical pedagogy.

Activities

As Hooks (1994) explains, certain prerequisites are necessary to conduct critical pedagogy successfully. Critical theorists suggest a number of activities to develop critical thinking and to raise cultural awareness. Some of these activities are particularly appropriate for the language classroom and include, among others, out-of-class activities multicultural activities, analyses of written and visual texts (textbooks and mass media analyses), mini-ethnographic projects, and personal journals in English.

> *Critical theorists suggest a number of activities to develop critical thinking and to raise cultural awareness.*

Out-of-class activities. Ensuring that the course content is relevant to students is usually the responsibility of the teacher's and/or language department. Traditionally, teachers achieve relevance by providing material to which students can relate. For this study, one of the ways I ensured relevance was by requiring students to choose the activity they wanted to conduct and create their own texts. The implication of this practice is to link the Spanish classroom to the students' worlds, to help them understand that they are exposed to Latino cultures in their daily life and that its influence is not limited to the Spanish classroom.

Traditionally, the class in which this study was conducted was a 4-credit course with three hours a week allocated for grammar and content, and a forth hour dedicated to conversational/ computer-based activities. The forth hours was scheduled in the catalogue at specific times, took place in the language lab with a different Spanish teacher, and was worth 15% of the students' final grade. When I designed this course the language department allowed me to deviate from

this practice. Hence, I asked students to conduct independent work to satisfy the requirement. For the out-of-class requirement, students could watch movies related to Latino cultures, read books, magazines, and comics, attend Latino dance-classes, concerts, lectures, go to Latino restaurants or clubs, or conduct other activities related to the target cultures. In order to obtain credit for the out-of-class requirement, students were requested to submit a one-page reaction paper in Spanish describing each activity and share their reaction papers with their peers. This practice set the ground for students to relate the course content to the world that surrounds them, defining language learning as an active process that is linked to their daily lives.

Multicultural activities. Multicultural education conceptualizes the school as a social system in which all students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, language, or ability, will have an equal chance to succeed academically (Banks & Banks, 2009). Activities that can be useful in SLA to help students understand aspects of the target cultures, and to make them relevant to their lives are *Woman of Puck; A Parable: An Introduction to Cultural Values*; and *Cultural Incidents*.

Woman of Puck—a famous perceptual illusion consisting of a double picture. Depending on what part of the picture students focus on, they see an old woman or a young woman (Appendix A). The goals of the activity are to get students to not always believe what they first see and to demonstrate how perceptions are determined by cultural values.

The students were given a handout (Appendix A) and asked to fill it out individually while viewing The Woman of Puck. Next, the handouts were collected, shuffled, and handed back to the class (no students received their own handout). Students worked in groups and discussed the answers on the handouts. Some students volunteered to describe the woman they were seeing and, at the end, students discussed the objectives of the activity. For instance, they analyzed the cultural values associated with youth and old age.

The Parable: An Introduction to Cultural Values— a short story involving five characters, in which the behavior of each character is intended to represent different values (Hoopes & Ventura, 1979). The goal of this activity is to demonstrate how individual choices are determined by cultural values, to question the dominant ideology that a culture is formed of merely one set of values, and to acquaint students with specific cultural differences and similarities held by class members.

The story was read aloud in class and students were asked to select, in rank order, the characters whose behavior they most approved of and to discuss their different choices (Appendix B).

Cultural Incident— a short skill-directed exercise (Kohls & Brussow, 1995) in which students are given an incident described in a non-judgmental, neutral way (Appendix C). The goals of the activity are to demonstrate how beliefs are determined by cultural values, and the ability to change attitudes by adapting to new situations, in addition to stimulating cultural awareness.

Students were first presented with a short incident that ended with a question: "How would you help Ms. XXX understand what happened?" Following the

incident there were possible answers/explanations. In groups, students discussed which explanation they thought was most plausible. Then students were presented with a rationale for each alternative explanation, showing why or why not each answer might make sense. An open class discussion followed. For the first written assignment students created their own cultural incidents and presented them to their peers.

Analyses of written and visual text. Another method to encourage critical thinking and to develop cultural awareness is to examine the discourse of written and visual texts to which students are usually exposed. Fairclough, Mulderrig, and Wodak (2011) analyze different dimensions of the relationship between power and discourse. They state that "discursive practices may have major ideological effects: that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic groups, through the ways in which they represent things and position people" (p. 358). Power can be exercised through discourse in "one-sidedness" relations. This is what Fairclough (1989) calls hidden-power, and it is performed through the discourse of the mass media, television, radio, film, textbooks, and newspapers (p. 49). In this case, power is indirectly exercised and the individuals and organizations that the media and publishers portray often do not equally represent all social groupings in the population (Ramirez Berg, 2011). Analyzing textbooks that students have used in the past and visual texts to which they are exposed in the mass media are useful activities in the Spanish classroom to explore the power behind discourse in society. For instance, traditionally all language textbooks contain a chapter dedicated to family. However, very few textbooks make reference to different types of family such as single-parent families or gay family, much less to the fact that gay marriage was legalized in Spanish speaking countries such as Spain, much earlier than in the U.S. Likewise, students might analyze popular shows such as Breaking Bad to explore in what ways Latinos are portrayed, or if there is a balance between "good" and "bad."

Finally, at the pedagogical level, mass media representations are considered authentic material in that they are "not designed solely for classroom use but rather for native speakers" (Ciccone, 1995, p. 203) and beneficial for language learning (Wallermire, 2008). As Ciccone illustrates, not exposing students to authentic material at the beginning and intermediate levels hinders their language learning. It might also increase their later frustration due to their lack of early exposure to the processing strategies necessary for decoding authentic language.

Textbook analysis. To introduce this activity, students working in pairs created a list of what they expected to find in a language textbook, and what they usually like and dislike about language textbooks. Then, students' answers were shared with the class. Each pair of students picked one of the 15 textbooks I brought to class, and skimmed it to see if the textbook met their list of expectations. Students were told that the textbooks were formerly used in Spain to teach English as a Second Language to Spanish students. While skimming the books, students analyzed:

Critical activities in the Spanish classroom

- the title of the book,
- if the book was appealing and why,
- in what language the instructions were written,
- if it had pictures or drawings,
- if it portrayed diversity (gender, ethnic, age...),
- if culture and grammar were integrated and in what ways.

As a follow-up activity students brought textbooks they had used in previous Spanish courses, and I brought a selection of books for those students who did not have access to their old textbooks, and they skimmed them using the previous criteria. Finally, each student chose a textbook and wrote a textbook analysis assignment (Appendix D).

Mass media analysis. For this activity, students watched episodes of different Spanish sit-coms, which caricaturized characters from Spain, the U.S., France, Russia, and Japan. Following this, there was a class discussion on the stereotypes observed, stereotypical images of these prototypes held in the U.S., and the reasons why stereotypes vary in different cultures. The follow-up assignment was to write an episode of a sit-com portraying the first day of a Spanish exchange student in the U.S.

Next, students read articles translated to Spanish and adapted for the classroom that illustrate the under- and misrepresentation of Latino actors, actresses, and characters in movies and TV shows in the U.S. (Ramirez Berg, 2011). These articles also provided students with the vocabulary needed for their written assignment on mass media analysis.

Finally, students chose a movie or TV show made in the U.S. in which one or more Latino characters were presented and wrote a two-to-three page analysis. Students presented their mass media analysis to their peers, and screened short segments of the visual representation to illustrate their analyses.

Mini-ethnographic projects. To develop mini-ethnographic projects students are given the freedom to explore their own interests in relation to the target cultures. These projects "are open, long-term, integrative inquiries done in a social setting that are created and/or developed with much student input and ownership" (Wolk, 1998, p. 96). These projects make the material relevant while providing students the opportunity to become meaning makers, not merely meaning consumers:

Ethnography is a method used to obtain cultural information from the native's point of view to explore how people within the target culture group prioritize their language experiences. The fieldwork is done by interviewing a native speaker in the community who can provide an inside account of a specific topic (Rodriguez Pino, 1997, p. 4).

> *Ethnography is a method used to obtain cultural information from the native's point of view to explore how people within the target culture group prioritize their language experiences.*

The importance of conducting mini-ethnographies in the Spanish classroom as a final project is significant. First, students get to practice everything they have learned during the semester in a final project (both at the level of content and at the level of structure). Second, students get to choose the topic of study. Third, students are

instructed in ethical issues when conducting qualitative research with human subjects, bringing together cultural awareness issues that already have been studied. Fourth, students learn how to conduct the different stages of the project (identify thesis, write interview probes, report findings). Finally, they practice decoding authentic language in a real situation with a native speaker. Students presented their mini-ethnographies to their peers.

Personal Journals and Debates

When applying critical pedagogy to a beginning or intermediate language classroom, the teacher may provide time during which students can express themselves in their own language. Allotting time for English debates and journals is an effective way to avoid (1) student frustration when they are discussing culturally sensitive issues in another language and (2) students' wanting to switch to English during a Spanish discussion because they cannot find the words to express themselves. It also allows them to express complex ideas without suffering what authors have reported as language learning anxiety and the barrier of the second language (Ewald, 2014). Journals that are focused on listening to the students' concerns should always be followed by a discussion or debate in which students and teacher arrive at an agreement.

During the semester in which this study was conducted, students wrote three journal entries in English in class. A debate in English followed each journal entry. English journal entries and debates were scheduled in the syllabus and were not graded. English debates where videotaped.

Results and Discussion

Data suggest that using activities driven from critical pedagogy in a Spanish classroom helps to build a cohesive speech community, it challenges the participants' cultural values, and it guarantees the relevance of the course content, enabling students to raise cross-cultural awareness while learning the language.

Building a Speech Community

This course required students to periodically discuss their cultural values. This was favorable for building a new speech community, in which students' engagement brought them together as a group early in the semester. The students who were often absent had a harder time fitting in when they attended class, which led some to eventually drop out (out of the 29 students who initially enrolled in the class, only 24 remained by the end of the semester).

A significant factor that increased the sense of community in the class was the ability for students to express their opinions and create individual voices. At the beginning of the semester, six females and two male students noted how they found it difficult to participate and share their opinions in class, although the vast majority of them eventually overcame their shyness based on their increased participation in the last activities. For example, a student who had a very hard time establishing her voice in the class community, yet overcame the obstacle early in the semester was a female student who wrote me an e-mail message saying:

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> The reason I do not participate more is because of activities such as today's, where everyone has to analyze and criticize every sentence that comes out of your mouth. This makes me very nervous. I also think of something to say and someone else is usually quicker to say it. It is not that I don't want to participate.

She is referring to a peer correction activity in which I showed anonymous excerpts of students' written work and as a group, the class corrected them. It seems obvious that more reserved students might feel insecure about their language skills and are threatened by the idea of such an activity, and for this reason the creation of an inclusive class community becomes so imperative. Data suggest that it was the sense of community that eventually made this student feel at ease in the class. Two weeks after her message, I sent her an e-mail asking her if she was going to attend the organized out-of-class session scheduled for the following week:

> Are you going to come Monday at 1 pm to our extraordinary session? Your cultural incident was very good (with few mistakes that students will correct in class) and I need to know if you want to present it to the other students to make transparencies.

Although I made it clear that students were going to correct her mistakes she answered, "I would be happy to come." This student became an active member of the class community, was in permanent contact with me and the other students through e-mail, and ended up presenting all of her written assignments to her peers throughout the semester.

Another female student who appeared to feel challenged with the prospect of speaking at the beginning of the semester, but who made a dramatic change by the end was from Italian-Hispanic descent and had a better command of Spanish than most of her peers. Still, at the beginning she remained non-communicative and refused to perform orally in most sessions. On the first videotaped session she did not say a word during the whole class. I asked her on several occasions if she had any comments, to which she shook her head and stared at the floor. In her second journal entry she wrote:

> I like that the class is very open and people don't get embarrassed by their mistakes. I am a shy person sometimes, especially when I do something I am aware of, for example speaking Spanish. However, this class makes you get over it because it is the only way to succeed. I have not held up my contract very well. I have already had two absences and my participation is very low… I try on very few days to get my voice out there, but I get embarrassed easily.

Two months into the semester, she decided to present for the first time one of her written assignments surprising her peers and herself with her oral presentation skills. As the term progressed, she increased her oral participation in the class, becoming one of the most vocal students by the end of the semester. As the following excerpt of her last journal entry suggests, fostering a critical classroom environment can improve the chances for reserved students to confront their fears:

I found it easier to participate in this type of class format, even though it took some time, when I did begin to participate I felt confident in my answers. The Spanish debates and oral activities allowed us to be more active and express our opinions. It was important to know where others stood.

Her reference to "where others stood" is an important element in the creation of a class community and reflects the manner by which class participants learned to respect their peers' voices.

The oral activities and debates were helpful in aiding students establish their voices within the community. Four students declared in their second journal entry that the debates enabled them to confront their fears of speaking in public, while two students said in their third journal entry that a positive aspect of a critical classroom is that students have a voice that is heard. Students' positive opinions about the debates increased throughout the semester. In the second journal entry, only two students claimed liking the debates. By the end of the semester, in their last journal entry, fourteen students talked about the debates and the oral activities as being enjoyable and a useful tool to improve language learning and argumentation skills.

Challenging Cultural Values

> Cross-cultural awareness ideally leads students to see the members of the target cultures through a positive lens making visible their differences and similarities within a continuum of human characteristics.

While conducting multicultural activities, different cultural assumptions were challenged in our quest for promoting cultural awareness. Cross-cultural awareness ideally leads students to see the members of the target cultures through a positive lens making visible their differences and similarities within a continuum of human characteristics. Furthermore, cross-cultural awareness entails self-awareness, which helps participants perceive themselves as cultural beings. The cultural assumptions that emerged in class were related to mainstream interpretations of culture and stereotypes, such as the belief that all members of a society share the same cultural values. Participants discussed how societies are composed of different cultures, which accounted for the contrasting cultural values and misunderstandings that arise in human interactions.

For instance, when we conducted the multicultural activity *A Parable: An Introduction to Cultural Values* (Appendix B), an interaction occurred that illustrates the simplistic assumption of cultural homogeneity that is, the common belief that all members of a society share the same cultural values. After ranking the characters in order, starting with the one they respected most, students needed to explain their choice. A group consisting of only female students ranked Rosamaria and Regina in the first and second place because their behavior was driven by their desire to help. They ranked Paco next for not helping, followed by Esteban who asked for an unreasonable amount of money in exchange for help, and finally, Felipe for rejecting his friend. Another group formed by two females and two

male students were divided. The female students had made the same choices as the previous group, and the male students ranked Rosamaria last because she was a thief and they explained that the ends do not justify the means. Esteban was ranked in first position because he was merely taking care of his business.

Next, I asked students to identify the cultural values that had risen from our interpretations of the story, and the values that emerged included friendship, support, loyalty, and hospitality as positive values; and greed and capitalism as negative values. Six female students insisted that it is acceptable to break the law for good causes, while three male students disagreed, contending that the law should never be broken. I summarized the discussion saying that different cultures might hold opposite values, and I gave as an example that some female students had ranked Rosamaria's stealing as a positive value, but a few male students had labeled it as negative. To that, a male student said that he disagreed with my interpretation because in the classroom everybody shared the same culture.

This comment gave us the opportunity to discuss the dominant ideology that a culture is formed of merely one set of values, those held by the dominant classes. Students brainstormed on the different cultural groups that form society in terms of gender, race, age, sexual orientation and other social constructions, analyzing a society as a compound of different micro-cultures. Students finally agreed that our Spanish class was composed of different cultures, which accounted for the contrasting cultural values that had risen from this activity.

Another cultural assumption was related to unmarked social traits, such as those associated with the middle class. For example in her textbook analysis, a female student wrote:

> *En los dibujos y las fotografías, hay diversidad en raza etnia, y genero. Hay mexicanos, estadounidenses y muchos otros. Hay chicos y chicas. La mayoría de la clase social pertenece a la clase media… esto no es bueno o malo…[en conclusión] los estereotipos que se encuentran en otros libros de texto… no están en este libro.*
>
> [In the drawings and pictures there is racial, ethnic and gender diversity. There are Mexicans, U.S. citizens and much more. There are boys and girls. The majority of the social class is the middle class… this is not good or bad… [in conclusion] stereotypes that are found in other textbooks… are not found in this book.]

This excerpt does not analyze the exclusion of all social classes other than the middle class as a cultural misrepresentation, because middle class traits, as the characteristics of the mainstream population, are unmarked in students' perceptions, and therefore universalized as the norm. Consequently, students do not perceive the imposition of what they consider the norm as detrimental to the cultural representation of a society.

Data suggest that when students are asked to identify stereotypical traits of the U.S. culture, they more easily recognize traits related to what is marked as working class. In this way, students fail to recognize the mainstream middle-

class (with which most of them identify) as bearing any particular cultural and socioeconomic qualities, rendering it an unmarked, universal identity.

Finally, a recurrent assumption that was questioned in class was the cultural misconception that certain stereotypes are true because some individuals held the traits that characterize the stereotypes. The following excerpt from a female student's analysis of the NBC sit-com *Will & Grace* illustrates this idea:

> *La actriz latina en* Will & Grace *es muy estereotípica de las latinas. Primero, el nombre de Rosario es muy estereotípico. Ella es una latina que trabaja limpiando, es ilegal, tiene una personalidad fuerte y roba. Pero creo que algunas características son la verdad de las latinas. Porque mi mamá es latina y como Rosario tiene una personalidad fuerte. Mi mamá es muy emocional y cuando ella está enojada nosotros vamos a otro lado. Y cuando mi mamá vino a Estados Unidos, limpió casas también.*
>
> [The Latino actress in Will & Grace is very stereotypical of Latinas. First, the name, Rosario, is very stereotypical. She is a Latina who works cleaning, she is undocumented, she has a strong personality and she steals. But I think that some of the characteristics are true for Latinas. Because my mom is Latina and, as Rosario, she has a strong personality. My mom is very emotional and when she gets angry we flee. And when my mom came to the US, she cleaned houses too.]

... stereotypes are the generalizations of characteristics held by individuals, which should not lead to the conclusion that some stereotypes are true, even if there are people with these characteristics.

In class it was extensively discussed that stereotypes are the generalizations of characteristics held by individuals, which should not lead to the conclusion that some stereotypes are true, even if there are people with these characteristics. Data suggest that by the end of the semester the majority of the students understood that portraying stereotypical representations of certain cultures creates images in a person's unconscious that are difficult to identify and deconstruct. Students reported these reflections in their third journal entry, in which 11 students asserted that the multicultural activities had facilitated the questioning of assumptions previously taken for granted, helping them to deconstruct stereotypes of which they were not aware. As a student wrote in her last journal entry:

The multicultural activities and questioning of cultural assumptions made Spanish much more than just a language class. This class not only helped me improve my Spanish but it made me aware of many stereotypes and prejudices that I haven't always recognized. This class has helped me to be more open-minded and aware of the world.

Furthermore, two students specified that challenging their cultural assumptions to understand the target cultures better had facilitated the understanding of their own culture. Moreover, the vast majority of the students reflected similar opinions in their mass media analysis, and mini-ethnographies, as the following excerpt illustrates:

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Las películas de los tiempos actuales en los Estados Unidos frecuentemente contienen papeles estereotípicos de personajes latinos. También, la población latina de este país no está representada bien ni en la televisión ni en el cine; hay pocos papeles latinos en los programas y las películas estadounidense… pero la situación esta mejorando. En las películas Traffic *y* Blow *por ejemplo, los latinos comercian con drogas y dan la idea al público que esto es una característica de la cultura latina. Es necesario que nuestra sociedad de una impresión correcta de los latinos, y que los represente bien en cuanto al número de latinos en los Estados Unidos y sus estilos de vida.*
[Today's U.S. movies frequently portray stereotypical Latino characters. Also, the Latino population is not well represented either on TV nor in movies; there are not many Latino roles in programs and movies in the US… but the situation is improving. For instance, in the movies *Traffic* and *Blow*, Latinos deal with drugs and this tells the audience that this is a characteristic of the Latino culture. It is necessary that our society show a correct image of Latinos and that they be correctly portrayed in terms of the number of Latinos in the U.S. and their lifestyles.]

Finally, when examining the positive and negative stereotypes that students identified in their mass media analyses, it is critical to note that the positive Latino representations which students identified were played by non-Latino actors and actresses.

The positive stereotypes were found in five movies or TV shows: *The Cosby Show, Evita, The Mask of Zorro, Resurrection Boulevard*, and *A Walk in the Clouds*. All of the positive male representations were found in *The Mask of Zorro* in the character played by Anthony Hopkins. Moreover, the majority of the positive female representations were found in the above-mentioned movie in the character played by Catherine Zeta-Jones, and in Evita in the character played by Madonna. Participants examined these positive images as a step forward in the ways Latinos are portrayed, but we all failed to realize that often when Latinos are represented positively, the role is played by an Anglo actor or actress.

Finally, students discussed extensively the limited representation of Latino characters in the mass media, and the ways in which these representations influence our cultural perceptions at an unconscious level. As a reaction to these discussions a female student wrote in her Mass Media Analysis conclusions:

Cuando miré la película por primera vez, no vi los estereotipos. [Ahora] veo las mismas cosas en todas las películas que representan la cultura latina. Por ejemplo, no es probable que ellos tengan un trabajo notable, [siempre] vivan en una familia muy grande, sean pobres.
[When I watched the movie for the first time, I did not see the stereotypes. [Now] I see the same things in all the movies where the Latino culture is represented. For instance, it is not probable that they have a good job, they [always] live in a big family and are poor.]

This was one of the 20 students who admitted in her last journal entry that prior to the course, she had not realized the ways in which her cultural perceptions were

affected by commonly-held social assumptions. When she watched Fools Rush In for the second time as an assignment for the course she perceived many negative stereotypical representations that she had overlooked the first time. Likewise, prior to this activity, I had not realized that often, when Latino characters are portrayed in a positive manner, the roles are played by mainstream non-Latino actors and actresses, transforming the Latino persona into an unmarked mainstream character. In fact, I realized it when analyzing the data for this study.

Students also specified that challenging their cultural assumptions to understand better the target cultures facilitated the understanding of their own culture making them more self-aware:

> The best part of the class was the intercultural activities and discussion of stereotypes. In the beginning of the semester, the class was very segregated and I feel that through discussion of our opinions of stereotypes (not just Hispanics, but the skits we did that involved stereotypes of African Americans, the video we watched that stereotyped Chinese and American people, etc.) they were broken down and this united us.

Relevance as a Learning Tool

Relevance is a key element of the learning process because if the material is not relevant, the learning process is usually hindered. One of the multiple ways in which relevance was achieved in the classroom was when students created their own texts and shared them with their peers, which allowed them to learn from each other and develop presentational skills.

Eight out of the 24 students who wrote *Cultural Incidents* also connected their life experiences to the course material, using relevance as a learning tool. For instance, a female student worked in a retirement home and her incident was based on the conflict that occurred when her Honduran friend visited her job-place and could not comprehend why U.S. families sent their elders to these homes. Another example came from a male student who always dressed in black and based his incident on the 'Gothic style' shared by many U.S. young people. An African-American student from Baltimore, wrote about her experience as a first-year college student in Louisiana, and the cultural shock she suffered. Yet another male student focused on the Maryland crab-feast tradition and the reactions it could provoke in outsiders. Relating the class content to students' own reality proved to be a very useful learning tool.

Relevance was also achieved by using authentic material to which students had access. This practice links the Spanish classroom to the students' worlds, helping them understand that they are exposed to Latino cultures in their daily life, and that their influence is not limited to the Spanish classroom. This link was made apparent to some students who acknowledged that the first time they saw movies such as *Fools Rush In*, they did not realize how stereotypically the Latino characters were portrayed. Furthermore, many students seem to be unaware of the exposure they had to the Latino community in their daily lives. As a student wrote in her third journal entry: "In doing the ethnography and mass media

project, I clearly observed the Spanish community around me that I once never paid attention to."

Relevance between course content and students' realities was also ensured when students took an active role in their learning process, making the connection between the class content and their daily lives. Students related the class material to their own realities drawing upon previously acquired knowledge as a learning strategy. When conducting their mini-ethnographies, students used their social networks as a strategy to facilitate their work. Eighteen out of the 24 students who completed this assignment interviewed family, friends, and acquaintances of Latino decent. Some interviewees were family-related (a mother, a grandmother), some work-related (a co-worker), some community-related (the woman who cleaned her mother's house, a neighbor), and many were school-related (college friends or former teachers).

The few students whose social network did not include Latinos suffered some anxiety at the initial stages of the assignment. These were two female students who, until they actually conducted the interviews and enjoyed them, constantly complained about the requirement. When they informed me that they did not have an interviewee I told them that they could interview the regular camerawoman and me, but both disliked the idea and said that they would look for somebody else. As they failed in finding anybody else, they ended up following my suggestion. Their final reactions are illustrated in the following excerpt:

> *Aunque este proyecto estaba muy difícil, creo que he aprendido mucho. Aprendí primero que tengo mucho que aprender de español, pero también que es muy importante aprender sobre otras culturas y personas. Me gustó mucho hablar con XXX. Es una mujer muy inteligente y amable y estaba muy abierta sobre sus experiencias. Creo que con su ayuda yo he cumplido el objetivo que me fijé con esta entrevista: estudiar los conflictos afrontados por una extranjera en los Estados Unidos.*
> [Though this project was very difficult, I have learned a lot. First I learned that I have still a lot of Spanish to learn, but also that it is very important to learn about other cultures and people. I loved to talk to XXX. She is a very intelligent and kind woman and she was very open to talk about her experiences. I believe that with her help I have accomplished the objective I set for myself for this interview: to study the obstacles faced by a foreigner in the U.S.]

Another student whose social network did not include Latinos decided to go to a downtown Latino diner and try to interview construction workers. I advised him against this method but he insisted on trying it and failed in finding an interviewee. When he went to the diner he stood up and asked for volunteers for his project, and no customer responded to his call. He reported in his ethnography the difficulties and obstacles he had encountered in his attempt.

Also, for their out-of-class requirement, many students wrote about activities that were part of their daily lives, relating their own lives to the class content. Examples of reports students wrote were: Cristina, a talk-show a student regularly

watched, and the Latino night-clubs she attended; salsa lessons a student was taking; the Latino children a student tutored on Saturday mornings; the music store where a student worked and the Latino influence on U.S. music trends; or a collection of children's short-stories a student had and one of the stories she translated to Spanish. Finally, some students attended lectures on Latino topics held at the university that I would periodically announce.

Also, many students reported that because of the class content, they had decided to continue their Spanish studies. For instance, in her third journal entry, a female student wrote:

> The ethnography was extremely informative … I learned a lot and felt very immersed in the culture. The person interviewed showed me Spanish magazines and told me all about Puerto Rico and I believe this has had an effect on my decision to take Spanish next semester.

From the 24 students who completed the course, 10 took the next Spanish level the following semester, and five more informed me in the personal interviews I held with each of them at the end of the semester that they would be taking Spanish later in their undergraduate years. Therefore, relevance was also achieved in that the course influenced the students' decision to make the study of Spanish part of their lives in future semesters.

Conclusions

> The literature suggests that there is a need in the U.S. to create alternative ways of teaching about target cultures in the foreign language classroom.

The literature suggests that there is a need in the U.S. to create alternative ways of teaching about target cultures in the foreign language classroom. This critical ethnography responds to the challenge through the design and implementation of a Spanish course that emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills along with language learning. The participants in this study critically approached the target cultures while learning the language, using activities driven from critical pedagogy. The objectives of these activities were to introduce students to the notion that each culture creates its own set of distinct values, and to encourage students to identify their own cultural values. They were designed to help students realize that their beliefs are determined by cultural values, to stimulate awareness of problems in transmitting one's own ideas by listening to others, and to develop the ability to change one's attitudes by adapting to new situations.

The importance of using activities driven by critical pedagogy in beginning and intermediate Spanish courses is twofold: it encourages critical thinking and promotes cultural awareness earlier in the language learning process. Furthermore, students use their own work to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills by creating original texts and presenting them to their peers.

Relating the course content to students' realities facilitated the understanding of the target cultures and the development of critical thinking skills. The most significant consequence of this practice was that students started relating the

content of their Spanish class to other courses they were taking, cross-referencing knowledge among the courses of their major. Furthermore, 50% of the students informed me that they were going to continue their Spanish studies partly as a result of the positive experience of this course, and 10 out of the 24 students who completed the course, also completed the subsequent level of Spanish.

The learning process was facilitated by examining the connection between students' daily lives and the target cultures, and by deconstructing the misperception that the study of Latino cultures is confined to the Spanish classroom. Therefore, participants realized the extent of their exposure to the Latinos who live among them, which helped students understand the importance of learning Spanish, and helped me become more aware of the resources that are available to contextualize the course content in ways that are motivating for students.

Throughout the semester the analysis of cultural assumptions increased in complexity and depth. Findings show that participants increased their critical thinking skills analyzing mainstream interpretations of culture that related positive stereotypes with unmarked social traits, and negative stereotypes with marked characteristics. All of the participants, including myself, admitted having enriched their knowledge and understanding of the cultures examined in class, gaining not only cultural awareness but increasing each participants' self-awareness of their own culture. Therefore, participants analyzed common cultural assumptions, which helped deepen their understanding of the social, political, and cultural realities of the target groups. In this way, a critical pedagogical approach can interrupt conventional identity discourses by exposing how differences are produced against the unmarked mainstream norm.

Finally, critical pedagogy encourages the creation of a new speech community based on students' individual voices. Class activities provided occasions to analyze our roles in the classroom community, roles that were modified throughout the semester depending on students´ personal journeys. Activities driven from critical pedagogy were favorable for building a new speech community, in which

> ... critical pedagogy encourages the creation of a new speech community based on students' individual voices.

reserved students could confront their fears of speaking in public. Participants learned to negotiate the cultural content by creating and respecting the individual voices that formed the class community.

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Appendix A

Hill, W. E. "My Wife and My Mother-in-Law." *Puck 16*, 11, Nov. 1915.

Instrucciones: Mira el dibujo y elije la respuesta correcta según tu opinión. Luego, comparte tus respuestas con tu compañer@. Explica tus respuestas.

1. *La mujer es*   *a. joven*
                           b. vieja

2. *Ella es*   *a. soltera*
                           b. viuda

3. *Su ropa es*   *a. elegante*
                           b. descuidada

4. *Ella es*   *a. de clase alta*
                           b. de clase baja

5. *Ella es*   *a. rica*
                           b. pobre

6. *¿Es bonita?*   *a. Sí*
                           b. No

7. *¿Es inteligente?* *a. Sí*
                           b. No

8. *¿Confiarías en ella?* *a. Sí*
                           b. No

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    9. *¿Querrías que fuera tu madre?*   *a. Sí*
                                               b. No
    10. *¿Es posible que la encontraras*   *a. en un restaurante?*
                                               b. en la calle?
    11. *¿La invitarías a cenar?*   *a. Sí*
                                             b. No

[Instructions: Look at the picture and chose the correct answer. Then share your answers with a classmate. Explain your answers.

    1. The woman is old/young; 2. She is single/widow; 3. Her clothes are elegant/unkempt; 4. She is upper class/lower class; 5. She is rich/poor; 6. Is she pretty? Yes/No; 7. Is she smart? Yes/No; 8. Would you trust her? Yes/No; 9. Would you like her to be your mother? Yes/No; 10. Would you see her at a restaurant/in the street? 11. Would you invite her to dinner? Yes/No.]

Appendix B

Una Parábola: Introducción a valores culturales

    Había una vez dos amigos que vivían juntos en una casa en un pueblo a las orillas de un río muy peligroso. Siempre estaban juntos y, un día, a Felipe se le rompieron las gafas. El pobre de Felipe no podía ver nada sin sus gafas. Rosamaría se sentía muy mal por Felipe y quería ayudarlo. Felipe le dijo que sólo había una solución: encontrar unas gafas nuevas. La única oculista que él conocía vivía al otro lado del río. Rosamaría debía cruzar el río (que estaba lleno de cocodrilos) para ir a ver a la oculista.

    Rosamaría buscó día y noche a alguien que la ayudara a cruzar el río. No había ningún puente. Sólo encontró a un hombre llamado Esteban, que tenía un barco. Rosamaría le pidió que la ayudara a cruzar el río y Esteban aceptó pero pidió $20.000 a cambio. Rosamaría no tenía tanto dinero y le rogó que la dejara pagarle poco a poco, a lo largo de cinco años. Esteban se mostró implacable: o todo el dinero o Rosamaría tendría que cruzar el río nadando. Rosamaría estaba muy confundida y fue a visitar a su amigo Paco. Le explicó toda la historia: las gafas, los cocodrilos y el dinero. Paco le contestó que era su problema y que tenía que solucionarlo ella sola.

    Rosamaría decidió que tenía que ayudar a su amigo Felipe. Una noche entró en la tienda del pueblo, robó el dinero, cruzó el río, y volvió con unas gafas nuevas. Cuando le contó a Felipe toda la historia él se enfadó muchísimo. Felipe le dijo a Rosamaría que tenía que irse de la casa porque él no podía vivir con una ladrona.

    Rosamaría estaba descorazonada. Fue a ver a su vecina Regina y le contó lo que había pasado. Tras escuchar la historia, Regina le dijo que aunque no fueran amigas, podía irse a vivir con ella.

    Escribe el orden de los personajes (Rosamaría, Felipe, Esteban, Paco, Regina) según el respeto que sientes por ellos. Escribe la razón por la cuál respetas o no respetas a cada personaje.

_____

_____

_____

_____

[Adapted and translated from: Holmes, H. & Guild, S. (Eds). (1971). *A Manual of Teaching Techniques for Intercultural Education.* New York: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.]

[A Parable: An Introduction to Cultural Values

Once upon a time there were two friends who lived together in a house in a village near a very dangerous river. They were always together and one day, Felipe broke his glasses. Poor Felipe couldn't see a thing without his glasses. Rosemary felt terrible for Felipe and wanted to help him. Felipe told her that there was only one solution: get new glasses. The only eye doctor that he knew about lived at the other side of the river. Rosemary had to cross the river (that was infested with crocodiles) to go see the eye doctor.

Day and night Rosemary looked for someone who would help her cross the river. There were no bridges. She only found a man called Esteban who had a boat. Rosemary asked him to help her cross the river and Esteban agreed but he asked for $20,000 in exchange. Rosemary didn't have that kind of money and begged him to allow her to pay in small installments, throughout five years. Esteban refused: he would get the whole amount or Rosemary would have to cross the river swimming. Rosemary was very confused and went to see his friend Paco. She explained the whole story: the glasses, the crocodiles, and the money. Paco's response was that this was not his problem and that she had to solve it by herself.

Rosemary decided to help her friend Felipe. One night she broke into the village shop, stole the money, crossed the river, and returned with new glasses. When she told Felipe the whole story, he was furious. Felipe told Rosemary that she had to leave the house because he could not live with a thief.

Rosemary was heartbroken. She went to see her neighbor, Regina, and she told her what had happened. After hearing the story, Regina told her that even if they were not friends, she could stay with her.

List, in rank of order, the characters whose behavior you most approve (Rosemary, Felipe, Esteban, Paco, Regina). Explain your answers.]

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<div align="center">

Appendix C

Incidente Cultural: CONVERSACIÓN O ACOSO

</div>

El jefe de Jane en Washington D.C. le pidió que fuera a México D.F. a representar a la compañía en una conferencia. Jane estaba muy contenta de tener esta oportunidad y de poder visitar otro país. Todo estuvo bien, el viaje a la ciudad y la llegada al hotel, hasta la fiesta que hubo la noche antes de la apertura de la conferencia. En la fiesta, una joven ejecutiva de IMB en México, Dinorah, se presentó a Jane. Al empezar la conversación, Jane pensó que Dinorah se acercaba demasiado. Cada vez que Jane intentaba poner una distancia entre las dos, Dinorah se acercaba más. A los cinco minutos, Jane se encontró arrinconada contra una pared. Dinorah siguió hablando muy cerca de ella. Como Jane se sentía muy incómoda, educadamente se excusó y volvió a su cuarto en el hotel y no volvió a aceptar ninguna invitación a ninguna fiesta. ¿Cómo ayudarías a Jane a entender este incidente?

1. Dinorah quería tener una relación sexual con Jane.
2. No es frecuente en México que una mujer represente a su compañía. Dinorah quería ser la única mujer e hizo todo lo posible para que Jane se sintiera incómoda y se fuera.
3. La distancia que mantienen dos personas mexicanas es distinta a la distancia que mantienen dos estadounidenses.
4. Dinorah nunca había conocido a una extranjera y sentía tanta curiosidad que quería tocarla.

<div align="center">

Razonamientos para las distintas explicaciones

</div>

1. Aún en el caso de que Dinorah fuera lesbiana, no es probable que acosara a Jane en un evento laboral. No hay pruebas para mantener este razonamiento. Por favor, elija otra vez.
2. Actualmente en México hay muchas mujeres ejecutivas al igual que en EE.UU. Hay una mejor respuesta, por favor, elija otra vez.
3. Esta es la respuesta más probable. En México y en otros países de cultura latina, la distancia que mantienen dos personas cuando hablan es más corta que la que mantienen dos personas en EE.UU. u otros países anglosajones. En EE.UU. la distancia adecuada son unas 18-20 pulgadas mientras que en México son unas 10-12 pulgadas. Ambas mujeres, Jane y Dinorah, estaban intentando mantener la distancia aceptada en sus culturas.
4. En México hay mucha inmigración de otros países, incluyendo de EE.UU. Es muy improbable que una ejecutiva de una compañía multinacional no haya conocido nunca a una extranjera. Por favor, elija otra vez.

[Cultural Incident: Conversation or Assault

Jane's boss at Washington D.C. asked her to go to Mexico D.F. to represent the company at a conference. Jane was very happy for this opportunity and for being

able to visit another country. Everything went well, the trip to the city, the arrival at the hotel, until the party the night before the conference opening. At the party, a young executive from IMB Mexico, Dinorah, introduced herself to Jane. When they started talking, Jane felt that Dinorah was standing too close to her. Every time Jane tried to put some distance between them, Dinorah would step closer. After five minutes, Jane found herself cornered against the wall. Dinorah kept talking really close to her. As Jane felt extremely uncomfortable, she politely excused herself and returned to her hotel room. She did not accept any other invitations to attend parties. How would you help Jane understand what happened?

1. Dinorah wanted to have sex with Jane.
2. In Mexico it is not common for a woman to represent a company. Dinorah did not want any competition and did all what was in her power to scare away Jane.
3. The appropriate distance to keep between two people is different in Mexico and in the U.S.
4. Dinorah had never seen a foreigner and she was so intrigued by her that she wanted to touch her.

<div align="center">Rationales for the different explanations</div>

1. Even in the hypothetical case that Dinorah had been a lesbian, it is not probable that she would harass Jane in a professional event. There is no evidence for this explanation. Please, try again.
2. Currently in Mexico there are many female executives as in the U.S. There is a better explanation. Please, try again.
3. This is the most probable answer. In Mexico, as well as other Spanish speaking countries, the distance kept between two people when they are interacting is shorter than the distance kept in the U.S. and other English-speaking countries. In the U.S. the appropriate distance is 18-20 inches while in Mexico it is 10-12 inches. Both women were keeping appropriate distances for their cultures.
4. There is a lot of immigration from other countries, including the U.S., to Mexico. It is very unlikely that an executive from a multinational company had never met a foreigner. Please, try again.]

Critical activities in the Spanish classroom

Appendix D

Instructions to Analyze Textbooks

Requisitos:
   (1) Cover Page:
      - Student's name
      - Class
      - Activity's name
      - Title of the Textbook
      - Objective of activity
   (2) Pages 1, 2 and 3:

You have to write a two-to-three-pages essay analyzing the textbook you have chosen. Use the handout filled out when analyzing the English textbooks as a guide. And please, CHECK YOUR SPELLING, AGREEMENTS AND CONJUGATIONS. Use a DICTIONARY to double check spelling. Check the uses of *SER* and *ESTAR* and the uses of the SUBJUCTIVE in our textbook. You may want to edit each other's essays before you turn them in. Also, proofread it yourself a couple of times before you turn them in.

I would like you to analyze the cover of the book (*la portada*), the pictures (*las fotografías*), drawings (*los dibujos*), the cultural activities (*las actividades culturales*) and the grammar (*la gramática*). Analyze the language used, if the grammar and the cultural activities are integrated and how they are integrated. Please, give examples.

If there is no diversity in the pictures, or if there is, I would like you to explain why that is good or bad. Likewise, if there is no diversity in the language, or if there is, I would like you to explain why that is good or bad. If the grammar is integrated I would like you to give examples. If the culture is represented in a stereotypical manner, I also want you to give examples.

I want you to check if the textbook (*el libro de texto*) has a table of contents (*un índice*), glossaries (*glosarios*), dictionaries (*diccionarios*) and if you think they are good or bad and why. Also check at the beginning of the book if it has supplementary materials such as a video (*un video*), a tape (*una cinta*), a workbook (*un libro de trabajo*) ... and if they seem good or bad and why.

Finally, I want you to structure your essay cohesively. You need an introduction (*introducción*) where you present the textbook and you explain how your essay is going to be structured (i.e., *Primero voy a analizar las ilustraciones del libro. Luego, analizaré el idioma usado en este texto...*). Then you need a development (*desarrollo*), divided in paragraphs for your different sections (you may use titles and subtitles if you wish). Finally, you will need a conclusion (*conclusión*) where you may want to give recommendations (using the subjunctive) to improve the textbook you have analyzed.

Opinion exchange in French conversational interaction

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study is an analysis of the interactional environment of opinion exchange, based on a corpus of seven informal conversations between native speakers of French recorded in 2010. While previous research has highlighted a predilection for diverging views in French conversation, the data here reveal considerable mitigation in the expression of opinions and disagreement. The frequent use of impersonal expressions in the data is also analyzed and contrasted to textbook presentations of opinion exchange. The purpose of the study is to increase awareness among both instructors and learners of the role of expressing and responding to opinions in French conversational interaction, and to offer suggestions on how to integrate this dimension of real-world talk into classroom teaching.

Over the last two decades, a number of data-based research studies have focused on phenomena like turn-taking (Wieland, 1991), listener feedback (Laforest 1994; 1996), interruption, and overlap in ordinary conversation between speakers of French in France and Canada. The research and analysis of Mullan (2002), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1996), and Béal (1993; 2010), among others, have helped to identify elements of French interactional style. Research has shown, for example, that conversation between speakers of French from France is marked by frequent overlap and animated back-and-forth, reflecting the values of involvement and spontaneity, and that Americans and other native speakers of English, by contrast, tend to wait for an interlocutor to finish before taking a turn, reflecting a cultural respect for autonomy. Both Mullan and Béal have conducted contrastive studies of French speakers from France and English speakers from Australia in professional and private settings. French interactional style as described by these researchers is said to reflect a culture which values divergent opinion rather than consensus, representing a confrontational or conflictual ethos,

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in contrast to Anglophones who are more conflict-averse (Béal, 2010, pp. 59-60; Mullan, 2012, p. 323).

Prior research on opinions

Carroll (1987), in her classic analysis of French-American cross-cultural differences, notes that social conversation, for the French, is a commitment; it is taken seriously in the sense that it represents, reflects, and creates a real connection between people: the more you know someone, the more you talk. Ordinary conversation, she writes, is more about relationships than about information or topic (p. 47). In a similar vein, Béal (1993) argues that it is not for nothing that the term *engagé* (as in *littérature engagée*) came into being in France; the term expresses the willingness to render one's views public and defend them. According to Béal (2010), French speakers value clarity, sincerity, and honestly expressing what one thinks (p. 379), and conversation is characterized by the revelation and solicitation of personal opinions, a taste for argument, expression of emotion, and a relatively small number of precautions to protect the interlocutor's face (p. 60).[1] Anglo-Saxon norms, by contrast, underscore the value of reserve, tact, and being non-commital (p. 352).

> ...social conversation, for the French, is a commitment.

Mullan's (2010) research has shown that native speakers of English often utter disclaimers functioning to downgrade the value of opinions in favor of fact, a phenomenon she attributes to an Anglo-Australian notion of egalitarianism. The English tag question "isn't it?" (e.g., it's a lovely day, isn't it?) is one manifestation of a "levelling tendency" which functions to invite agreement while still leaving room for a potentially different view. For French speakers, however, according to Mullan, "the emphasis is not so much on tolerating different opinions, as on encouraging them, with a view to creating an exchange" (p. 40). She also points to the emphasis placed on individual judgment in French education, and the expectation instilled early on that students demonstrate this judgment by expressing their own points of view (p. 125). While Mullan states that French speakers do sometimes mitigate opinions, citing Lacroix (1990, pp. 339-340) who suggests in a study on politeness that frequent disagreement actually necessitates tact and mitigation, she does not pursue this issue in her book.[2]

Research questions

The present study is an attempt to answer the following research questions:

(1) How do speakers introduce statements of opinions? (2) How do speakers elicit opinions from an interlocutor? and (3) How do interlocutors respond to the expression of opinions? Definitions of the word "opinion" in both French and American English dictionaries share common elements. In *Le Petit Robert* (1977), opinion is defined as "*Manière de penser, de juger; attitude de l'esprit qui tient pour vraie une assertion; assertion que l'esprit accepte ou rejette (généralement en admettant une possibilité d'erreur)* [way of thinking, judging; attitude of mind that holds an assertion to be true; assertion that the mind accepts or rejects (usually admitting the possibility of error] (p. 1313); in *Le Petit Larousse* (1993) as

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"*Jugement, avis émis sur un sujet*" [judgment, stated view on a subject] (p. 719); and in Webster's (1996) as "(1) a belief or judgment that rests on grounds insufficient to produce complete certainty;" and "(2) a personal view, attitude, or appraisal" (p. 1358). For the purpose of this study, opinion is defined as an expressed judgment, personal view, or evaluation.

Methods

The corpus consists of seven informal conversations ranging in length from seven to twelve minutes each, for a total of 70 minutes of videorecorded data collected in 2010. The study subjects, who volunteered to participate, were fourteen educated native speakers of French from France. All but two were men, and approximate ages ranged from the early 20s to late 30s. One participant was educated in French through high school, four through college and nine through graduate school. Participants were therefore similar with respect to age and education, as in Béal's (2010) study (p. 20). Nine participants had spent one to four months in the United States; four had lived here for two to three years; one speaker had 20 years' U.S. residency. Thirteen of the fourteen participants therefore had less than three years' time in the U.S., and nine participants had less than four months' time. As Mullan (2012) has pointed out, length of time spent in a foreign country can affect interactional style (p. 330), and, by way of comparison, the participants in her (2012) study of disagreement had spent less than two years in the country of their second language. Participants in the present study were paired according to gender and approximate age. In all cases, the pairs of individuals who conversed were acquainted with each other, and in several cases knew each other quite well; therefore the variable of relationship between interlocutors was constant. Participants were given a choice of topics "on the spot," with a few minutes to think before speaking. The topics actually chosen included participants' views of American life based on their personal experience in the U.S., the pros and cons of the European Union, the effect of globalization on French life, the role of French in the world beyond France, and sports in the United States versus France. Participants were instructed to speak informally for approximately ten minutes, and to let the conversation evolve in its own way. The researcher was present at the recordings, as was the case in Mullan's (2010, 2012) research, but did not participate in any way once the conversations began. Audio files of all conversations were transcribed, resulting in 57 pages of transcription, and the videorecordings were reviewed for nonverbal cues and visual context.

Findings

Expressing opinions

In conversational interaction, opinions can be formulated as simple affirmations or statements, without any signal (Bragger & Rice, p. 120), or they can be explicitly identified or "marked" as opinions by the speaker. In the data of this study, personal expressions like *je pense que, je crois que*, or *j'ai l'impression que* [I think that, I believe that, I have the sense that], given in Table 1, and impersonal expressions like *il faut dire que* [you have to admit that] or *il est certain que* [there's

no doubt that], in Table 2, function to express opinions and introduce ideas, and frequently occur at the beginning of a turn. The identification of an utterance as opinion occurs as a response to a direct question (*qu'est-ce que tu penses de…/ je pense que*) [what do you think of…/ I think that] in the following example:

A: *est-ce que à ce moment-là tu considères que le facteur langue c'est c'est un facteur de puissance nationale à l'étranger* [do you think then that language is a factor in national power abroad]

B: *je pense que ça peut y contribuer…* [I think it can contribute to it…][3]

Explicit signaling of opinions is also used for statements that are not necessarily true or verifiable. Thus on the topic of language, cultural influence, and shared history, one speaker posits that the French are closer to Quebecois than to Anglophone Canadians (*je pense qu'on est plus proches des Québécois que du reste du Canada*) [I think we are closer to the Quebecois than to the rest of Canada]. *Penser que* (in the *je* or *tu* form) is used in statements and questions 31 times by six different speakers, *croire que* [to believe or think that] five times by four speakers, and *trouver que* [to find that] occurs only once.[4] There are no instances of *je ne pense pas que*. The expressions *je pense, j'ai l'impression* (without *que*) are usually found at the end of a turn, with falling intonation. *A mon avis* [in my opinion] can occur in the middle of a turn, following a verb. *Pour moi* [for me] indicates personal opinion or interpretation (here's how I see it). As Béal (2010) previously found, the expressions *moi, je* and *moi personnellement* [personally, I] in the data are used at the beginning of a turn to emphasize the speaker's point of view (p. 108). Overall, in fast-paced exchanges there is less explicit signaling of opinion.

Table 1

Personal expressions	No. of occurrences
je pense que [I think that]	24
je crois que [I think that]	5
pour moi [for me]	3
à *mon avis* [in my opinion]	2
il me semble que [it seems to me that]	2
j'ai l'impression que [I have the impression that]	1
je trouve que [I find that]	1
je suis persuadé que [I'm convinced that]	1
je dirais que [I'd say that]	1

Attenuated, nuanced statements of opinion (*j'ai un peu l'impression*, *on a effectivement un peu l'impression*) [I have somewhat the impression, indeed one has somewhat the impression] are common in the corpus. In one case, a statement begins as an expression of certainty but is immediately mitigated: *mais c'est sûr que l'euro à mon avis est un facteur vraiment très positif* [it's a fact that the euro in my opinion is a really positive factor]. The modifier *un petit peu* [a little bit] (e.g., *oui c'est effectivement un petit peu dommage*) [yes it is indeed a bit of a shame] is used eight times by five different speakers. Mullan (2010) has noted a number of such mitigating devices, including phrases like *il me semble que* [it seems to me

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that], adverbs like *peut-être* [perhaps], adjectives like *possible* [possibly], and tag questions (*tu ne trouves pas*?) [don't you think?] (p. 126). Not only is attenuation quite frequent in this corpus, but in one conversation, the speakers produce what amounts to a collaborative interpretation, culminating in a formulaic summary of their views (*le sport n'est plus un moyen mais une fin c'est une conception différente du sport*) [sports are no longer a means but an end it's a different concept of sports]. This phenomenon of joint construction of an argument runs counter to the idea of opposition highlighted in much previous research.

Perhaps most striking is the variety and number of impersonal expressions (usually with the subject pronoun *on*) found in the data. A list of these expressions, each of which occurs once, are given in Table 2. Expressions such as *on a l'impression que*, *il faut dire que*) [one has the impression that, you have to say that] are used to express or elicit opinions, introduce topics, or add information to a topic. Expressions like *on a vu que*, *on peut voir que*, or *on sait que* [we've seen that, one can see that, we know that] are used in some cases to present an opinion as an observation or statement of common knowledge.

> *Perhaps most striking is the variety and number of impersonal expressions (usually with the subject pronoun* on*) found in the data.*

A number of these expressions are characteristic of argumentation and are of particular interest to more advanced language learners. For instructors, the recurrence of these phrases is a reminder of the importance of the pronoun *on* and its various functions in both formal and informal spoken French.

Table 2

Impersonal expressions

on peut voir aussi que [we can see that]
on a vu que [we have seen that]
on voit que [we see that]
on sait très bien que [we know very well that]
on sait que [we know that]
on ne pourrait pas se poser la question [couldn't one wonder whether]
on a presque l'impression [one almost has the impression that]
on a l'impression que [one has the impression that]
on peut se demander [one could wonder]
on se demande [one wonders]
on peut se poser la question aussi de savoir si [one can also wonder whether]
on va se demander on peut se demander pourquoi [one might wonder one can wonder why
on se rend compte que [one realizes that]
est-ce qu'on peut considérer que [can one consider/think that]
ce qu'il faut se dire c'est que [what you have to say to yourself is]
il faut dire que [you have to recognize that]
c'est intéressant que [it's interesting that]
c'est sûr que [it's a certainty that]

Eliciting opinions

> *... there are not many instances of direct elicitation of opinions in the data.*

The most basic finding is that there are not many instances of direct elicitation of opinions in the data. As indicated above, the direct question *qu'est-ce que tu penses de...*? (occurring in three cases right at the beginning, to start off the conversation), elicits the symmetrical rejoinder je pense que. In two instances this direct question provokes repeated use of je pense que in the response, up to four times in one case, suggesting a kind of structural priming, or re-use of the same syntactic form, in the interaction.[5] Once the conversations are underway, the direct question is not prevalent. Yes/no questions beginning with est-ce que tu penses que [do you think that], when they occur, are often found at the beginning of a turn. Indirect, impersonal questions, like on peut se demander pourquoi... [one might well wonder why] are used to put ideas and opinions on the table, introduce topics, and guide the talk.

Responding

Several findings stand out in this category. First, and more generally, the

> *... the data point to the importance of frequent response in conversational interaction.*

data point to the importance of frequent response in conversational interaction. Most conversations in the corpus are characterized by animated back-and-forth, despite taking place in the formal, unnatural setting of a recording studio. Secondly, disagreement is infrequent in the data, and attenuated through the use of impersonal expressions or other means when it occurs. Mullan (2012) cited the high frequency of disagreement in her data as evidence of the "positive evaluation of disagreements in French interactional style" (p. 323), but in this corpus there is more mitigation, more indirect communication than what is sometimes suggested about the French in conversation in both research and textbooks.

Anglophones' preference for agreement may well be signaled by the phrase "I couldn't agree more, but" (Mullan, 2012), yet in the data of the present study of French speakers, the equivalent phrase, *je suis cent pour cent d'accord avec toi, mais* [I agree one hundred percent, but] is also found. There are many instances of emphatic agreement, showing active participation and engagement; one also finds examples of symmetry and repetition which function to validate an expressed opinion (*en France ça passerait pas très bien / non en France ça passerait très mal*) [in France that would not go over well / no in France that would over very badly].

The following excerpts from two conversations, on the topics of labor strikes and sports, respectively, provide particularly compelling examples of the deferral of disagreement within a turn and over a series of turns. Passages in which hesitation and potential or actual disagreement occur are highlighted in bold. The conversational talk is represented as utterances rather than sentences, and standard written punctuation is omitted. A question mark indicates part of an utterance that is inaudible or hard to understand.

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Transcript #1 [See Appendix A for translations]

> B: *alors ça m'étonne parce que les les donc les gens euh manifestent pour travailler moins mais ce sont des gens qui n'ont ne sont même pas dans le monde du travail dans le cas des lycéens c'est des gens qui ne sont même pas encore dans le monde du travail qui manifestent en disant ben non d'entrée de jeu je ne voudrais pas beaucoup travailler je vais vouloir travailler le moins possible*
>
> A: *le moins possible voilà*
>
> B: *en payant (?) évidemment le plus possible*
>
> A: *le plus possible oui*
>
> B: *ça c'est un concept que j'ai du mal à comprendre en France **et qui pourtant domine tous les***
>
> A: ***c'est quelque chose qui n'est pas généralisé** enfin toutes les écoles qui vont sortir les cadres de la France je parle des facultés de droit les classes préparatoires en écoles d'ingénieurs ou des écoles de commerce bizarrement y a jamais de grèves là dedans les élèves sont tous en train de travailler leur concours on peut se poser*
>
> B: ***mais bon ça fait pas la majorité de la France***
>
> A: *malheureusement non*

Transcript #2

> B: *ce ce ce qui aussi c'est un autre point euh je pense qu'il existe ici en particulier pour les sports relativement techniques c'est que il y a une barrière financière qui se qui est plus présente ici qu'elle ne l'est en France c'est à dire que les gens qui sont capables de se payer des sports qui nécessitent un matériel relativement cher ne peuvent pas le faire avec un matériel comme on peut le retrouver en France de moins bonne qualité*
>
> A: ***j'suis pas sûr** pour les euh pour la plupart des sports vraiment les sports rois les quatre sports rois que sont le baseball le basket le football (?) on trouve tout ça très facilement dans les écoles on peut se faire des équipements*
>
> B: ***oui mais c'est***
>
> A: *par contre si on adapte un sport plus exotique comme l'escrime*
>
> B: ***hm***
>
> A: *là c'est un peu plus compliqué pour trouver un club ou acheter du matériel c'est sans doute moins répandu aussi quand on va dans des boutiques comme les Sports Authority **mais les sports de loisir le ski le vélo euh le l'escale les choses comme ça ici sont à mon avis beaucoup moins accessibles qu'ils le sont chez nous***
>
> B: ***possible euh quoiqu'en France***
>
> A: ***euh** [still wants to speak, tries to hold floor]*
>
> B: *ça n'a pas toujours été non plus euh*
>
> A: *pour deux raisons [continues idea]*

The hesitation (*hm; euh*) and mitigation in these examples are indicative of disagreement as a dispreferred response.[6] If the rejoinder in an adjacency pair is

a dispreferred response, there may be delay or elaboration of some kind. In the second excerpt in particular, disagreement is expressed in mild terms (*j'suis pas sûr; possible; oui mais*) [I'm not sure; maybe; yes but] and is not forthright; rather the speakers need some time to "work through" the talk and give voice to their views.

This finding does not confirm what has generally been said about the French predilection for conflict in previous research, perhaps due to situational factors. In this study, speakers were recorded in a studio, with a researcher present, although sitting at a distance; both the place and context were academic. Several participants themselves said, in brief follow-up interviews on what makes for interesting conversation, that they were more respectful and formal than they would have been had the topic been more mundane. Situational factors which might affect the liveliness or contentiousness of a spontaneous conversational exchange include (1) topic (how much you know and how much you care); (2) relationship and rapport between speakers (the closer people are, the less guarded they feel); (3) venue and context (formal or informal). While the performance of conversation in a recording studio differs from natural conversation with respect to purpose and situation, likely increasing a sense of formality, at least initially, all participant pairs knew each other, and some quite well, which could have offset that dimension. On the other hand, in Mullan's (2012) study on disagreement, participants were relative strangers (p. 331), and disagreement was still found to be relatively unmitigated.

With respect to agreement, the data of this corpus contain various types of responses, including long phrases like *je suis tout à fait d'accord avec toi* [I agree completely with you] and short rejoinders such as *c'est vrai* [that's true], *voilà tout à fait* [that's it absolutely] and *exactement* [exactly]. Béal (2010) has noted the emphatic character of many short reactions in French conversation (such as the triplets *oui oui oui* or *non non non*), even in formal, professional contexts (p. 107), and this kind of repetition is found in the present corpus as well (*c'est sûr c'est sûr; c'est vrai c'est vrai; c'est ça c'est ça* [that's right]; *ah oui ça je suis d'accord ça je suis d'accord* [on that I agree].

Participants' opinions on opinions

Following each conversation, participants were asked by the researcher to comment on what makes for a good conversation among friends. Among the points made by more than one participant are the following:

- The interlocutors should have the same level of knowledge about and interest in the topic. It is desirable to have a common interest, even somewhat similar views, but with nuances, and small divergences.
- It is important to have a real dialogue and more or less equal participation by all in a multi-party conversation, not one person who dominates.
- It is interesting to have some difference of opinion, but not necessarily a strong divergence of views. Completely opposing ideas give rise to conversations which are lively but not very constructive because each

person tends to "dig in" or get entrenched in his or her own opinions. On the other hand, complete agreement results in each person concluding that what he or she thinks is right. If the speakers are completely in agreement, there is no conversation.

- Having different opinions, even on small points, allows for discussion, and a chance to defend one's point of view.
- Flexibility, being open to other people's points of view, learning from others are important. Each person brings something to the conversation, so that there is an exchange, a learning process.
- There is a difference between relaxed, informal conversation between friends and a real discussion of a serious topic, in which there is a substantive exchange of ideas; in an informal conversation there is more overlap, interruption, cutting people off, finishing their sentences. There is also more *sincérité, franchise* [sincerity, candor]. In a more formal conversation, there is a "barrier" of respect.

These comments are pertinent for many learners of French, who are likely to find themselves in conversations in more formal settings and with people they do not know well. Learners who study abroad for longer periods of time may, on the other hand, become familiar with conventions of informal talk among friends. The point is made repeatedly, in any case, that nuanced difference of opinion and flexibility of thought are key to a successful exchange of views.

Pedagogical implications

Numerous researchers have made the case for pedagogical materials based on real spoken language (Barraja-Rohan, 2000; Béal, 2010; Beeching, 1997; Liddicoat, 2000; McCarthy, 1998; McCarthy & Carter, 1995; O'Connor Di Vito, 1991). The function of expressing opinions, like many others, is often presented in textbooks via lists of expressions (e.g., *il est bon que*) [it's good that], which are not selected based on frequency of use in spoken, conversational French. Furthermore, these expressions are listed as lexical items, without interactional context, leaving students somewhat at a loss as to how to actually use them.[7] The language function is also closely connected to the grammatical agenda. Expression of opinions, for example, is associated with the grammatical topic of subjunctive mood, and in some cases, particularly in intermediate-level textbooks, exercises may provide more practice of the grammatical structure than the communicative function. For example, students may be asked to supply an impersonal expression (such as *il est juste / stupide / essentiel / merveilleux que…*) [it is fair / stupid / essential / wonderful that…] followed by a subjunctive verb in order to complete a statement of opinion.[8]

The greatest number of expressions in textbooks that are also found in the data of this corpus are expressions for asking and offering opinions. However, while impersonal expressions (e.g., *on peut voir que*) [one can see that] are frequent in the corpus, textbook lists, by contrast, favor personal expressions with pronouns *je, tu*, and *vous* (*j'affirme que, je suis certain que*) [I maintain that, I am sure that].[9]

The greatest number of textbook expressions not found in the data are impersonal expressions of the structure *Il est* + adjective + *que* (*Il est important que*), and expressions having to do with agreement and disagreement. For example, statements like the following, drawn from a variety of textbooks, do not occur in the corpus:

J'approuve totalement ce que tu as/vous avez dit.	I completely approve of what you've said.
J'apprécie ton point de vue.	I appreciate your point of view.
Cette idée a ses bons côtés.	This idea has its good points.
Vous avez raison / tort.	You are right / wrong.
Je suis contre!	I'm opposed to / against this!
Je n'accepte pas votre point de vue.	I don't accept your point of view.
C'est ridicule, ça!	That's ridiculous!
Mais ce n'est pas vrai!	But that's not true!
Je ne peux pas vous laisser dire que…	I can't let you say that…
Tu as/Vous avez tout à fait tort de dire que…	You're completely wrong to say that…
Excusez-moi, mais ce que vous dites est totalement stupide.	Excuse me, but what you're saying is totally stupid.

While it is not impossible to hear statements like these in real world talk, some are quite direct and/or contentious, and would be more likely to occur either in very informal situations such as close friends arguing, or possibly in televised political debates. Students need to learn to interact in those situations they are most likely to encounter, which may well call for politeness and attenuation.

Beyond the appropriateness of the inventory itself, learners need some sense of how these functions occur sequentially in spoken interaction (Barraja-Rohan, 2000, p. 72). For materials writers, this means including planned but unscripted recorded conversation between native speakers, with exercises to guide students' observation of the interaction (tone, involvement, or turn-taking), beginning at least at the intermediate level. At advanced levels, instructors can expose students to input materials such as conversations available on-line (film or TV excerpts, news interviews) or, when possible, transcripts of conversations to analyze.[10]

McCarthy (1998) and others (Barraja-Rohan, 2000; Richards, 1990; Riggenbach, 1991) have pointed out the need for learners to acquire follow-up phrases in communicative exchange. Short, evaluative comments with the structure *c'est* + adjective (*c'est vrai*), like those mentioned earlier in the context of agreement, are frequent rejoinders in everyday conversation. Adjectives in French are most often taught in textbook grammar sections as noun modifiers, as in *une longue histoire* [a long story] or *une ville intéressante* [an interesting city], with emphasis on agreement of adjectives with nouns, and placement before or after the noun. However, it would be valuable, at an earlier point in the instructional program, to teach adjectives with a lexical rather than grammatical focus, teaching only the masculine singular form, in frequently occurring communicative contexts

(i.e., responding), so that learners have a variety of useful, easy things to say in real conversation.[11]

It is important to be able to say something even when one may not know enough about the topic to have an opinion, in order to stay engaged. In one of the conversations of this study, one speaker was a good deal more knowledgeable about the topic than the other; he talked more, and expressed and inquired about opinions more. Nevertheless his partner kept responding, and maintained presence in the conversation by doing so. The strategies he used included latching on or linking to what the other speaker said through repetition or tokens like *voilà* or *c'est ça*, asking questions, using phrases like *il me semble que*, invoking personal anecdotes and examples (*ça me fait penser à…*) [that reminds me of], and repeating the other speaker's words and ideas (*comme tu disais…*) [as you were saying]. Other strategies might include topic shifts (Dörnyei & Thurrell, 1994, p. 43), using a question like *est-ce que tu penses que...* [do you think that…], and introducing new topics or sub-topics (Richards, 1990, p. 71), with a phrase such as *un autre point c'est que…* [another point is that…].

It is no small achievement for students to grasp the idea of communicative norms and values, and the fact that conversational interaction has culture-specific dimensions. To reach this objective students need to observe native speakers in videorecorded interaction, and notice behavioral differences. They can then try out ways to elicit and express opinions in conversation, and respond to what others say.[12] Classroom ouput activities might include free conversation with partners or in a whole group, videoconferencing with French students, videorecorded interviews (individual or in pairs) with international students on cultural questions, mini-group projects on a current event topics, an in-class roundtable with native speaker guests, or a conversation hour with native speakers from the community and university.

> *It is no small achievement for students to grasp the idea of communicative norms and values, and the fact that conversational interaction has culture-specific dimensions.*

The goal, as McCarthy (1998) puts it, is to "observe, discuss and come to understand features of interaction rather than to 'learn' or 'imitate' them (p. 57). Having an opinion, expressing an opinion, and learning from different points of view are valued by French speakers when they converse. Data from spoken interaction can provide students with strategies for saying something even when they may not know enough about the topic to have an opinion, and for keeping the ball in play through engaged response. Students who engage in more formal conversations with native speakers of French can thus learn to express themselves and respond in an engaged and polite manner. Those who have the opportunity to participate in informal conversations in a study abroad context, for example, may go on to appreciate somewhat different norms of conversation among close friends. Recognizing and showing signs of involvement, interest, agreement, and disagreement is an important if somewhat neglected dimension of second or

foreign language learning, and a potential source of real enjoyment for speakers, both in classroom interaction and real world talk.

Notes

1. Face is defined by Brown and Levinson (1978) as the "public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (p. 61). Negative face relates to the notion of freedom from imposition, and positive face to the positive self-image of the interlocutors. While the content of face is culture-specific, the concept itself, and the orientation to face in interaction, are said to be universal.

2. To allow for comparison of the present study to previous research, the parameters of Mullan's and Béal's studies, which specifically target the expression of opinions, are given here. Mullan's (2012) study on disagreement consisted of three short excerpts of conversation, one between two native speakers of Australian English, another between two native speakers of French, and the last between a native speaker of Australian English and a native speaker of French speaking English, for a total of six participants. The corpus of her (2010) book consisted of ten hours of separate French and English conversations, involving a total of 24 native speaker participants. Her (2002) article on French interactional style involved four recorded conversations of 45 minutes each between native speakers of French, for a total of nine participants, including the researcher. The analysis in Béal's (2010) book is based on excerpts from several large corpora gathered in France and Australia in both professional and private settings, as well as reported anecdotes, and recorded interviews with French and Australian informants. Her (1993) article on cross-cultural talk in the workplace involved visits to a French company in Australia, interviews with 30 individuals of French and Australian nationality, and the recording and transcription of 15 hours of conversation. Other research on French interactional style referenced in this article includes smaller scale studies like Wieland's (1991) analysis of turn-taking, based on four hours of recorded dinner conversations with a total of 16 participants, and studies based on larger corpora such as Laforest's (1994, 1996) analyses of backchanneling cues, in which 87 narratives, varying in length from 13 to 416 seconds, were selected from a total of 308.

3. All translations from French are my own. In many cases, there may be other equally viable possibilities.

4. See Mullan's (2010) extensive analysis of the differences between these three expressions (pp. 50-52) and their frequent function as discourse markers (p. 41).

5. On imitation and priming in conversation, see Branigan, Pickering, & Cleland (2000).

6. In certain types of conversational exchanges (e.g., invitations, requests), some responses are considered "preferred" in the discourse, and are easier to use than others (Brown & Levinson, 1978, p. 38). Acceptance of an invitation is a

preferred response, for example. Refusal is considered a dispreferred response, and often requires more work: explanation, hedging, or apology. In the case of opinions, disagreement is dispreferred and therefore more complicated. Mullan (2012) argues that disagreements are not a face threat for French speakers in the same way as for Australian English speakers (p. 325). Béal's (2010) analyses similarly reveal a preference for negative politeness strategies and "higher concern for non-imposition" among Australian speakers, as contrasted to French. See, by way of contrast, Lüger's (1999) important discussion of attenuated disagreement in French (pp. 139-140).

7. McCarthy (1998) has pointed to an "overly simplistic tendency to equate speech-acts with particular linguistic formulae, a sort of 'phrasicon' of speech acts, or 'function'" (p. 19), and the tendency to invent these formulae rather than look at real data. McCarthy, McCarten, and Sandiford's (2005) ESL textbook *Touchstone,* based on the North American English portion of the Cambridge International Corpus, is a welcome exception to the traditional model.

8. All examples are drawn from the following textbooks, currently on the market in the U.S. and France: *Campus, Du tac au tac*, *Entretiens*, *Intrigue*, *Liaisons*, *Studio +*, and *Tu sais quoi?*

9. A notable exception is French published *Studio +,* which includes several impersonal expressions with subject pronoun on (*oui, mais on pourrait dire aussi que…*) [yes, but one could say that] under the category of *Nuancer un argument* [to attenuate an argument] (Bérard, E., Breton, G., Canier, Y., & Tagliante, C., 2004, p. 82).

10. For ideas and activities on the teaching of conversation and interactional norms, see Liddicoat and Crozet (2001); Thornbury & Slade (2006); Dörnyei & Thurrell (1994).

11. The conversation manual *Tu sais quoi?!*, for example, offers lists of short positive and negative reactions, as well as expressions of doubt and disagreement in the first chapter (Dolidon, A., & López-Burton, N., 2012, pp. 11-12. See also *Personnages* (Oates, M.D., & Dubois, J.F., 2010, p. 192) for an effective activity consisting of statements to which students are asked to respond with brief evaluations such as *C'est normal* [that's normal] or *C'est dommage* [that's too bad].

12. See Appendix B for examples of activities to practice these functions.

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Appendix A

Translation of transcripts

Transcript #1

B: so that surprises me because people uh demonstrate in order to work less but these are people who haven't who are not even in the workplace in the case of highschoolers they're people who are not even in the workplace who are demonstrating saying no right off the bat I don't want to work much I want to work the least amount possible

A: the least amount possible that's it

B: getting paid (?) obviously the greatest amount possible

A: the greatest amount possible yes

B: that's a concept I have a hard time undertstanding in France **and which nevertheless dominates all the**

A: **it's something that is not universal** though all the schools that graduate executives in France I'm speaking of law schools preparatory schools

engineering schools or business schools strangely enough there are never strikes in those schools the students are all busy preparing their exams one begins to wonder

B: **but that's not the majority of French**

A: unfortunately not

Transcript #2

B: what what what also there's another point uh I think there is here especially for relatively technical sports there's a financial barrier that one finds here not in France which is to say that people who can pay for sports that require expensive equipment can't do it with equipment like what one finds in France of lesser quality

A: **I'm not sure** for uh for most sports really the four top sports baseball basketball soccer (?) you find all that very easily in schools one can get equipment

B: **yes but it's**

A: on the other hand if you adopt a more exotic sport like fencing

B: **hm**

A: then it's a little more complicated to find a club or buy equipment it's probably harder to find also when you go into stores like Sports Authority (?) **but recreational sports skiing biking uh climbing things like that here in my opinion are much less accessible than they are at home**

B: **perhaps uh although in France**

A: **uh** *[still wants to speak; tries to hold floor]*

B: it hasn't always been

A: for two reasons *[continues idea]*

Appendix B

Classroom activities to practice opinion exchange

The following exercises are intended for pair work in the classroom but could also be done individually. Intermediate level students can practice statements and responses as given, with a simple comment if appropriate. Advanced level students can be tasked with researching topics beforehand, so as to be able to elaborate more fully their opinions. All expressions for stating and responding to opinions are derived from the corpus of this study.

Eliciting and expressing an opinion

Form a question with the opening *Qu'est-ce que tu penses de/du/de la/ des…* [What do you think of …]. Your partner will reply using one of the following expressions to introduce his/her opinion: *Je pense que* [I think that]; *je crois que* [I think, believe that]; *il me semble que* [it seems to me that]; *j'ai l'impression que* [I have the impression/sense that]; *pour moi* [for me].

1. *l'enseignement des langues aux Etats-Unis* [language teaching in the U.S.]
2. *l'influence des médias sur l'opinion publique* [the influence of media on

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> public opinion]

3. *les transports publics en France* [public transportation in France]
4. *les sports professionels* [professional sports]
5. *l'Union européenne* [the European Union]

Responding to an opinion

Respond to the following opinions stated by your partner by choosing one or more of the expressions below. You can repeat the expression for more emphasis if you like (*c'est vrai, c'est vrai*), for this is often done by French speakers in converation. Make an additional comment if possible.

C'est vrai [right; that's true]; *c'est sûr* [that's for sure; absolutely]; *oui bien sûr* [yes, of course]; *ça je suis d'accord* (on that I agree); *oui, là dessus je suis assez d'accord* [yes, on that I pretty much agree]; *je suis cent pour cent d'accord* [I'm agree one hundred percent]; *possible* [maybe]; *je ne suis pas sûr(e)* [I'm not sure].

1. *Je crois que l'anglais est facile à apprendre* [I think English is easy to learn].
2. *Je pense que le gouvernement doit subventionner les arts* [I think the government should subsidize the arts].
3. *Il me semble que l'économie américaine va mal* [It seems to me that the American economy is not doing well].
4. *A mon avis, les parents doivent aider leurs enfants avec les devoirs* [In my view, parents should help children with their homework].
5. *On doit pouvoir voter à l'âge de 16 ans* [People should be able to vote at age 16].

Responding by adding a contrasting view [Knutson, 2010; Adapted from Thornbury & Slade, 2006, pp. 258-259]

Respond to what your partner says by adding a contrasting idea. Choose from the expressions below to begin your statement.

Oui, mais... [Yes, but...]; *Je suis d'accord, mais...* [I agree, but...]; *C'est vrai, mais...* [That's true, but...]; *Mais par contre...* [But on the other hand...].

Modèle: A: *Tout est si cher actuellement, pas vrai*? [Everything's so expensive today, isn't it?]

   B: *Oui, mais les salaires ont augmenté en même temps.* [Yes, but salaries have gone up at the same time.]

1. *Ce café est vraiment fort*! [This coffee is really strong!]
2. *Le français est si difficile.* [French is so hard.]
3. *Il peut faire très froid en Nouvelle Angleterre.* [It can get very cold in New England.]
4. *L'assurance médicale est nécessaire pour tout le monde.* [Health insurance is necessary for everyone.]
5. *Les Américains n'ont pas besoin de parler des langues étrangères.* [Americans don't need to speak foreign languages.]

The following activities are particularly appropriate for advanced level conversation courses.

Interviews avec un individu francophone

Vous allez interviewer un individu francophone en français pour comprendre son l'opinion sur un sujet ou un événement de l'actualité aux Etats-Unis ou ailleurs, ou sa réaction à un film récent ou classique.

Proposez ces sujets à l'individu et laissez-le choisir celui qu'il préfère. Ensuite, faites un peu de recherche avant l'interview. Par exemple, s'il s'agit d'un film, visionnez-le à l'avance et lisez quelques revues critiques. S'il s'agit d'un sujet de l'actualité, lisez des articles de la presse francophone pour pouvoir en parler.

L'interview doit durer au moins 10 minutes. Pendant l'interview, prenez des notes ou enregistrez-la pourvu que la personne soit d'accord.

Ecrivez un résumé de l'interview (une demi-page minimum). *Qu'est-ce que vous avez appris et qu'en pensez-vous? Quelles étaient les idées ou opinions les plus intéressantes de l'interview? Dans votre résumé, utilisez le discours indirect (e.g., le professeur Leblanc a dit qu'il trouvait le film superbe…).*

[You will interview a native or fluent French speaker in French in order to understand his or her opinion on a topic or news event in the U.S. or other country, or his or her reaction to a recent or classic film.

Propose a few topics to the interviewee and let him or her choose one. Then do some research on the topic before the interview. For example, if the topic is a film, watch the film beforehand and read a few critical reviews. If the topic is a current event, read articles from the Francophone press in order to be able to talk about it.

The interview should last at least 10 minutes. During the interview, take notes or record it providing the interviewee consents.

Write a summary of the interview (one half-page minimum). What did you learn and what do you think about what was said? What were the most interesting ideas or opinions expressed? In your summary, use indirect discourse (e.g., Professor Leblanc *said that he found* the film superb…).]

Conversations avec un(e) partenaire

Avec un(e) partenaire, consultez un site web d'informations en français (par exemple www.tv5.org, www.france24.fr, *ou le site d'un journal francophone) pour trouver un article qui traite d'un sujet qui vous intéresse. Faites une photocopie de l'article, que vous rendrez à votre professeur avant l'enregistrement.*

Enregistrez sur vidéo une conversation dans laquelle vous parlerez avec votre partenaire de l'actualité que vous avez choisie. Exprimez votre opinion, dites si vous êtes d'accord ou pas avec votre partenaire; discutez un peu de ce que vous avez lu. Durée: 5 minutes.

N'oubliez pas que l'expression des opinions dans la conversation est valorisée chez les Français. Il ne s'agit pas forcément de vous disputer avec votre partenaire, et il ne s'agit pas non plus d'un débat. Mais pour que la conversation soit animée et intéressante,

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quelques differences d'opinion s'imposent. Pensez aussi au chevauchement de parole, à la répétition ou la reprise des mots de l'interlocuteur, et aux expressions que vous apprises pour exprimer vos opinions.

[With a partner, consult a news web site in French (for example www.tv5.org, www.france24.fr, or the website of on-line Francophone newspaper) in order to find an article on a topic of interest to you. Make a photocopy of the article to give to your instructor before the recording.

Video-record a conversation in which you speak with your partner about the news topic you have chosen. Express your opinion, say whether you agree or disagree with your partner; discuss what you have read. Length: 5 minutes.

Remember that expressing opinions in conversation is valued by French speakers. It is not necessarily a question of arguing with your partner, and it is not a debate. But in order for the conversation to be animated and interesting, a few differences of opinion are in order. Think about overlap, repetition and uptake of what your partner says, and expressions you have learned for expressing opinions in French.]

Reviews

Edited by Thomas S. Conner, St. Norbert College

The Northeast Conference makes available in its *Review* evaluations of both products and opportunities of interest to foreign language educators. These evaluations are written by language professionals at all levels and 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 the Northeast Conference.

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

McCarus, Ernest N. *English Grammar for Students of Arabic*. Ann Arbor, MI: The Olivia and Hill Press, 2014 (2007). Additional online resources included. ISBN: 978-0-934034-35-7. Pp. 165. Price: $19.95.

It is a common lament among foreign language teachers that many of their students do not know English grammar and thus lack the foundation necessary to understand foreign grammar concepts. Moreover, many students struggle with the very concepts behind some seemingly alien grammar rules, not realizing that they already know how to use similar concepts in English (grammatical cases would be one of many examples). *English Grammar for Students of Arabic* (*EGSA*) part of a series of similarly titled books for learners of nine different languages, aims to address this challenge head-on. It presents 48 sections, each devoted to a straightforward grammar question, such as "What is a Preposition?" and "What is Meant by Mood?" The author then addresses each question, first as it applies in English and then in Arabic. For teachers who struggle to hold their students' interest, this text would seem to be a Godsend, addressing a much needed paucity of available resources. Indeed, it will prove a useful resource for teachers and some students, but is not a panacea for a poor foundation in first-language grammar (nor, in fairness, does the book ever claim to be that, as much as teachers might wish it were).

The strengths of this guide are its organization, relative ease of use, and its focus. First off, the sections are short—most are two to four pages—and begin with the most simple of questions: "What is a Word?" and "What is a Noun?," progressing, logically, to more complicated, less familiar topics. There is even a section dedicated to the concept of "it." The language is as simple and straightforward as it can be, and the author has made great efforts to make each explanation as comprehensible as possible. *EGSA* now includes a link to a Website where grammar concepts are correlated to the corresponding pages in the popular textbook series *al-Kitaab* (no other textbooks are currently linked). If *EGSA* is not

always easy to understand, it is simply because Arabic grammar itself is rather complicated and the terminology of Arabic textbooks on the market is not standardized. Lastly, and most commendably, *EGSA* has obviously been written from scratch by an Arabic teacher, and not adapted from an existing guide for Spanish, French, or another European language. Thus, we feel that the author is explaining Arabic grammar just as he would to a student in class.

The weaknesses of the text are in its use of transliteration instead of Arabic script, and in the general lack of Arabic grammar terms. The former weakness really limits the effectiveness of the book, essentially forcing students to imagine the actual script, which is an unnecessary step for those already struggling to understanding concepts like "noun" and "verb." I was temporarily encouraged to discover that the Website does include a link for "Arabic script," but upon inspection, it is just a pdf document with a list of words and corresponding page numbers, a rather weak fix for a problem the publishers seem to be acknowledging. Presumably one would have to reference back and forth between the book and the pdf or write in the Arabic script from the pdf to the book, tasks too cumbersome to realistically expect readers to carry out on their own. The second weakness is partially due to the inconsistency within the Arabic teaching community about whether to use English grammatical terminology (e.g., "the Elative"), Romanized Arabic terms (e.g., "The Masdar") or the actual Arabic terms. This text sticks to English terminology, such as "subjunctive mood" and "reflexive pronoun," with only a few very common Arabic terms carried over (e.g., *idaafa* and *masdar*). Since the book is technically about *English* grammar, this is understandable, yet it does somewhat limit the usefulness of the book.

The greatest limitation, though, of a text of this nature, I believe is a practical one. It is difficult to imagine students with a very weak English grammar base being willing or able to sort through the technical explanations here, despite the great effort made to simplify them. An explanation like "the progressive tenses are composed of the auxiliary verb *to be* + the present participle of the main verb" (121), as accurate as it is, would likely confound the very learners who most need help. It could also have the effect for such students of imposing an additional layer of terminology. Someone struggling to grasp what a *masdar* is would not likely be helped by learning the equally unfamiliar term "gerund," particularly as Arabic grammar concepts do not often neatly correspond to English equivalents. These limitations are inherent in the nature of this kind of text, and not in the author's treatment of the material, which, I believe, is as clear and straightforward as it can be. As such, I believe the text will appeal mostly to teachers and students with a relatively strong grammatical foundation, who are merely looking for clarification or in using their knowledge of Arabic to better understand the parallels and divergences from English. The book is not—nor does it ever claim to be—the solution for students entering an Arabic class with a very poor foundation in English grammar.

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Publisher's Response

We wish to thank Professor DiMeo for his comprehensive and fair review. We agree with him that "students with a very weak English grammar base" might feel overwhelmed by the number of terms introduced and not "willing or able to sort through the technical explanations...." To address this problem, we purposely limited the grammatical terms included to the ones commonly found in language textbooks. Unfortunately, these are the terms that students—willing or not—will have to understand. The aim of the O&H Study Guides is to help students acquire a better understanding of basic grammar so that they will be in a better position to understand the uniqueness of Arabic.

Professor Jacqueline Morton
Creator and editor of the O&H Study Guide Series
The Olivia and Hill Press
Ann Arbor, MI

Ryding, Karin C. *Teaching and Learning Arabic as a Foreign Language: a Guide for Teachers.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-58901-657-6. Pp. 277. $34.95.

"In many respects, and in almost every mode, Arabic instruction differs from teaching a Western language or an Asian language." (1) This statement, from the introduction to Dr. Karin Ryding's *Teaching and Learning Arabic as a Foreign Language*—with which few Arabic teachers would argue—neatly summarizes the need for a reference book like this one. Dr. Ryding, a well-known educator, whose credentials include, among many other positions, directing the prestigious Arabic program at Georgetown, has done the much-needed work to apply language acquisition and pedagogy specifically to the teaching of Arabic in a comprehensive, point-by-point manner. For teachers who have struggled to apply the theories and methods of language teaching books written primarily for European languages to their work in Arabic, this book will be a valuable bridge.

Dr. Ryding's selection of topics is comprehensive and logically structured. Beginning with "Fundamentals of Foreign Language Pedagogy," to a review of traditional and current teaching methodologies, the book moves on to teaching the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, with sections dealing with topics as diverse as heritage speakers, learning styles, pronunciation, the Arabic alphabet and more. A book of fewer than 300 pages cannot hope to give an in-depth analysis of all these topics. A one-page summary of Communicative Language Teaching (59), for example, would hardly be sufficient to stand alone. Therefore, one of the most valuable features of this work is its extensive set of references and citations, all easily accessible. Few readers will be equally interested in all topics; this book gives a starting point and good references for further examination of the topics of greatest interest to the reader. The book also includes some very useful lists and tables, many drawn from the Foreign Service Institute, which will be of immediate practical value, such as a nine-point list of Arabic grammatical features (95-96) and a simplified list of Applied Linguistics Terminology (237-40). Some subjects are obviously dealt with in a cursory manner,

and will be of limited use, such as a listing of Area Studies topics from 1997 (241-42) or a paragraph on university Arabic departments (233).

Many Arabic teachers today, especially native speakers, were trained in fields other than language teaching and may feel lost at their colleagues' use of second language acquisition terminology. This book will be a very valuable reference for those teachers, as it provides the technical terminology for concepts they may be very familiar with from experience, such as the different varieties of Arabic discourse.

The unique quality of this book is that unlike previous texts that have included discussion of general pedagogical principles and approaches, the author has not "cut-and-pasted" generic statements from theoretical texts, but really started with a blank page and written about these concepts from her experience as an Arabic teacher. Previous texts have been either very grammar heavy or not directed toward the particular challenges of Arabic. Here, the narrative flows freely from general principles to the distinctive challenges of teaching Arabic with no hesitation. A discussion of how to introduce the Arabic alphabet, for example, is full of practical suggestions with easy references to the theoretic principles that back them. A discussion of the general principles of teaching pronunciation moves right into a classification of Arabic sounds from an English-speaker's perspective and then a practical hint like "Arabic Vowels as Music" (171-73). It is in examples like these where the text is strongest, pulling together so many different threads in an easily comprehensible and practical manner.

Teaching and Learning Arabic as a Foreign Language is not a stand-alone course in teaching methodology. Yet it can be either a valuable starting point for beginning teachers or a very useful bridge resource for experienced teachers of Arabic for further study and reflection. For those Arabic teachers who have felt at a disadvantage trying to apply theories and examples based on Spanish and French, this book will be a most welcome tool.

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French

Deitz, Ritt, ed. *Francophonia: Stories From the Professional French Master's Program*. Madison, WI: Incidence Editions, 2014. ISBN: 9781492928010. $19.95.

As its subtitle suggests, this book is a collection of more than twenty personal recollections by graduates of the Professional French Master's Program (henceforth PFMP) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A first book of memoirs, *Post-Francophile*, was published back in 2010, so technically this is a follow-up volume of personal vignettes highlighting the exciting and multifaceted careers of program graduates.

In program director and editor Ritt Deitz's words: "This is a book about Americans who wanted their French skills to render something concrete for them in their working lives" (13)--other than the obvious, I am tempted to say, which still is teaching. However, teaching French as a career having long ago ceased to be a very good selling point to

recruit French majors and minors, it is about time that someone came up with Plan B, and UW-Madison is to be greatly commended for its prescience when it pioneered the PFMP more than a decade ago. To date, its almost 200 graduates have found long-term employment, making ample use of their French skills and their experience traveling and interning abroad. The professional internship that students complete in their field of interest, in a French-speaking environment *naturellement*, constitutes the program's capstone experience, one that usually leads to a "real" job.

"Francophonia is about a place—the 'Francophone world' and our authors' experience in it" (14), their extraordinary experience in it, I should emphasize, because the so-called French-speaking world is not always what they imagined, and most of our authors eventually realize just that but, in the end, still manage to find a cozy niche for themselves in a multilingual and multicultural environment.

The title *Francophonia* conjures up an imaginary space where everyone speaks French; it also suggests that the Francophone world is focused more on language than on culture and that it is the former that lends the latter its geographical ubiquity. But, for historical and cultural reasons, no two Francophone countries are alike, so students traveling to French Africa, say, are in for a rude awakening and gradually realize that culture also informs language. To no small extent, as Deitz argues in his opening essay, Francophonia is a façade (27), which foreign learners naturally take for the real thing and then gradually discover to be as much illusion as reality. But it is the dream of Francophonia that inspires learners of French everywhere (non-Americans learn French too) and keeps them motivated long enough to challenge them to confront their preconceived notions and stereotypes when they face reality in the *hexagone*, as well as in the most remote corners of the Francophone world.

Contributors relate experiences traveling to and working in the most interesting places in countless and, for them, quite unexpected capacities. For example, graduates of the PFMP program relate the challenges of making their bi-national child bilingual; growing up the child of two American French professors in France; acting in an international film and video collective known as Kino, in Montreal; serving as the translator of a particularly self-conscious French author; promoting the work of French musicians in America; rooming with Francophones in Paris and Orléans, among other places; traveling in the back country of Morocco; teaching French at international schools in France and Switzerland; interning at a world-class aeronautics institute in Toulouse or at a small market research company in Paris; living with a professional clown in Montreal; learning about Québécois culture through its cuisine; getting around the French Congo without a map; using one's French skills to secure an international job with the Norwegian government.

Every single piece in this entertaining and educational collection comments incisively on some aspect of the international work experience. Going Francophone, professionally speaking, can pay huge dividends. For example, the American schoolgirl who was unhappy about spending summers in France with her academic parents grew up to become an intern with Agnès Varda. One former intern now works as the Women's Retail Buying Director for Western Europe, while another is a manager with Nike, based in London—all thanks to the connections they made through the PFMP. Moreover, the enthusiasm that drives each vignette is highly contagious and makes the

reader want to be twenty years old again. I will encourage my best students to seriously consider the program. Knowing French obviously opens doors everywhere.

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Wong, Wynne, Stacey Weber-Fève, Edward Ousselin, and Bill VanPatten. *Liaisons: An Introduction to French, Enhanced Edition.* **Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning, 2015. Student Edition of the text with iLrn: Heinle Learning Center ISBN: 978-1-305-12609-1. Pp. 592. Annotated Instructor's Edition ISBN-13: 978-1-285-12609-1. Pp. 608. For more information about Cengage Learning Solutions, visit** www.cengage.com. **For orders and pricing information, visit** www.cengagebrain.com.

Combining the principles of communicative language teaching with current research in second language acquisition to form the foundation of their pedagogical approach, authors Wynne Wong, Stacey Weber-Fève, Edward Ousselin, and Bill VanPatten offer *Liaisons: An Introduction to French*, a beginning-level French program that incorporates a film of high production value and comprehensible input:

> The film *Liaisons* is an engaging, plot-driven, first-rate production that was initially mistaken for a feature film by the Union des Artistes in Canada. Filmed on location in Quebec and France by award-winning director Andrei Campeanu, the stellar cast includes the notable talent of Mylène Savoir (Exode), Guillaume Dolmans (Coeur ocean), and Johanne Marie Tremblay (*Jésus de Montréal, Les invasions barbares, Les fille de Caleb*). The film tells the story of Claire Gagner, a psychology student at McGill University who receives an anonymous note that takes her to Quebec City. Mysterious characters appear in Claire's life as she embarks on a journey that eventually leads her to France, where the past and the present blend in some startling revelations. (AIE-9)

In the film, students learn that Claire Gagner's mother Simone committed herself to a psychiatric hospital, resulting in Claire having to work as a receptionist at l'Hôtel Delta to pay for her university studies. At l'Hôtel Delta, students meet Robert, the hotel manager, and Abia, Claire's best friend. The film's three other main characters are: Alexis, a Parisian who is in Quebec on family business; Mme Papillon, a friend of Claire's uncle in Paris; and Rémy, the enigmatic man drawn to Claire. The textbook is comprised of an introductory chapter, twelve main chapters, and a concluding chapter. Every two main chapters of the textbook correspond to a film segment or "*séquence.*" Thus, for Chapters One and Two, there is "L'Étranger;" for Chapters Three and Four, "*La Décision*;" for Chapters Five and Six, "*À Québe*c;" for Chapters Seven and Eight, "*La Clé*;" for Chapters Nine and Ten, "*Une Rencontre*;" and, for Chapters Eleven and Twelve, "*Une Découverte.*" The introductory chapter covers the film's credits and prologue and the concluding chapter, "*Un nouveau chapitre,*" examines the ending to the film.

Each chapter is divided into three parts, each with its own vocabulary and grammar sections. Especially noteworthy are the "*Du film* Liaisons" boxes in the grammar sections that employ photographs and film highlights to help students better understand the specific grammatical point under examination. Other chapter features include:

1. "*Un mot sur la culture*": Brief cultural readings at the end of each vocabulary lesson that emphasize products, practices, and perspectives;
2. "*La parole est à vous*": A question related to the chapter theme which includes responses to the question from speakers from around the Francophone world and addresses the Communities Standard of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning;
3. "*Liaisons avec les mots et les sons*": A full-page pronunciation section complemented by a "*dictée*" (the introductory chapter provides background information on the cultural importance of "*dictées*" and the "*dictées*" are often lines from the film or famous quotes);
4. *Liaisons* film spread: Two pages of pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing activities that follow the presentation of each film over two chapters; the first chapter's activities are more comprehension based while the second chapter's are more analytical;
5. "*Liaisons culturelles*": In the odd-numbered chapters, this feature provides students with a collection of short cultural readings that emphasize a particular reading strategy and pertain to chapter themes;
6. "*Liaisons avec la lecture et l'écriture*": In the even-numbered chapters, this feature builds upon the "*Liaisons culturelles*" to foster a process-oriented approach for improving student skills in reading and writing;
7. "*Résumé de vocabulaire*": A complete listing of all the chapter's active vocabulary;
8. "*Liaisons musicales*": Initiation to Francophone musicians and composers;
9. "*Si vous y allez*": Introduction to places of interest in the Francophone world;
10. "*Un mot sur la langue*": Additional information, for example, regional variations and sociolinguistic factors, on different aspects of the French language;
11. "*Pour aller plus loin*": Presentation of and some initial practice for grammar that one might see, but would not normally expect students to master in a beginning-level language program; and, finally,
12. "*Découvertes culturelles*": Reading sections with corresponding Internet activities on art, architecture, literature, cinema, science, and technology from around the Francophone world found in Chapters Three, Six, Nine, and Twelve.

What makes the program's features meaningful is that they are all carefully integrated with the chapter themes. In addition, all the program features are supported by the Premium Website and iLrn.

In conclusion, Wong, Weber-Fève, Ousselin, and VanPatten have seamlessly connected all the elements of *Liaisons: An Introduction to French* so that students

learning French are able to develop a realistic understanding of the contemporary Francophone world. Furthermore, the extensive variety of communicative activities fosters both critical thinking and natural student interaction.

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Publisher's response

Thank you very much for publishing such a thoughtful review of *Liaisons*. Your input is valuable to us as we plan future editions.

The *Liaisons* film is a highlight of the program and, as Dr. Angelini mentioned, the "*Du film* Liaisons" grammar activities that relate to the film help students further understand the presented grammar lessons. Other key features of the book are the cultural readings and videos and the spotlights on the francophone world.

I am happy that the reviewer noticed how the "*Liaisons culturelles*" and the "*Liaisons avec la lecture*" sections of each chapter provide students an opportunity to improve their skills in reading and writing while learning about French culture. One of the feature characteristics of *Liaisons* is its integration of cultural lessons throughout the book, whether that is through readings and comprehension activities or internet activities. Each chapter features a different cultural topic, from articles on the francophone world and French literature to sports and cuisine. As the review makes clear, the features in each chapter are integrated with the chapter's theme. This approach provides students with an opportunity to immerse themselves in the topic so that they can fully understand the subject matter. I am glad to hear the positive feedback on the communicative activities. The activities on iLrn further allow students to master the lessons and practice what they learned in a meaningful way.

The flexibility of the *Liaisons* program is demonstrated through the iLrn online learning platform. Instructors can lead technology-balanced, flipped, or hybrid classes by using the elements of iLrn, including the online gradebook, assignment filter, and Share It! discussion forum. If instructors would like to review a chapter or sign up for a 30-day trial, they can visit **iLrn.cengage.com** to get started or inquire with their local Cengage Learning Consultant.

Zenya Molnar, Product Assistant
Lara Semones, Senior Product Manager
Cengage Learning

Mooney, Timothy. *Molière Than Thou: A Gleefully Giddy One-Man Classical Comedy Borrowed from the Plays of Jean Baptiste Poquelin Molière Drawn from New Rhyming Versions.* **Prospect Heights, IL: TMRT Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-9831812-2-4. Pp. 54. $ 9.95.**

A wonderful compliment to his previous *The Big Book of Molière Monologues* (containing over 160 monologues from 17 Molière plays), Mooney's latest Molière work reproduces his entertaining one-man play featuring well-chosen adapted scenes

from ten Molière plays. In short, Mooney presents his always entertaining touring production "Molière Than Thou" in a "nice neat package, for performance, exploration, or for reading, and remembering" (vii). The present work serves both as an introduction to Molière's best plays, as well as to major themes, ranging from infidelity to searing social satire. Lawyers, religious devotees, incompetent doctors, and foolish cuckolded husbands serve to entertain and educate the audience.

Extremely well conceived and well organized, the play begins with a plausible, comically presented explanation of why only one man would play so many various roles. Food poisoning resulting from overly ripe shell-fish combined with the "bad judgment of actually … *going to see the doctor!*" (1) leave only one man to prevent a severe financial loss if the large audience who, having paid in advance, is not satisfied. And, thus begins the comedy—with well-placed italics signaling comic delivery along with hapless audience members serving as comic foils and love interests. Mooney's text deftly moves through short scenes culled from *The Misanthrope, The School for Wives, The Bourgeois Gentleman, Sganarelle or the Imaginary Cuckold, Tartuffe, Don Juan, The Doctor In Spite of Himself, The Imaginary Invalid, The Schemings of Scapin,* and *The Precious Young Maidens.* His "giddy" pace reinforces Molière's comic wit and helps all readers, whether familiar or not with Molière, better understand the playwright's message. Historical, theatrical context and short summaries of the chosen play's action and major themes given between each scene further serve to introduce Molière to the reader.

Mooney's work would serve many instructors well. It is a wonderful compliment to literature, humanities and theatre courses dealing with seventeenth-century century theatre, general humanities, and theatre (whether it be courses presenting great playwrights or those requiring performance), *Molière Than Thou* can also be used as short audition pieces for aspiring actors. Translation courses would benefit from studying Mooney's great deftness in maintaining the spirit of the original, while maintaining a consistent skilful rhyming scheme. In short, Mooney makes Molière accessible to many in a most enjoyable manner.

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Publisher's Response

Please note that, in addition to the book itself, live performances of this one-man play continue to be available for booking at **www.timmooneyrep.com**.

Timothy Mooney

Gilbert, Anne, ed. *Territoires Francophones: Études Géographiques Sur la Vitalité des Communautés Francophones du Canada.* **Québec: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 2011. ISBN: 978-2-89448-613-9. Pp. 424. Price: $39.95 CDN. For orders and information: Les Éditions du Septentrion, 1300 avenue Maguire, Sillery (Québec) G1T 1Z3. Tel: (418) 688-3556. Fax: (418) 527-4978. E-mail:** info@septentrion.qc.ca**; Website** sept@ septentrion.qc.ca**.**

Territoires Francophones: Études Géographiques Sur la Vitalité des Communautés Francophones du Canada is a collection of articles that address the themes of survival and resilience in the Francophone minority communities of Canada. The articles approach these themes via the overarching concept of geography. Along with an introduction and a fairly extensive bibliography, *Territoires Francophones* is divided into the following five main sections: "*Milieu et vitalité*;" "*La vitalité à l'épreuve du terrain*;" "*Études de cas*;" "*Perspectives comparées*;" and, "*Synthèse et conclusion*." Given the extent to which college/university courses directed toward American students of French are moving beyond France (commonly referred to as the "Hexagon" because of its geographical shape) to include *la Francophonie* as a whole—in part an attempt by American professors of French to maintain enrollments for fear of having their courses cancelled—understanding the pressures faced by the Francophone minorities communities of Canada, our northern neighbor with whom we share the largest and friendliest border in the world and who is our largest trading partner, *Territoires francophones* provides excellent food for thought.

In her introduction, Gilbert puts forth the thesis that the Francophone minority communities in Canada have the potential to be active and vibrant. Her thesis relies heavily on three main points: the majority of the Francophone minority communities in Canada are located in a geographical space where the French language could thrive; because French is one of the two official languages of Canada, community and civic leaders have the right to use it and maintain it; and, the interplay between community and civic leaders is key to the survival of the French language in the Francophone minority communities.

Section One, "*Milieu et vitalité*," succinctly outlines the two key determining factors for the vitality and survival of the Francophone minority communities in Canada: community institutions (e.g., French-speaking and servicing a French-speaking population) and the actual desire of the community to maintain its language and culture. In contrast to Section One, Section Two, "*La vitalité à l'épreuve du terrain*," describes the actual reality of the Francophone minority communities, one that is quite discouraging. For example, how do Francophone immigrants to Canada successfully integrate into a community where private businesses do not have to provide services in French? Or, what happens when native speakers of French move to English-speaking areas in search of employment? Will finding an answer to these two questions be left up to private businesses, who will become responsible for the promotion and preservation of the French language and Francophone culture of these minority communities? Only time and active interest on the part of private businesses will provide the answer.

Section Three, "*Études de cas*," details the case studies of five distinct Francophone minority communities. For example, the small struggling populations of towns in Saskatchewan are contrasted with those populations of large cities in Ontario where

the public services dedicated to the Francophone minority communities are not fully utilized. This section would be particularly useful for classroom discussion because it is rare that an American student is aware of the fact that there are Francophone populations struggling to exist outside the province of Quebec. This is not for lack of interest on the part of the students but more due to the fact that most American textbooks for beginning and intermediate French language rarely dedicate more than one chapter to Quebec and maybe a brief section to the history of the Acadian people when presenting the Francophone populations of Canada. Case in point, Section Four, "*Perspectives comparées*," is especially interesting as it contrasts the struggling northern Quebec Francophone communities with those of the Acadian population; the Acadians have always maintained that they are a distinct and unique Francophone community with their own identity despite the fact that they are spread across New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. In short, it is imperative not to combine the Francophone populations of Quebec with those of the Acadian population elsewhere in Canada.

Section Five, "*Synthèse et conclusion*," sums up the various factors that threaten the vitality of the Francophone minority populations of Canada. The impact of these factors vary as they range from such non-controllable aspects as the age of the population and the spread of English in today's interdependent global economy to the strength of community leaders in achieving their political agendas. In short, Gilbert warns that the Francophone communities of Canada are at a point of no return: either the status of the French language will rapidly decline in Canada because of a variety of contributing factors or it will blossom thanks to these very same contributing factors because of the desire of the people of these communities to maintain their language and culture.

In conclusion, *Territoires Francophones* does a fine job of illuminating the pressures facing the Francophone minority communities of Canada. It would serve as a wonderful resource for those teaching a Canadian Studies course or for anyone wanting to engage in an in-depth analysis of the challenges currently facing the Francophone minority populations of Canada or in a comparative study between these particular linguistic communities of Canada and those of language minorities in other countries, such as the Basque population in Spain.

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Publisher's Response

Depuis sa fondation en 1988, le Septentrion s'efforce de faire connaître le rôle des différentes communautés dans l'histoire nord-américaine. À ce titre, l'ouvrage dirigé par Anne Gilbert apporte un éclairage sur les francophones du Canada, comme Dean Louder, cet autre professeur de géographie, a pu le faire à travers plusieurs livres.

Gilles Herman
Les Éditions du Septentrion

German

Chalupa, Cynthia and Heiko ter Haseborg. *Neue Blickwinkel: Wege zur Kommunikation und Kultur.* **Wayside Publishing, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-938-026-00-3.**

Neue Blickwinkel: Wege zur Kommunikation und Kultur is an intermediate, standards-based, multi-skill German textbook designed primarily for high school AP students and/or fourth- semester college students. It is organized into seven thematic units, each comprised of three lessons. All seven units directly address issues of young adulthood, such as career paths, pop culture/media, and German identity. The authors' primary aim is to provide "authentic language practice in the three modes of communication and analyses of important cultural events and literary texts". The focus on new media is designed to engage students in German materials beyond the classroom and encourage them to explore the German-speaking world beyond the textbook.

While the attempt at providing engaging, theme-based materials for this target audience is appreciated, the execution is unfortunately somewhat lacking. The first manifestation of this shortcoming is in the relative length of the chapters compared to each other. For example, while Chapter One contains thirteen pages, the following chapter only contains six. These inconsistencies in chapter length and scope are found throughout the rest of the text, albeit to a lesser degree. It is also noted that the reading texts for Chapter Two are much easier than the ones for Chapter One. In fact, it seems that the first two chapters should simply be switched in order to achieve some progressive uniformity in length, difficulty, and pre-knowledge needed to engage more effectively with some of the topics covered.

All chapters start out with some type of schemata-building exercise, which is perfectly appropriate. These exercises are generally limited to pictures and discussion questions. What is immediately striking is that they tend to presume a prior knowledge of the German culture. "*Vergleichen Sie Ihre Erfahrungen mit denen der deutschen Schüler.*" [Compare your experiences with those of the German pupils.] While the level of student comprising the intended audience probably does have any background on the thematic issues addressed, the point of schemata building is to activate prior knowledge in the personal realm and then build a bridge to the new knowledge to be acquired. In this sense, it might be better to center the discussion on a first-person (most likely US-American) experience—expressed in German—first. Another photo contains the caption "*So war es 1948 in Berlin! Welche Traditionen gehörten damals zur Einschulung in Deutschland?*" [This is how it was in 1948 Berlin! What traditions belonged to the first day of school at that time?] I found myself repeatedly puzzled as to whom the students were to direct these questions and discussions. It also seems that some relatively simple checklist and ordering activities found later in the chapters would serve a much clearer and more appropriate pedagogical purpose as part of warm-up activities before new materials are introduced.

Further examination of chapter content reveals a loose template consisting of a list of new vocabulary words, a reading selection with factual comprehension questions, one or more grammar explanations and paradigms, several grammar exercises, some listening, writing and speaking activities sprinkled throughout, and some Internet

and media activities in later chapters. What I found striking about these materials is a general lack of methodological build-up and a general lack of integration between provide input and expected output. For example, in Chapter Three, the reading text is about the introduction of the learner's permit (for driving) in Germany. The grammar topic on the next page is the Past Perfect tense with the functional aim of chronological ordering of events. However, the full page reading text contains only one instance of this form, but has multiple instances of the passive voice, which is not addressed in the grammar lesson. From a pedagogical standpoint, I would like to see the texts selected to heavily model the target structural forms in real-world usage.

The grammar exercises themselves, in addition to being largely decontextualized (though loosely tied somewhat through content theme) often seem to lack the build-up of pattern recognition/structured practice/applied use and are instead generally somewhat drill-like. I would expect to have the students go back through the reading text (after completing something more globally analytic than a factual comprehension check) and identify the forms in use, extract and practice them in drills, then produce them in both scaffolded and non-scaffolded activities based on the information in the text. Proportionately speaking, grammar practice takes up a relatively large amount of the units and often seems to be expected with very little repeated multi-skill input (thus listening usually comes at the end of the chapter).

Similar patterns are noted with vocabulary drills coming late in the chapter and not always well connected to input texts. Extensive color coded vocabulary lists at the end of each chapter are organized alphabetically by part of speech, but do not seem to take advantage of a more cognitive grouping approach based on functional groupings and collocations. Lessons seem to lack targeted practice of new vocabulary and that what does exist seems somewhat poorly placed in the overall lesson order. While the topics are certainly interesting and thematically grouped, I find myself sometimes wondering whether the ACTFL-ILR levels and text typology have been thoroughly considered. For example, the brief autobiographical blurbs found as the reading text in Chapter Two seem much too low for the target audience and subsequent chapters seem to oscillate between long, complex texts and shorter, simpler texts without an apparent build-up along the modal progression from enumerative, orientational, instructive, evaluative and projective text types.

On the whole, *Neue Blickwinkel* provides an interesting, theme-based collection of texts that include relevant topics for a young adult audience. In the hands of an experienced teacher who can order activities systematically and point out needed connections that are not obvious from the surface layout of the lessons, this book seems like a reasonable option for an intermediate German class. However, I would hesitate to use it in a multi-section course in which common outcomes were desired/ necessary and/or for which less experienced teaching assistants or novice teachers without a strong background in methodology were employed.

*The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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Anton, Christine, Tobias Barske, Jane Grabowski, and Megan McKinstry. *Sag Mal.* *An Introduction to German Language and Culture.* **Boston: Vista Higher Learning, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-61767-948-3. Pp. 540.**

At first glance, this introductory German textbook does not look much different from its competitors. As is customary, the paper-based *Sag Mal* package includes a Student Activities Manual, audio-visual material, and a publisher-produced DVD, in this case, *Fotoroman*, presenting 24 episodes about student life in Berlin. Vista also tries to address the growing demand for online teaching materials by presenting interactive digital alternatives. The *Sag Mal Supersite* provides textbook–based activities, additional practice opportunities, auto-grading, instant feedback for exercises, synchronous chat activities, recorded readings, audio vocabulary flash cards, and authentic video clips. Students also have record-compare options to practice their pronunciation, Internet search activities, interactive maps with statistics and cultural notes, and options for submitting their writing online. A student portal provides access to cumulative assessments of online work, while the communications center allows instructors to disseminate notifications, due dates and other teaching-related announcements. At second glance, *Sag Mal* therefore seems to offer more out-of-class learning options and support for hybrid versions of conventional face-to-face introductory German courses —an attractive option in an era of growing demand for online language instruction.

Like most U.S.-produced introductory language textbooks, *Sag Mal* is divided into twelve chapters, which cover topics such as family and friends, food, holidays, vacation, travel, health and professions as contexts for communicative practice. Each chapter is sub-divided into *Lektion* A and B, the subsections, *Kontext, Fotoroman, Kultur, Strukturen*, and ends with a final *Weiter geht's* segment. The individual chapter parts are color-coded and information appears on one page or two facing pages. Culture is integrated through web quests, authentic texts, TV commercials, and short films.

Each chapter's *Kontext*-section contains guided and more open-ended group and partner exercises. The more structured activities make use of discourse prompts, the recycling icon helps students recall previously learned structures and transfer them to new contexts. Students apply the rules of German spelling and pronunciation through oral practice, ranging from word-level exercises to culturally relevant sayings or proverbs. The *Fotoroman*-episodes, shot in Berlin, are contextualized with the individual chapter topics with versatile instructional possibilities, intended either for in-class use, as homework or for review. While they reinforce vocabulary and grammar, individual episodes are fairly lengthy, the plots somewhat contrived, and the acting a little wooden, probably rendering them more useful for out-of-class assignments. *Kultur* explores contextualized cultural themes, scaffolding them through in-depth reading texts and images, statistics, maps or charts, augmented by information on people, places, dialects and traditions from German-speaking regions. Advice on the

development of comprehension strategies, encapsulated in *Ein kleiner Tipp*-inserts, are interspersed throughout.

Sag Mal's underlying format is determined by grammar and not theme-driven. Like most introductory textbooks, the chapter on family therefore introduces and practices possessive adjectives, while the one on health-related material covers reflexive pronouns, regardless of when students would need to use given structures to communicate. The authors try to minimize lengthy grammar explanations by organizing them in a visually appealing way in the *Strukturen*-section. *Startblock* defines new grammatical terms and reminds students of those they have already encountered, while the stills from the *Fotoroman* integrate the given episode with the grammar explanations, giving instructors little choice but to use the video program each chapter. The *Querverweis* boxes provide references to previously learned grammar or foreshadow future topics, while those entitled *Achtung!* highlight potential sources of confusion and provide additional explanations. As a result, despite the initial impression, grammar coverage remains fairly substantial; it is merely broken down differently. The exercises following grammar introduction range from guided practice to more open-ended, creative activities, while the *Wiederholung*-section recycles previously covered material and integrates it with new structures and vocabulary. The penultimate section in each chapter is entitled *Zapping* or *Kurzfilm* which contextualizes TV commercials, public service announcements or short films within a given chapter's overarching topic. It appropriately scaffolds them through pre- and post-viewing activities. Thematically grouped vocabulary lists as well as page references to pertinent grammar items end each chapter.

The *Fotoroman* and contextualized activities ensure that students receive a fairly thorough introduction to Berlin, and the final *Weiter geht's*-sections in each chapter deepen culturally-focused facts about other German-speaking regions through related reading, listening, and writing activities. *Die Deutschsprachige Welt* introduces students to German-speaking Europe in the first chapter, others focus on *Österreich*, *Die Schweiz und Liechtenstein*, and various German states. The third chapter allows students to make cultural comparisons by highlighting famous Americans of Austrian, German or Swiss descent and North American traditions with cultural roots in German-speaking countries. Except for Bayern, states are presented in regional clusters (e.g., *Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg und Bremen* and *Mecklenburg-Vorpommern und Brandenburg*). Given that stereotypical Germans are often depicted as a Lederhosen-clad Bavarians, the authors try hard to highlight other aspects of that state's culture. Providing this together with information on other states would allow for different, more diverse information on German cultural heritage, such as ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe, Namibia or Mennonites in the U.S. and Canada.

The *Sag Mal Supersite* offers in-depth, technology-based practice opportunities through corresponding chapter sections. *Kontext* provides oral skill-building activities as well as record-and-compare exercises for more in-depth pronunciation practice. Written summaries, key vocabulary and grammar structures and true/false statements accompany all streamed episodes of the *Fotoroman*. The *Strukturen*-section allows students to choose audio versions of grammar explanations and exercises and offers additional online-only practice and chat activities, while *Kultur* features further

cultural readings and web searches. The *Supersite* also provides simulated synchronous communication activities with a virtual chat partner. In order to create the video chat illusion, students check their gender, enable their microphones, cameras, and record their answers as soon as the virtual partner is done talking. In one such activity students first read a letter and then answer the pre-recorded chat partner's questions about the letter while another requires that students talk to the virtual partner about leisure time preferences. Judging by some of the assignments, it appears that the Supersite allows classmates to connect virtually and conduct video chats. It is not clear, how long the chats can last and how the instructor can assess simulated or synchronous student-to-student conversations.

The online materials partially duplicate the printed information and add audio alternatives, but also offer additional versions of mechanical, controlled, guided and more open-ended exercises. In most cases, the bottom of the screen features a reference section as well as a keypad for umlauts and ß. Where exercises do not offer self-correction options, students can save and submit their work to the instructor. In the family chapter, for example, students can pull up the page with the family tree and first duplicate the textbook activity through audio prompts before practicing again, determining family relationships from a different point of view. The activities range from marking correct responses to typing answers to oral cues, recording spoken answers, matching, and categorizing. In some cases, however, the online activities seem a little random or mismatched. One example requires students to type German names as a response to an oral prompt, but misspelling names that are only given orally and may not be familiar to students does not assess student comprehension. Another, based on an image of a man with two women, asks students to identify a second male as the correct answer. Some web search activities also do not seem level-appropriate. In the third chapter, for example, students are given difficult key words (e.g., *Scheidungsanwalt, Trennungsgründe, Anstieg der Scheidungsrate*) to conduct research into the rise in Germany's divorce rate. Reporting their findings would require language functions that are too advanced at this early stage.

In conclusion, it is commendable that the authors are trying to provide less lengthy grammar explanations, offer information on reading and learning strategies, and, through explicit recycling, seek to introduce, practice, revisit, and reinforce language functions in multiple contexts and using all language skills. The layout is clear and easy to follow—both in the textbook and online. Integrating information about other German-speaking countries should happen more systematically, given the proliferation of study abroad and internship opportunities for Americans in all major German-speaking countries. It is therefore heartening to see that Sag Mal attempts to heighten student awareness of German as a pluricentric language beyond a cultural note or tourist-attraction type text about Austria and Switzerland in activities like one of the family chapter's online *Kultur* exercises. The *Sag mal Supersite* undoubtedly provides multiple additional exercise options, which visual, auditory, and tactile learners often do not have. Unfortunately, the majority of activities are merely more interactive versions of mechanical pencil and paper assignments. Adding a blogging or peer-comment function to the *Supersite* for the more open-ended or interactive oral and writing activities would provide a truly communicative technology-based

opportunity for creative language use and move beyond teacher-initiated (or in this case, computer-centered) instruction. It could make *Sag mal* a natural choice for anyone who is developing hybrid German language classes or wants to provide more communicative technology-based options in regular face-to-face courses.

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Publisher's Response

I am pleased to respond to Professor Gisela Hoecherl-Alden's review of Vista Higher Learning's *Sag Mal: An Introduction to German Language and Culture*. I was thrilled to see that Professor Hoecherl-Alden identified so many of the *Sag Mal* hallmarks that its authors worked hard to incorporate. An obvious example is the textbook's layout and organization of grammar explanations in a manner that lowers the student's affective filter. Indeed, *Sag Mal* minimizes lengthy grammar explanations by organizing them in visually appealing *Strukturen* pages. All the essential information is provided, only arranged more smartly than in other introductory German textbooks. I was also pleased to read Professor Hoecherl-Alden's acknowledgment claiming that the *Sag Mal* authors avoided cultural clichés and instead highlighted the many diverse aspects of German-speaking cultures and claiming that *Sag Mal* heightens student awareness of German as a pluricentric language. She also recognized the program's rich variety of online activities, from controlled to open-ended, including web-only activities as well as ones that duplicate textbook exercises. Professor Hoecherl-Alden commended the Sag Mal authors for offering information on language skill-building strategies and using recycling to introduce, practice, revisit, and reinforce language functions in multiple contexts. Finally, I am grateful to Professor Hoecherl-Alden for pointing out the *Sag Mal* design and how it facilitates navigation in the textbook as well as online.

I do, however, disagree with Professor Hoecherl-Alden's view that the integration of the *Fotoroman* video stills in the grammar explanations leaves the instructor little choice but to use the video program. There is no question that the video program enhances student enjoyment and acquisition of German; however, the purpose of the video stills is to reinforce vocabulary and establish a link between the grammar concept and its real-world application. Nevertheless, the program was designed to allow instructors to forgo the *Fotoroman* altogether without diminishing the value of the grammar explanations. Professor Hoecherl-Alden also referred to the plots of the *Fotoroman* video episodes as contrived and the acting wooden, but what might seem stilted to the instructor with native or near-native language proficiency is precisely that which teaches beginning students to use visual cues to decipher spoken dialogue. As a matter of fact, beginning students crave this type of carefully paced auditory input and feel safer and more prepared when required to watch authentic video. Finally, I was puzzled by Professor Hoecherl-Alden's remark that *Sag Mal*'s underlying format is determined by grammar and not theme-driven when, in fact, the exact opposite is true.

In other words, the functional themes were established first and the grammar sequence that enables their expression was determined afterward.

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Japanese

Endo Hudson, Mutsoku. *English Grammar For Students of Japanese. The Study Guide For Those Learning Japanese.* **Ann Arbor, MI: The Olivia and Hill Press, 2014. Pp. 204. ISBN: 13-978-0-934034-16-6.**

English Grammar For Students of Japanese (henceforth *EGSJ*) provides students of Japanese with an easy-to-use primer of both English and Japanese grammar, which beginning students in particular should find most useful. As the author states: "this handbook is designed to supplement any beginning Japanese language textbook. It is not meant to be comprehensive, nor is it intended to replace a language textbook. It is written to help you get the most out of your Japanese textbook as well as to answer some of the questions you will have as you learn Japanese" (v).

However, the Japanese part of the text is all in *romaji*, which may be a "turn-off" to some but is likely to better help the average student master the basics of Japanese grammar. Perhaps a future edition could include examples in both *romaji* and Japanese script.

Each section consists of two parts, one focusing on English grammar, the other on its Japanese equivalent, showing students exactly how the grammar point under consideration works in each language, providing numerous well-chosen examples that underline significant differences between English and Japanese. For a future edition the author might consider cross-referencing all standard first- and second-year Japanese language books, as the French book in this same series does so well. This feature would make it possible for students to download the pages they need to prepare in *EGJS* before each lesson. Instructors can then assign additional topics as needed.

Although most first-year texts include grammar explanations, they generally assume that students already have a good enough grasp of basic grammar and seldom dwell on difficult concepts, such as direct and indirect object pronouns. I teach French but have been learning Japanese on my own for the past twenty years or so, and I will say that this is the best Japanese textbook I have come across thus far. For the first time I feel I understand complicated topics such as counters and relative and conditional clauses. Suddenly, it all "clicked." My wife, who is a Japanese native and teaches in our department, immediately recognized the book's tremendous pedagogical potential and decided to make it mandatory reading across the board, from Japanese 101 to Senior Seminar. This is the type of text that learners of Japanese should keep close by all times because it makes it easy to review complicated topics that foreign speakers are unlikely ever to master fully. In my opinion it is far superior to other similar titles for reasons that I will attempt to spell out below.

EGSJ covers virtually every grammar topic that beginning, intermediate, and advanced students of Japanese are likely ever to encounter. The table of contents is

two pages long, which underscores the comprehensive nature of this language primer. Topics are listed in roughly "chronological" order, beginning with those that students are likely to encounter in the first few weeks of class (e.g., nouns, pronouns, personal pronouns, number, the possessive, verbs, among others) before moving on to more complex grammar, such as polite and plain forms, topic sentences, predicates, and tenses, which pose special problems in Japanese since English lacks anything that is quite the same. Studying *EGSJ* made me realize just how different Japanese is, which makes me appreciate this book all the more since it really did help me bone up on complicated grammar. Less complex concepts also receive in-depth coverage (e.g., adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions). Explanations are always concise, examples admirably clear, and written in such a way that they easily can generate pattern-practice style independent review. For example, in the section on relative clauses I learn that "*Watashi ga yuube yonda kiji wa omoshirokatta desu*" (180) means "the article that I read last night was interesting." Now, on my own, I can tinker with this sentence, changing a word here and a word there, improving my command of relative clauses so that I am able to use them with confidence, naturally and spontaneously, in everyday conversation. For example, "*Watashi ga yuube yonda hon wa muzukashikatta desu*"—"The book I read last night was difficult." I do not pretend to be perfectly fluent in Japanese but by working on basic structures with the help of this book (and learning a ton of vocabulary) I am better able to sustain a halfway meaningful conversation.

To start things off, the author offers a long list of helpful study tips. After all, many students have never taken a foreign language before and often do not know how to study effectively and therefore waste valuable time and then become discouraged. The "To the Student" section includes much commonsensical advice, such as reminding students just why grammar is useful and advising them to seek help before moving on if there is something that is not clear and also to take every opportunity to review topics. The "Tips For Studying a Foreign Language" are especially good and include suggestions for making flashcards (putting the Japanese word on one side and the English equivalent on the other, including a good example, and studying vocabulary by going from the Japanese word to the English). Personally, I prefer a more traditional vocabulary notebook, but today's students seem to like flashcards. Whatever works. The important thing is to organize vocabulary and to keep it in one place, since most of us cannot retain everything we learn immediately but need a device facilitating the memorization of words. Finally, the author might also have stressed the importance of attending class religiously, studying regularly for an hour or so every day, and always saving ten to fifteen minutes at the end of the day for review, which greatly aids in the memorization of vocabulary and grammar structures; however, she does stress the importance of studying a little bit at a time every day, if possible.

One way to give readers a flavor of how *EGSJ* is organized is to look at the section on verbs ("What is a Verb?" 21-25), an obvious enough topic for beginning language students but sufficiently different in Japanese to cause them an initial headache. The author first describes how verbs work in English, defining such things as inflection, tense, and voice (all of which are cross-referenced to relevant sections elsewhere in *EGSJ*). As previously stated, grammar explanations are admirably clear and should be helpful to native speakers of English, who seldom have a good sense of how their

language works. For example, how many of our students can define transitive and intransitive verbs? The definitions provided here will be useful to them outside Japanese class as well. I particularly appreciated the clarity with which the author outlines the various types of Japanese verbs: irregular verbs (*kuru* and *suru*) and regular verbs with their two main categories: *ru* verbs and *u* verbs (also called consonant-stem verbs, to distinguish them from the *ru* verbs, which are vowel-stemmed verbs. Japanese does distinguishe between transitive and intransitive verbs, but in Japanese verbs differ in meaning and spelling depending on their function. "To open" is either *akeru* (which is transitive) or *aku* (which is intransitive). Thus *akeru* means "to open" something, whereas the intransitive *aku* just means "to open," as in the sentence "The store opens early."

The Olivia and Hill Press publishes similar primers of all the commonly taught languages (French, Spanish, German, Italian, Latin, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, and English for native speakers of Spanish), and I heartily recommend them to my colleagues in modern languages. Again, I am much indebted to Mutsoku Endo Hudson for this exemplary primer of Japanese grammar. What I particularly appreciate is that examples in both languages are perfectly idiomatic. Unlike so many texts whose author has not mastered one or the other language and therefore causes great confusion in some instances, *English Grammar For Students of Japanese* is virtually flawless. The explanations of English grammar are so good that they could be used in an English composition class. Moreover, in the entire volume I discovered only a few typos (23, 50, 65), an extraordinary accomplishment in a bilingual book of this kind, which attests to the author's dedication and competence. I also appreciate the layout of the book: pages are not overly crowded, and model sentences and important terminology are either boldfaced or italicized. This a "must-buy, must-read" book for anyone seriously interested in learning real Japanese.

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Publisher's Response

Thank you for such a complimentary review. It is always reassuring to read a review where the reviewer understood the aim of the book. At the time of writing, we hesitated a lot with regard to including Japanese script. I don't know if we made the right decision. The argument that won out was that we were not teaching Japanese language and did not want to create an additional hurdle for students with an unfamiliar script.

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Creator and editor of the O&H Study Guide Series
The Olivia and Hill Press
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Pedagogy

Swanson, Peter B. *Identifying and Recruiting Language Teachers: A Research-Based Approach. A volume in Contemporary Languages in Education* **(Terry Osborn, Series Editor). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc., 2013. ISBN: 978-1-61735-856-2 (paperback). $45.00. ISBN: 978-1-61735-857-9 (hardcover). $85.99. ISBN: 978-1-61735-858-6 (e-book). Pp. 167. For orders and special web pricing information, visit** www.infoagepub.com**.**

Since the educational system in the U.S. continues to face multiple challenges due to the sluggard economy, it must do a better job of identifying and recruiting motivated teachers. Using a research-based approach, Peter B. Swanson attacks head-on the precarious situation presently facing the foreign language educational community. His arguments are clearly heartfelt and genuine, as evidenced by his opening remarks in the volume's preface:

My interest in recruiting individuals into the teaching profession, specifically in the area of second language teaching, began to grow as I started my teaching career in the 1990s. I am a career changer. I started my professional life in the business world marketing office automation equipment and found that I was not interested in the profession. I was extrinsically motivated to succeed by financial factors. However, when I had the opportunity to teach Spanish as a long-term substitute in a public high school, I quickly realized I was intrinsically motivated to succeed. Teaching was the profession that nurtured my interests, competencies, and abilities, and rewarded me for those attributes.

As I was completing the teacher certification process, I secured employment as a high school Spanish teacher. While attending conferences on language teaching, I became aware that there appeared to be a shortage of certified language teachers in Wyoming and Colorado. I networked with other language teachers around the country and learned that the shortage of language teachers was more pervasive than what I initially thought. While an abundance of research indicates that various factors explain the shortage (e.g., salaries, negative perceptions of the profession in general), I started to seek deeper understanding of the problem. During my doctoral studies, I focused pilot studies that led to my dissertation, which sought to uncover foreign language teacher identity and socialization practices. (XI)

In the first chapter, "The Shortage of America's Foreign Language Teachers: The Current State of Affairs," Swanson pinpoints seven crucial areas contributing to this shortage: Retirement; Attrition; Increased Enrollments; Legislation; Perceptions of Teaching; and, Personality and Vocational Initiative. Although one might correctly argue that there are regional factors that might play a greater role in some areas than others, or even play a greater role than the ones examined by Swanson, his exploration of these seven specific areas provide a set of core topics to discuss, especially since he concludes this chapter with a section on "Recruitment and Retention Initiatives."

The second chapter, "Guiding Frameworks," is more theoretical and considers such topics as vocational personalities, work environment, conceptual change, and self-

efficacy. Chapter Three, "Working With Adolescents in Language Courses," is thought provoking insofar as it considers adolescents as possible second language teacher recruits. Chapters Four ("Recruiting Future Educator Organization Members"), Five ("Campus Visits"), Six ("Recruiting Adults"), and Seven ("Concluding Thoughts"), contribute to the conversation on practical solutions. Particularly helpful also are the three appendices (Second/Foreign Language Teacher Efficacy Scale; Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale [Short Form]: Teacher Beliefs: How Much Can You Do?; and, Program of Study" B.A. Spanish w/Concentration in Teacher Education) and the accompanying and detailed reference list.

Identifying and Recruiting Language Teachers: A Research-Based Approach provides a model for the future of our profession. Those among us who teach education and/or FL methods courses will find this volume very useful and inspirational.

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Spanish

Gill, Mary McVey, Deana Smalley, and María-Paz Haro. **Cinema for Spanish Conversation, Fourth Edition.** Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2014. ISBN: ISBN-13: 978-1-58510-706-3. Pp. 324. $69.95. For orders, visit **www.focusbookstore.com.**

In keeping with its fine tradition of publishing innovative pedagogical materials for the foreign language classroom, Focus Publishing's fourth edition of *Cinema for Spanish Conversation* does not disappoint. In updating this popular text focusing on critically-acclaimed feature-length Spanish-language films that motivate students with real-world contexts, authors Mary McVey Gill, Deana Smalley, and María-Paz Haro chose four new films: Presunto culpable (2008, Mexico), the groundbreaking documentary of two young attorneys' attempt to exonerate a wrongfully-accused man; *También la lluvia* (2010, Spain/Mexico), the story of a film crew shooting a controversial film about Christopher Columbus in Cochabamba, Columbia in the face of local people who are rising up against plans to privatize the water supply; *No* (2012, Chile), the Oscar-nominated film about an advertisement executive's efforts to defeat Pinochet in Chile's 1988 national referendum; and, *El viaje de Carol* (2002, Spain), a tender coming-of-age film about a twelve-year old American girl who, with her Spanish-born mother, travels to Spain at the height of the Spanish Civil War in 1938. The other twelve films carried over from the third edition are: *Arráncame la vida* (2008, Mexico); *Como agua para chocolate* (1992, Mexico); *Diarios de motocicleta* (2004, Argentina/Chile/Peru); *Flores de otro mundo* (1999, Spain); *Guantanamera* (1995, Cuba); *Hombres armados* (1997, United States); *Mar adentro* (2004, Spain); *María llena eres de gracia* (2004, Colombia/United States); *La misma luna* (2007, Mexico/United States); *El Norte* (1983, Guatemala/Mexico/United States); *Todo sobri mi madre* (1999, Spain); and, *Volver* (2007, Spain).

Features new to the fourth edition and building upon the previous editions' success at fostering and promoting student use of real-world language include: up-to-

date background information on each film, including the director and cast, as well as the inspiration for the film's genesis; a four-color layout with film images and screen shots; "*Opiniones*," a section of questions aimed at facilitating more in-depth themed discussion; and a filmography of recommended films with comparable themes or from the same region for each of the text's featured films. As with the three previous editions, each chapter is uniformly structured to include "*Preparación*" (pre-viewing and vocabulary building activities); "*Exploración*" (post-viewing comprehension activities that further the student's understanding of each film's major themes and encourage the student to probe deeper into the meaning of each theme); "*Análisis y contraste cultural*" (guided compare and contrast activities that build on acquired vocabulary as well as suggested conversation and composition topics); and, "*Más allá de la película*" (authentic texts, with pre- and post-reading activities and from multiple genres, such as poems, literary prose, interviews and articles, which allow students to expand upon what they have learned from the film and improve their reading comprehension; for example, for *La misma luna*, an interview with the film's director Patricia Riggen is provided). Furthermore, users of *Cinema for Spanish Conversation* receive, as a PDF, a free-of-charge teacher's guide with additional film activities and an answer key for all exercises.

In conclusion, *Cinema for Spanish Conversation* does not simply prepare students for understanding the films under study. Comprised of films in a variety of genres (drama, romance, adventure, biography, comedy, thriller, history, and documentary), it is clear that each film selected engages students in focused discussions on relevant contemporary topics (for example, one easily is able to engage in discussions on sustainability and the environment with *También la lluvia* or political oppression with *No*). *Cinema for Spanish Conversation* truly fosters student learning of Spanish language and culture in context as well as an appreciation of cultural differences within a historical framework, which will make our students better representatives of the United States when they travel, study, or work abroad and when they interact with foreigners who visit, work, or live in the United States.

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Publisher's Response

As publisher of its new Focus imprint, Hackett Publishing Company is grateful for this opportunity to thank *The NECTFL Review* and Dr. Eileen Angelini for this perceptive review of Mary McVey Gill's, Deana Smalley's and María-Paz Haro's *Cinema for Spanish Conversation, Fourth Edition*. We are especially grateful for the review's recognition not only of the quality of the films covered, but of the volume's remarkable ability to prepare students to intelligently discuss a variety of topics of great cultural, political, and historical importance. We also thank the founding and visionary Publisher of Focus, Ron Pullins, for having developed this volume and its companion volumes in Focus' celebrated foreign-language-through-film series, as well as for his

trust in our stewardship and ongoing development of the series. If instructors would like to request an examination copy of this or any other title published in the series, they may do so at **Focusbookstore.com**.

Brian Rak
Editorial Director
Hackett Publishing Co.

De Los Heros and Mercedes Niño-Murcia, eds. *Fundamentos y modelos del estudio pragmático y sociopragmático del español.* **Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-58901-936-2. Pp. 386.**

The editors of this book have gathered an excellent collection of papers written in Spanish on first and second language Spanish pragmatics. The book is an exceptional resource for undergraduate and graduate students and researchers in Spanish linguistics. Pre-reading reflection questions and practice exercises are a useful feature for those who want to use this textbook in an advanced undergraduate or graduate Spanish linguistics course.

The book contains 15 chapters divided into four sections. The first section is an introduction to the field of pragmatics. In the second section, the authors give an overview of linguistic methods and their application to specific aspects of pragmatics research. The third section presents a series of socio-pragmatic themes from distinct theoretical and methodological perspectives. In the fourth section, the authors explore the relationship between language and communication.

Part 1, "*Nociones básicas del estudio pragmático*," contains two chapters. Blackwell distinguishes the field of semantics from pragmatics, arguing that in order to understand how meaning is represented, one must take into account both semantic and pragmatic meaning. In the second chapter, Martínez Camino discusses the theoretical principles involved in inferential communication. His chapter focuses on the work of Grice as well as that of Sperber and Wilson.

Part 2, "*Métodos de análisis*," consists of five chapters. Félix-Brasdefer describes how speakers use language to express communicative acts or speech acts. The author presents sample speech acts and discusses them using the frameworks established by Austin and Searle. Félix-Brasdefer concludes with recommendations for the learning of speech acts and other aspects of pragmatic performance. Bravo discusses linguistic politeness as an important aspect of the pragmatics research agenda. In delineating the relationship between indirect speech acts and politeness, the author refers to the theories of Lakoff (1972), Leech (1983, 1988), and Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). Bravo does an outstanding job of using authentic speech samples to elicit reflection and discussion. Koike and James discuss the use of conversation analysis to investigate social interaction. Cashman discusses the use of discourse analysis to examine oral and written language while Zavala outlines the tenets of critical discourse analysis.

Part 3, "*Lengua y poder*," contains six chapters. De los Heros explores the relationship between language and gender in the first chapter of this section. The author traces work on gender from the variationists and pre-feminists to more recent work grounded in

sociopragmatics, postmodern theories, and feminist studies. She concludes with an interesting discussion of issues such as: language and gender, language and sexual expression, and sexism in language. González-Cruz considers the relationship between linguistic variation and social class. In doing so, the author addresses work on social stratification, stereotypes, hyper- and ultra-correction, social networks, and other areas. In doing so, the author discusses the work of Labov on social stratification. Blas Arroyo reflects on language and politics. Using excerpts from authentic political speeches and interviews, the author investigates the linguistic strategies politicians use to persuade and manipulate the public. Escobar, del Puy Ciriza, and Holguín-Mendoza discuss the relationship between language and identity. The authors explore a number of interesting aspects of sociolinguistics: linguistic variation, the social construction of meaning, social networks and communities of practice, sociolinguistic expression of identity, construction of sociolinguistic identity, language contact, and code-switching. Bustamonte-López offers a fascinating discussion on language and immigration. Focusing on Spain and the United States, the author examines attitudes toward immigrants as expressed in public blogs and webpages. She concludes with a discussion of the linguistic features associated with immigration and language contact. García Tesoro discusses the relationship between language and education in the Spanish-speaking world. She compares traditional instruction with its focus on the structural aspects of language with more recent communicative approaches. The author then delineates the tension between a standard Spanish and varieties of Spanish as well as indigenous languages.

Part 4, "*Lengua y comunicación*," contains two chapters. Hernández Flores demonstrates how the media, in addition to transmitting information, are a central figure in the creation, confirmation, and redefinition of ideologies. It is in this sense that the media form part of—together with political, economic, religious, social, and artistic groups—an elite group of our society. The author argues for the use of CDA as a theoretical framework to investigate the use of the media to propagate and reinforce prejudice and discrimination toward specific groups. In the second chapter, Niño-Murcia elucidates the at times indefinable construct of globalization. In doing so, she differentiates globalization as a process from current discourses on globalization. The author goes on to discuss recent phenomena associated with globalization: deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and call centers. Niño-Murcia concludes with an excellent discussion of the relationship between language and globalization, and Spanish as an international language.

This book is an outstanding resource for undergraduate and graduate students as well as researchers in Spanish linguistics. It offers a clear and comprehensive introduction to the most important areas of research in Spanish pragmatics.

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Marinelli, Patti J. and Lizette Mujica Laughlin. *Puentes: Spanish For Intensive and High-Beginner Courses*. 6th edition. Boston: Heinle, Cengage Learning, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-285-09417-5. Pp. 356 + xviii + 72 (Appendices).

Puentes is a beginning-level Spanish textbook intended for true beginners rather than "high" beginners. As the authors state in the "Preface" to the Annotated Instructor's Edition, these are college students who "have typically studied Spanish for one to three years in high school or middle school. They know more than true beginners, but are not ready to function in an intermediate-level college course." *Puentes*' goal is to help these learners "quickly build upon their knowledge base instead of 'starting over' in a 'beginners' program." For this reason the textbook activities from the very first lesson are given in Spanish, as are the brief cultural readings. Furthermore, new vocabulary is more often than not contextualized in complete sentences, rather than in a long list of single words with English equivalents. For example, the Chapter One vocabulary relating to daily routines is presented by drawings accompanying statements about different family members. So, instead of a list of the infinitives *'trabajar', 'pasar', 'aprender', 'comer', 'conversar', 'estar ocupado', 'asistir', 'tener que estudiar', 'practicar deportes', 'mirar televisión'*, there are statements, such as "*Entre semana mis padres trabajan mucho. Están súper ocupados*", and "*Mis amigos y yo asistimos a clases todos los días.*" Following these drawings and statements are other theme-related activities, also presented in sentences, such as "*Normalmente yo... paso mucho tiempo en las redes sociales. —voy al gimnasio por la mañana / por la tarde. —escucho música / mi iPod.*" English is used for grammar explanations and, parenthetically, to introduce less common vocabulary in activities and readings. Readers who have used previous editions of *Puentes* will find new sections or changes, such as the chapter opener "*A primera vista*", which provides activities that address all the Standards for Foreign Language Learning. The "*¡Vamos a repasar!*" section at the end of the chapters reviews material introduced in that chapter and also recycles important vocabulary and structures from previous chapters. In this latest edition, audio recordings have been added for all "*Vocabulario temático*" sections.

As regards its overall organization, *Puentes* is divided into a preliminary lesson plus nine chapters. The preliminary lesson covers some basic, high-frequency vocabulary—like numbers, the alphabet, and objects typically found in the classroom; gender and number of nouns; the definite and indefinite articles; and a short list of functional language—classroom instructions such as "*Abran el libro en la página . . .*" and student utterances such as "*Más despacio, por favor.*" Each of the nine chapters revolves around a theme, such as family, travel, food, student life, shopping, free time, and celebrations. Each chapter also has sections devoted to the chapter theme vocabulary, grammar lessons, culture, and an optional section at the end that allows for further practice with culture—a country focus, speaking, and review of the chapter material. These materials are grouped in either two (in odd-numbered chapters) or three (in even-numbered chapters) steps ("*Pasos*") that build on the theme, with each step consisting of thematic vocabulary and functional language, and grammar. Chapter Three, for example, which studies the family, begins with an overview of social media, with its connections to keeping in contact with family. This leads to vocabulary used to describe relatives and people in general (physical and personality traits), as well as one's home and furniture. To support conversation related to these topics, the grammar lessons presented cover such elements as '*ser*' and '*estar*,' the form and placement of adjectives, comparative and superlative forms, and reflexive verbs. All these

lessons very appropriately assist in creating conversations that discuss and describe family and friends and their daily routines. Additionally, some grammar lessons for each chapter are placed at the back of the book, making it less disruptive for the class if the instructor omits certain grammar points for lack of time or due to the skills level of the class. For example, the "*Gramática suplementaria*" for Chapter Three, i.e., the past participle, also ties in with the themes of discussing and describing family and routines. The lesson points out how the past participle can function as an adjective, and then gives a number of examples and activities that show this in the context of the family and routines. The first activity, completing sentences, includes such examples as "*Mamá está (preocupar). El autobús llega en diez minutos y los niños todavía no están (vestir).*"

Typical activities throughout *Puentes* include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, question/answer, and creating dialogues or stories with obligatory prompts. The fill-in-the-blank activities are contextualized, with explanatory information given in the instructions. For example, in Chapter Seven, activity 7-39 "*La luna de miel de René y Rita*", is in the form of a blog. Instructions tell the student to read the information that Rita wrote in her blog to describe her honeymoon, and then to complete the sentences with the verb in parentheses in the preterite or imperfect, according to the context. In activity 7-41 "*Cuéntame...*", students are instructed to write brief stories for each of three color drawings depicting different scenes of outdoor activities, each with a specific conflict—a bicycle accident, an encounter with an extraterrestrial during a picnic, and sighting a shark while fishing from a boat. Each situation provides several prompts which trigger either preterite or imperfect verb tenses. The prompts for the bicycle accident, for example, are "*la estación, el tiempo, qué hacía José, qué interrumpió la acción, descripción de la chica, qué pasó después.*" Chapters end with the "*Un paso más*" section, consisting of a country overview, paired activities for speaking and listening comprehension practice, an episode of the video story that is ongoing throughout the textbook, and finally the review of chapter grammar, theme and vocabulary. In Chapter Seven, the country overview features Costa Rica, including a video and short readings on the civil war of 1948, National Ox Cart Driver Day, and the different species of turtles that nest on both shores of Costa Rica. Following the readings is an exercise that checks reading comprehension and asks students to provide comparative information about the United States, such as in the sentence that compares the civil wars of both countries and what was abolished as a result of each war. The next activity, "*¡Vamos a hablar!*" has students take turns reading a text to a partner that the partner is not to look at. The listening partner must complete a summary of what he or she has just heard.

i has many positive features. The connections among chapter themes, vocabulary, and grammar are logical and conducive to students' being able to create and communicate personally in the language. Grammar explanations are clear and helpful and include explanations of linguistic concepts, such as agreement, conjugation, and verb stems, all of which some textbooks assume students understand. Activities are always contextualized, so that students, at every step of the way, see how a particular lesson is actually applied. Very short cultural readings throughout the chapters provide further reading practice without being overwhelming and also generate interest in and curiosity about Hispanic culture. Finally, the physical characteristics of the textbook are appealing. Bright colors and drawings provide enough detail to convey necessary information but without causing any unnecessary distraction. This applies to the colors and icons that communicate activity

types or parts of the chapters. The icons are easily recognizable, being few in number and visible without getting in the way of the work at hand. At the same time, I do wish there were a legend at the front of the book that interpreted the icons. The layout of the chapters is easy to follow and not cluttered with too many side boxes. I would happily adopt this textbook for a high-beginner or intensive course.

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Publisher's Response

I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to Professor Day's review of *Puentes, Sixth Edition*. I would like to thank Professor Day for his thoughtful and thorough review of this textbook. As he states in his review, *Puentes* was designed with the high beginner student in mind. To that end, I would like to point out the book's unique power pacing: the first several chapters cover grammar points that these students have already been exposed to in a more condensed way (*gustar*, regular/irregular/stem-changing/reflexive present-tense verbs, comparatives and superlatives, etc.), while the second half presents new material in more manageable chunks (verbs like gustar, the preterite, the imperfect, and the subjunctive). This pacing encourages students to move from mere familiarity with material they have studied before to mastery of both familiar and unfamiliar material.

In addition to what Professor Day astutely notes regarding the integration of the 5 Cs and varied readings in "A primera vista", the even-numbered chapters feature videos that serve as a model for a project that students create and ideally post to the iLrn multi-media forum, "Share it." I would also like to point out that the "*Vamos a hablar*" part of the "*Un paso más*" section at the end of the chapter is designed as an information gap activity, which requires students to produce key vocabulary and grammar, in addition to honing crucial skills, such as deductive reasoning and circumlocution,.

I would also like to mention that there is a full suite of student and instructor ancillaries that accompany this textbook. Of note is the iLrn: Heinle Learning Center, which provides a wealth of activities that address a wide variety of skills, including pronunciation, listening comprehension, and reading comprehension, as well as online communication and community-building tools.

Professor Day's suggestion to add an icon key is an excellent idea and will be taken into account for the next edition. Cengage Learning would like to thank *The NECTFL Review* and Professor Day for his positive review of *Puentes*.

Heather Bradley Cole
Cengage Learning

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Our mailing list of 14,000 names throughout the region and the country represents the most active, dynamic, and professional educators in the field. These are the individuals who seek out opportunities for continued growth in their teaching, administration, research, and personal knowledge. The mailing list is available for purchase to those with a demonstrated interest in and commitment to foreign language education. It will not be sold to anyone outside the field. If you wish to present information about your program, district, or materials, please contact us at 717-245-1977 or at **nectfl@dickinson.edu** for further information.