

NECTFL ***REVIEW***

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



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

Number 76

September 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.



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- ➔ **Commitment to sustaining the profession**
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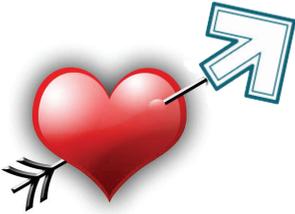
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Join us in New York



NECTFL 2016
February 11–13, 2016
New York Hilton Midtown

**Developing Intercultural Competence
through World Languages**

Click below for the detailed

[Call for Proposals](#)

Deadline September 30



From the 2016 Conference Chair



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Greetings all and welcome to the 2015-16 academic year! I am deeply honored to have been selected to serve as your 2016 NECTFL Chair and look forward to our work together over the upcoming year to promote and advance world language education. I am a long-standing world language educator, having taught French in the K-16 settings and am now a Professor of Education at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia where I have the wonderful opportunity to work with teachers along the full continuum of their professional development.

Over the past several months, the NECTFL Board has been working diligently to update and build its offerings to the region's WL educators. During this time we have maintained our deep commitment as a professional organization that liaises with and supports the outstanding efforts of ACTFL while most specifically serving all levels of language teaching and learning across the Northeast region and beyond. In its 62nd year, NECTFL remains in full swing and is actively planning a dynamic conference in New York City on 11 -13 February 2016 at the Hilton Midtown. Our aim is to bring together all those involved in the teaching and promotion of world languages, including researchers and educators at every level of world language education across the northeast region and beyond, for a dynamic exchange of expertise and knowledge. The 2016 NECTFL theme is *Developing Intercultural Competence through World Languages*.

The conference program will provide multiple opportunities for collegial interchange focused on developing intercultural competence, a topic critical to educators of world languages, as well as other disciplines, and to the development of twenty-first century skills. The program will include invited and peer-reviewed sessions, pre-conference workshops, and special presentations by distinguished speakers. New to the conference this year is an approach that clusters presentations and accompanying discussions around a series of related strand sessions based on small group presentations and supported by interactive discussions around a range of strand topics that will help WL educators focus on their deepening knowledge of intercultural competence and intercultural understanding for classroom practice and curriculum development. Participants will be encouraged to follow one of the six strand groups for focused discussions: (A) Exploring the Nature and Scope of Intercultural Competence; (B) Developing Global Citizenship through WLs; (C) Professional Development of Teachers for Developing Intercultural Competence; (D) Schools and their Broader Communities: Intercultural Competence; (E) Intercultural Competence in Teaching and Learning, and Curriculum Development; and (F) The Role of Technology in Developing Intercultural Competence. Board members, joined by educators from across our region, will serve as strand leaders, and some pre-conference webinars are in the works to jump start our discussion. If you are interested in serving as a strand co-leader or presenting a pre-conference workshop or conference session, please visit our website at nectfl.org for more details. The priority deadline for proposals is 30 September.

This year, we experienced both a change in NECTFL administrative leadership and a new headquarters location. In June, Rebecca Kline, NECTFL Executive Director for twenty

years, retired as many family needs came to the forefront for her. We are so grateful to her for her leadership, her expertise, and her continued commitment to the organization and our profession. We wish her all the very best and extend our deepest thanks to her for her professional leadership, insightful and creative work, and her vision for NECTFL's vibrant presence in the Northeast region. We will honor her in a special way at the 2016 Conference, so be sure to look for forthcoming details about this on our web page as we get closer to the conference.

As we open NECTFL's next chapter, we welcome John Carlino as Interim Executive Director and a new location for our headquarters in Buffalo, NY. John brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise with him from many years as a classroom teacher of German and administrative leadership experience in NYSAFLT, most recently as the organization's executive director. John is working diligently with me and the NECTFL Board on planning the 2016 conference. We are most fortunate to have been able to find a wonderful Interim Executive Director in John Carlino. He brings enthusiasm and genuine commitment to this position, as well as a deep understanding of and dedication to our profession and our region. We are thrilled to have him on board with us in this capacity.

As John mentioned in his message to you, our Northeast region is unique. We are a highly diverse region that extends from the mid-Atlantic up the northeast "corridor" of our nation, touches the Canadian border, and represents both large metropolitan areas and areas that are not so heavily populated. It is a region of 14 states where well over a hundred languages and cultures are represented in the homes of the families and students we serve, a region of strong academics at all levels. We are extremely grateful to our wonderful state associations who work actively with us to connect us as world language professionals across the region. They also help us by selecting outstanding teacher leaders for our Mead Fellows program, and identify candidates for NECTFL Teacher of the Year. Clearly, our state associations play a critical role in our outreach to all areas of the region, and we are grateful for all you do. We look forward to seeing many of you at our state conferences over the upcoming year.

We are also most grateful for the ongoing expertise of Bob Terry, Editor of our *NECTFL Review*. Our journal has become highly recognized as a solid research publication venue and is now listed in university data bases for ready research access. You should share our articles with colleagues, and we invite you to submit your own research for publication. This year, we will particularly be looking for articles that address aspects of intercultural competence, our 2016 NECTFL theme.

On behalf of the NECTFL Board of Directors, I extend deepest thanks to you all for your dedication to NECTFL and your support of our profession. We need to work together to ensure world language study and increase global competencies for all students and advocate for world language sustainability. We invite you to connect actively with your profession and NECTFL this year. Do plan to join us in NYC for a most special professional gathering, one that will engage and inspire you in multiple ways in the year to come! Please visit our web site often for updates—see you at NECTFL 2016 in NYC!!

With sincere regards and deepest thanks to all my WL colleagues,

Becky Fox
2016 NECTFL Chair

Meet the Interim Executive Director of NECTFL ---

John D. Carlino is currently the Executive Director of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSAFLT) and the LOTE Curriculum Learning Specialist in the Kenmore –Tonawanda (NY) UFSD. He has taught German, including IB, at Kenmore West High School since 1995. Prior to that, he taught French for six years. John studied in France for two years, receiving his B.A. from SUNY Buffalo in French and Teacher Education, and his M.Ed., also from SUNY Buffalo, in TESOL.

John has been a member of NYSAFLT since 1988. Beginning as a volunteer on the Annual Meeting Planning Committee in 1996, he also served on the Technology and Membership Committees. John was Treasurer of NYSAFLT for two terms and was elected to the position of Second Vice President for 2004, but resigned to accept the position of Executive Director.

At the regional and national level, John has served on the board of directors of NECTFL, and is currently serving on the board of directors JNCL-NCLIS and the NFMLTA (Modern Language Journal). He served three years on the AP College Board German CDAC Committee, and was published in the AP Vertical Teams® Guide for World Languages and Cultures (2009). He has served as chair of the AATG and ACTFL and NFMLTA nominating committees. John is also active in the Western New York chapter of AATG and is currently serving as treasurer.

At his full-time job, John is active with the Kenmore Teachers' Association, serves on the district Mentor Policy Board, and as advisor to the Kenmore West German Club and the Kenmore West Gay-Straight Alliance.

From the Interim Executive Director



Although I have only been in this position two short months, first and foremost I must say that that the transition has been smooth and the welcome warm. I owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to Becky Kline, not only on behalf of the association for her 20 years of service, but personally, for all that she did to assist in the transition.

It is my distinct pleasure to now be able work with so many colleagues from across our region, many of whom I have come to know over the years in my role as Executive Director of NYSAFLT. The northeast region is unique in its history and level of engagement and is home to many of the most active and involved state associations in our country. The leaders of our state associations play a critical role in the Northeast Conference. Without them, our conference would not be the dynamic, professional hub of networking, learning, and exchanging of ideas that it has evolved to be over the 62 years of its existence.

I'm very much looking forward to my work as Interim Executive Director and seeing this amazing association through its transition to a strong and vibrant future, as well as seeing and working with everyone in person at our conference in New York City!

John D. Carlino
Interim Executive Director

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info@nectfl.org

Guidelines for the 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 clear guidelines for writing an abstract.
5. Articles will not be accepted if they appear to endorse or sell software, hardware, books, or any other products.
6. **Do not include the names of the author(s) of the article on the first page of the actual text.**
 - a. On the first page of the submitted article, authors should provide the following information:
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 - 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.
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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*):
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 - 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 $\frac{1}{4}$ [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.
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- 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.
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- 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.
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 - 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!

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The Effectiveness of Courses Abroad as a Professional Development Model for Foreign Language Teachers

Jean W. LeLoup, *United States Air Force Academy*
Barbara Schmidt-Rinehart, *Ashland University*

Abstract

This article details a study conducted to determine the effectiveness of a professional development model for inservice Spanish teachers. Subjects were participants in intensive summer immersion programs abroad that included a rigorous methodology course advocating sound pedagogical models for lessons and stressed 90%+ target language use in the foreign language classroom. Subjects responded to an online survey requesting demographic data and provided Likert scale ratings on the perceived utility and effectiveness of program goals from their personal perspective. Results confirmed an overwhelmingly positive professional experience for participants and yielded concrete data supporting the goals of the program.¹

Introduction

What first inspires most foreign language (FL) teachers to follow their career path is their love of the language and culture. During their years of preparation, many engage in some form of study abroad and/or immersion experiences and

Jean W. LeLoup (PhD, The Ohio State University) is Professor of Spanish in the Department of Foreign Languages at the United States Air Force Academy (USAEA). She is Professor Emerita of Spanish from the State University of New York College at Cortland where she taught courses in language acquisition, methodology, and Spanish. Dr. LeLoup is co-moderator of FLTEACH, the Foreign Language Teaching Forum e-mail list, with Dr. Robert Ponterio. Her research interests include the incorporation of culture in foreign language instruction, the use of target language in the classroom, and the use of the *voceo*.

Barbara Schmidt-Rinehart (PhD, The Ohio State University) is Professor of Spanish in the Department of Foreign Languages at Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio. She teaches courses in Spanish, Spanish linguistics, and foreign language methodology and is the director of the "A.U. in Costa Rica program." Her research interests include professional development for foreign language teachers, the homestay component of study abroad, and the use of the *voceo*.

interaction with native speakers (NSs) and their respective culture (IIE, 2014; Isabelli, 2004). Nearly every university certification program for preservice FL teachers offers either its own array of study abroad options for students or, at the very least a direct path to other options offered by affiliated institutions or organizations (Pearson, Fonseca-Greber, & Foell, 2006). In addition, the collaboration between the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) resulted in the expectation for FL teacher education candidates to obtain an oral proficiency rating of Advanced-low in the language(s) they will teach as one measure of their certification potential (Glisan, Swender, & Surface, 2013).² This NCATE and ACTFL mandate has thus been a strong impetus for these preservice teachers to seek out and participate in study abroad experiences in order to reach this threshold proficiency level (Swender, 2003). Upon entering the profession, however, these same FL teachers are challenged with finding their way back to their original passions. As they move from being preservice teachers to inservice status, they are faced with personal and professional obstacles to maintaining their skills and knowledge (Glisan, 2005; Watzke, 2007). Professional development experiences that are tailored to the multi-faceted demands of being a FL teacher are not as readily available as opportunities for teachers in other subject matters (Berniz, 2007; Campbell, 2009; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson,

The Advanced level of target language (TL) proficiency, the refined classroom strategies, the use of authentic materials, the integration of technology, and the in-depth knowledge of cultural products, practices, and perspectives necessary to teach in this communicative era present a pedagogical sophistication that is unique to FL teachers.

& Orphanos, 2009; Potowski & Carreira, 2004; Schmidt-Rinehart, 2001). The Advanced level of target language (TL) proficiency, the refined classroom strategies, the use of authentic materials, the integration of technology, and the in-depth knowledge of cultural products, practices, and perspectives necessary to teach in this communicative era present a pedagogical sophistication that is unique to FL teachers. Professional development for this teacher cadre must be different. It must involve contact with the language and culture, and it must include an opportunity to hone lesson plans for their particular curricula, purposes, and students and to interact with other FL teachers (Velez-Rendon, 2002; Watzke, 2007).

The *Connecting Cultures* program was designed to meet these specific needs. In this program, teachers are given a chance to be study abroad students again while focusing on the development of materials for their own classrooms. The present study was conceived in order to determine the effectiveness of this type of professional development model. The research results presented here directly derive from survey responses contributed by participants in all the iterations of the *Connecting Cultures* program over a span of two decades. Does this type of professional development model indeed succeed in providing an optimal learning environment for FL teachers—one in which they can improve and/or further develop their linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical content knowledge, as well as forge lasting collaborative relationships with FL colleagues?

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Professional Development – The Need

Foreign language teachers find themselves in a very singular position: their content area is also their delivery mechanism. In essence, for FL teachers, “the medium is the message” (Bernhardt & Hammadou, 1987, p. 301). Because their professional circumstance is unique, FL educators desire and require professional development that is specific to their particular career needs. All too often, however, these teachers are subjected to generic forms of professional development that neither relate to their specialized context nor provide much educational benefit to them (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). This is lamentable in the present day when the research base on professional development clearly indicates which components are most likely to form the basis for achieving effective and satisfactory growth in one’s profession (Kesner, 2005; Klingner, 2004). Indeed, in light of the differing requisites of this body of FL professionals, researchers have rejected a “one size fits all” approach to professional development that would attempt to satisfy its requirements in the most generic sense (Berniz, 2007; Klingner, 2004; Schulz, 2007; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1997). Instead, they call for carefully planned and orchestrated professional development opportunities that will improve the pedagogical and linguistic capabilities of FL teachers and will concomitantly target deficiencies extant among these practitioners (Amengual-Pizarro, 2007; Campbell, 2009; Hedgcock, 2002; Lacorte & Krastel, 2002; Potowski, 2003; Potowski & Carreira, 2004).

Because their professional circumstance is unique, FL educators desire and require professional development that is specific to their particular career needs.

An examination of the FL professional development research base reveals several major areas of emphasis and/or concern for FL teachers, both inservice and preservice. These areas include language proficiency, expertise in FL instructional methodology, TL cultural knowledge, and maintenance of professional relationships (Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010; Amengual-Pizarro, 2007; Ellison, 2006; Glisan, 2005; González Pino & Pino, 2009; McDonough, 2006; Oxford, 2008; Velez-Rendon, 2002). At all stages of their career, FL teachers acknowledge the importance of achieving and maintaining a strong linguistic proficiency in the TL they teach (Amengual-Pizarro, 2007; Bell, 2005; Oxford, 2008; Swanson, 2012). Nevertheless, this goal appears to be elusive for many FL teachers for a number of reasons. During preservice training, not all FL teacher candidates take advantage of opportunities to study abroad or, if they do, they may engage in minimal or short-term experiences rather than semester or year-long immersion periods (Oxford, 2008). Thus these preservice teachers miss out on significant interaction with NSs of the TL (Antón, 2011). Proficiency in the TL is sometimes not stressed in teacher training programs. As a consequence, the students do not engage in the interactive practice nor acquire the ability to generate the TL “patter” necessary to communicate successfully with their future students and conduct an immersion atmosphere in their classroom (Amengual-Pizarro, 2007; Bell, 2005; LeLoup, Ponterio, & Warford, 2013). Not having a strong TL base when one is expected to conduct a classroom with 90% TL use creates a

feeling of inadequacy in teachers and reduces their sense of efficacy. This, in turn, can lead to greatly reduced TL use in the classroom, dissatisfaction with one's role as a FL teacher, and even eventual abandonment of the profession (Amengual-Pizarro, 2007; Swanson, 2010; 2012).

The study abroad setting has the potential to provide the ideal language learning environment for FL teachers. The combination of a carefully designed program to meet the needs of the teachers and the motivation of professionals seeking to further their skills makes the study abroad setting a powerful one. No longer young undergraduate students with limited language skills and unclear goals, the FL teachers are highly motivated to make the most of their time in-country, taking advantage of every opportunity to enhance their language proficiency, interact with the culture, gather authentic materials for their classroom, and learn from their colleagues. They are surrounded by the language and culture 24/7 and have the language skills from the very beginning of their experience to glean cultural knowledge not accessible without L2 proficiency. The homestay provides immediate access to native speaker interlocutors, and specific course assignments lead to focused and increased interaction (Allen & Dupuy, 2012; Allen, 2010; Cadd, 2012; Castañeda & Zirger, 2011; Di Silvio, Donovan, & Malone, 2014; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2010).

Expertise in FL instructional methodology encompasses a sound knowledge of second language acquisition (SLA), a solid basis of FL pedagogy, and skill in classroom management and how FL instruction can assist with this important skill. If FL teachers have little to no grasp of how languages are acquired, they can hardly carry out effective instruction in the classroom (Amengual-Pizarro, 2007; Hedgcock, 2002; Lacorte & Krastel, 2002; McDonough, 2006). This pedagogical content knowledge includes both SLA and language proficiency, and both can certainly change over time. Keeping abreast of current research in the SLA field can increase pedagogical knowledge and improve instructional practice. Improving one's language proficiency—as opposed to suffering from language attrition—can only be seen as a most positive step for any FL instructor. Researchers call for the incorporation of SLA instruction in teacher education programs, familiarization—on the part of all FL practitioners—with language teaching discourse (via regular readings of professional journal articles and like literature), and a recognition of how such content knowledge can influence one's instructional practices (Amengual-Pizarro, 2007; Antón, 2011; Tellez, 2005; Watzke, 2007). The evolving demands of the FL profession require a direct link between scholarship and teaching.

Engaging in action research projects can help practitioners further develop their own personal theories of language teaching, soundly grounded in the extant research base (Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010; Brown, 2009; Contreras-Sanzana & Villalobos-Clavería, 2010; Lacorte & Krastel, 2002; McDonough, 2006). During the initial years of inservice teaching, educators have a strong inclination to teach as they were taught and to fall back on familiar patterns from their

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own language instruction, despite knowledge gained in their teacher education programs (Brown, 2009; Contreras-Sanzana & Villalobos-Clavería, 2010; Lortie, 1975; Watzke, 2007). They tend to follow traditional models that may be outdated and ineffective. Because these initial years are quite formative and set the stage for a predisposition toward professional growth or not, these teachers need to engage in career development that will strengthen their professional maturity in many areas. Such participation could determine their effectiveness, their career satisfaction, and even their continued presence in the field (Potowski, 2003; Watzke, 2007). At the opposite end of the spectrum are the inservice teachers who have spent years in the profession without participating in meaningful professional development and who may be subject to the same criticisms of lagging behind in pedagogical and language content knowledge (Glisan, 2005). Both cohorts of educators—and all those in between—can benefit greatly from a well-planned and germane model of FL professional development.

Difficulty in acquiring, maintaining, and increasing cultural knowledge also presents significant issues for FL teachers. While many FL teachers express satisfaction with their level of TL proficiency (rightly or wrongly), they also admit to a lack of confidence in their cultural knowledge (Swanson, 2012). Omaggio Hadley (2001) lists several reasons for not including culture in one's daily curriculum: lack of time, knowledge, and desire to delve into topics that may touch on affect, an area which some practitioners hesitate to address. Preservice as well as inservice FL teachers, including university professors, appear to be fairly competent at teaching about products and practices of a TL culture. Where they fall short is in the conveyance of the all-important part that is termed perspectives (González Pino & Pino, 2009; LeLoup, Ponterio, and Heller, 2010). Some researchers argue that this problem stems from a dearth of courses on or attention to cultural understanding in FL methods courses in teacher training programs and, as a consequence, call for the inclusion of quality cultural instructional practices in the pedagogical preparation of preservice as well as inservice FL teachers (Ellison, 2006; González Pino & Pino, 2009; Schulz, 2007; Swanson, 2012). As reflected in the Cultures goal area of the National Standards, which are now known as the World-readiness Standards (NSFLEP, 2006, 2015), these perspectives are the underpinnings of cultural artifacts and behaviors and are arguably the most salient, albeit the most challenging, portion of cultural instruction and understanding. Indeed, three of the five goal areas of the National Standards (2006, 2015) deal directly with culture: Cultures (2.1, 2.2), Connections (3.2), and Comparisons (4.2). While it can be demanding and even difficult to teach culture in the second language classroom, because culture is inseparable from language, it must be incorporated as part of TL instruction (Byrd, Hlas, Watzke & Montes Valencia, 2011; Schulz, 2007). A boon to the incorporation of culture is the wealth of authentic materials one can readily find via the Internet and through use of myriad technological resources (Bell, 2005; LeLoup & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2003). Combining this treasure trove of materials available to teachers

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with sound pedagogical practices, the 3 Ps (products, practices, and perspectives) of the national standards can form a sturdy component for language instruction (NSFLEP, 2006, 2015).

Professional connections form a cornerstone of one's career development (Long & LeLoup, 2014). When teachers are actively involved in their own

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professional growth and when they collaborate with colleagues across the field, they advance in their ability to articulate their FL instructional beliefs and practices (Glisan, 2005). Beginning teachers need mentors and colleagues willing and even eager to share their knowledge. Singleton teachers, often isolated in their school districts, benefit from networking connections forged through conference attendance, participation in online forums (e.g., the Foreign Language Teaching Forum or FLTEACH), and involvement in professional organizations such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), the various AATs (American Association of Teachers of X language), and the like (Contreras-Sanzana & Villalobos-Clavería, 2010; Glisan, 2005; LeLoup & Ponterio, 2009; Swanson, 2010). Without these connections and efforts at professional participation, teachers will be hard pressed to stay abreast of professional issues and new initiatives in the field. A teacher truly invested in his or her career cannot remain on the periphery of the profession and expect to be successful (Daie, 1998; Glisan, 2005).

Given these compelling issues in FL professional development, the authors saw a need to develop an effective model of professional development that would address each of these areas to the extent possible for FL educators. Given that overarching arguments against engaging in professional development include the lack of time, money, and opportunities specifically geared toward growth in language and cultural knowledge as well as current pedagogical best practices (Schulz, 2007), the *Connecting Cultures* program was conceived to meet the demands stated above. The present study was designed to measure the effectiveness of the program after several iterations, as perceived by program participants.

Program Description

The *Connecting Cultures* courses abroad span 20 years and cities in three countries: Cuernavaca, Mexico (offered four times), Mérida, Venezuela (offered one time), and San José, Costa Rica (offered five times). The locations were chosen based on contacts through the instructors' respective and original university study abroad offices and were held at intensive language schools in Mexico and Venezuela and at a private university in Costa Rica. A total of 110 teachers participated in the courses. All participants were U.S. teachers of Spanish and received graduate credit for the course. The format of the program was a two-week in-country course with an online extension added beginning in 2001 when the technology became available.

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The program was designed to address four primary goals, ones that cover key areas of professional development specific to the needs of foreign language teachers: improve language skills, refine instructional practices, enhance cultural knowledge, and connect with colleagues (see *The Need*: literature review above). The immersion setting provided the ideal environment to improve language skills. The participants signed a language pledge upon arrival, promising to maintain all interaction in Spanish throughout the in-country portion of the course.

The homestay afforded opportunities for both language and cultural development. Throughout the two weeks, participants were encouraged to interact with their family as an extension of the academic work. They not only practiced their language skills, but also used them as informants for cultural “homework.” Participants were often asked to consult with their families in order to report back to the class. In later iterations of the program, participants used country-specific culture books such as *Culture Shock! Costa Rica: A Guide to Customs and Etiquette* (Wallerstein, 2011) and were assigned to solicit answers from their family for culture quizzes. The national standards’ paradigm of the 3 Ps was incorporated in discussions and lessons throughout the program. Cultural knowledge was further enhanced by excursions specifically designed and incorporated to address the goal of professional cultural development. The host schools worked closely with the program directors to plan pedagogically-based excursions (e.g., a visit to local schools, a lecture and tour of the national legislative assembly, excursions to national monuments), and weekend opportunities to explore the country.

The daily course work was two-tiered: two hours of language class with a teacher native to the TL country where the course was conducted and a two-hour pedagogy class taught (in Spanish) by the U.S. instructors. The language class varied according to the country and host institution. Each site, however, specialized in intensive language instruction and its teachers were trained in needs-based, individualized instruction. Students were assessed individually and then grouped with others of similar language ability, allowing the participants to work on specific concepts to improve their own proficiency. The host institution teachers provided the materials and curriculum for the Spanish language class.

The methods component focused on the use of authentic materials and technology to meet the National Standards (NSFLEP, 2006, 2015). Participants developed lessons based on models of instruction supported by sound pedagogical practices and SLA research (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 2002; Shrum & Glisan, 2010). This component served as a mini-methods course in which students were presented with prototypes for developing lessons in comprehension, interpersonal communication, and language structures. Each lesson needed to incorporate both technology and culture. The two-week program included workshop days in which the participants had opportunities to consult with the instructors, collaborate with other students, and consider exemplary lessons from previous courses. The lessons that were in-progress were presented on the last days of class—again, to have the benefit of feedback from fellow students and the instructors. Completed lessons were due once the students returned to the U.S.

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Starting in 2001, the course continued online after the participants returned home. They engaged in asynchronous discussions of professional readings targeting the goal areas of the course. The professional readings consisted of either a content-related text (e.g., Moran, 2001) and/or articles from professional journals selected by the instructors. Each student was responsible for being a discussion leader for selected chapters or articles, and others responded to each leader's post a requisite number of times. Students also read an additional article germane to the course's focus. Furthermore, students shared the materials they were required to develop during the course (e.g., lesson plans, journal article critiques). This online continuation was accompanied by an increase in the number of credit hours possible for the course (from three to six semester hours).

Procedures and Instrumentation

The study was designed to ascertain the perceived effectiveness of the *Connecting Cultures* professional development model in the areas of

1. improving language skills,
2. refining instructional practices,
3. enhancing cultural knowledge, and
4. connecting with colleagues.

Before conducting the investigation, the two researchers sought approval from their respective universities to undertake a joint research project. Institutional Review Board (IRB) training was completed by both researchers, IRB approval was granted by both universities, and the respective institutions both signed a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement (CRADA).

Upon approval of the project, a survey³ was designed to solicit demographic information and the participants' evaluation of the effectiveness of the program goals, providing both quantitative and qualitative data. The researchers consulted the director of one institution's Center for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) for assistance in survey construction. The survey was developed through the Survey Monkey platform, and participation was solicited via e-mail. The first part of the 20-item survey required the respondents to identify the program in which they participated and to complete a profile regarding their own travel experience, academic background, and teaching experience. The remaining questions were formulated as Likert-type items within scales that focused on each goal area and addressed related subcategories. The respondents evaluated the utility and effectiveness of the program goals through these Likert item ratings. In addition, several questions offered the opportunity to expand on participants' initial ratings. At the end of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to write recommendations and suggestions for the program. The open period for survey response covered a four-month period; all possible subjects were sent multiple e-mail reminders soliciting their participation and assuring them of the anonymity of their responses.

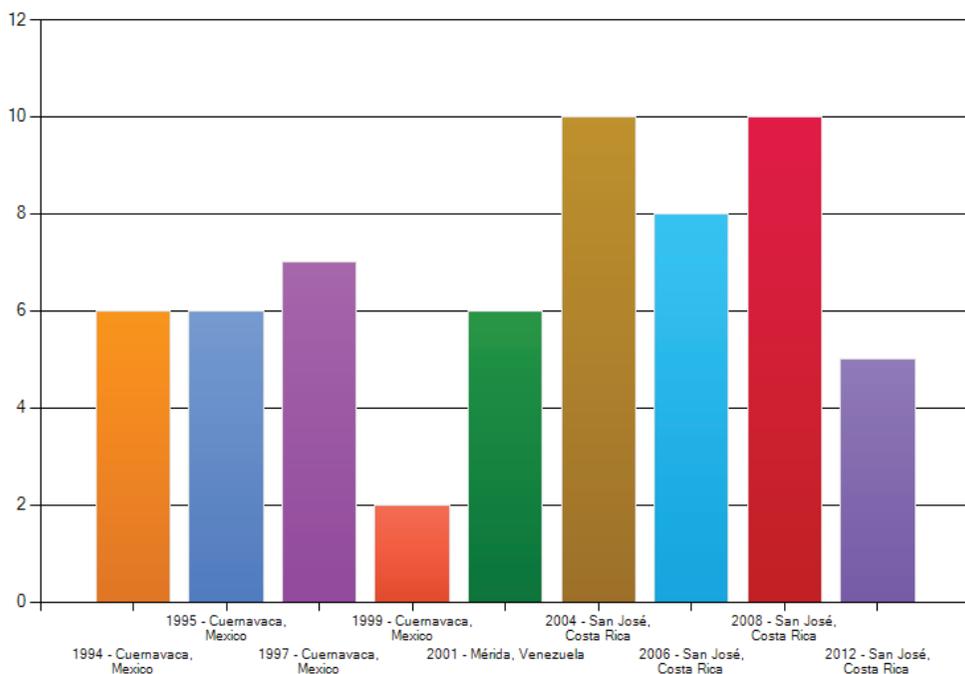
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Demographic Information

All 110 participants in the *Connecting Cultures* programs were eligible for inclusion in the study. The total number of potential respondents was actually 98 as several had repeated the program. Because the programs spanned 20 years, securing active e-mails or addresses for all participants proved challenging. Researchers made use of several vehicles to garner active e-mails, including original demographic information gathered at the time of the course and social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn. The final number of “successful” e-mails sent (i.e., no bounces received indicating an invalid e-mail address) was 68. The final total of respondents was 49, yielding a response rate of 72%. Figure 1 shows the country and year of each of the 49 responders.

Figure 1. Program Identification

PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION - Please indicate the Connecting Cultures program in which you participated. (check all that apply):



As seven teachers participated multiple times, the tallies shown in Figure 1 do not always sum to anticipated totals. Four teachers participated in three different programs and three teachers repeated the program twice. The Mexico programs from 1994-1999 yielded 21 responses, the Venezuela program (2001) generated six responses, and the Costa Rica programs (2004-2012) garnered 33 responses.

The information gleaned from the demographic information on the survey provides a professional profile of these language teachers. The majority of the teachers

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(67%) reported that they were at the beginning of their teaching careers when they took the course (one to five years of experience). Eighteen percent had been teaching six to ten years, two percent eleven to fifteen years, nine percent fifteen to twenty years, and four percent 25-30 years. When probed about their international travel experience acquired before the *Connecting Cultures* program, the majority reported that they had spent a semester or more abroad. Others indicated short-term experiences and a few had never been out of the country. Table 1 depicts the length and type of international travel before and after the program.

Table 1. International Travel Experience Before and After Participating in the *Connecting Cultures* Program

Length	0	2 wks Prof dev	2 wks with students (1-multiple)	3-4 wks (1)	Multiple short-term (3-4 wks/ea)	Semester or more	NS (travel or lived abroad with family)	2-wk vacation (1-multiple)
Before	4%	4%	0	7%	16%	65%	4%	0
After	24.5%	12%	16.5%	2%	16.5%	2%	0	26.5%

The data revealed a contrast regarding travel after the *Connecting Cultures* experience. The most common responses regarding length of time out of the country described multiple one- to two-week experiences and no further travel. Two new categories emerged: those of vacation travel and teacher-led student trips. The respondents identified the primary reason for their travel as pleasure/vacation as well as professional/personal development and academic credit (see Table 2).

Table 2. Primary reasons for travel abroad since *Connecting Cultures* program

Pleasure/vacation	75%
Professional Development	61.1%
Academic credit or advancement	33.3%
Personal development	44.4%

The survey respondents represent a sampling from each of the *Connecting Cultures* programs offered over the years and in different locations. They included teachers at all stages of their careers, with beginning teachers representing the highest percentage of participants. Amount of time in-country varied greatly as did their reasons for traveling. The response rate and representative participation from the various iterations of the course generated a stable data set through which researchers were able to assess the effectiveness of the different components of the program model.

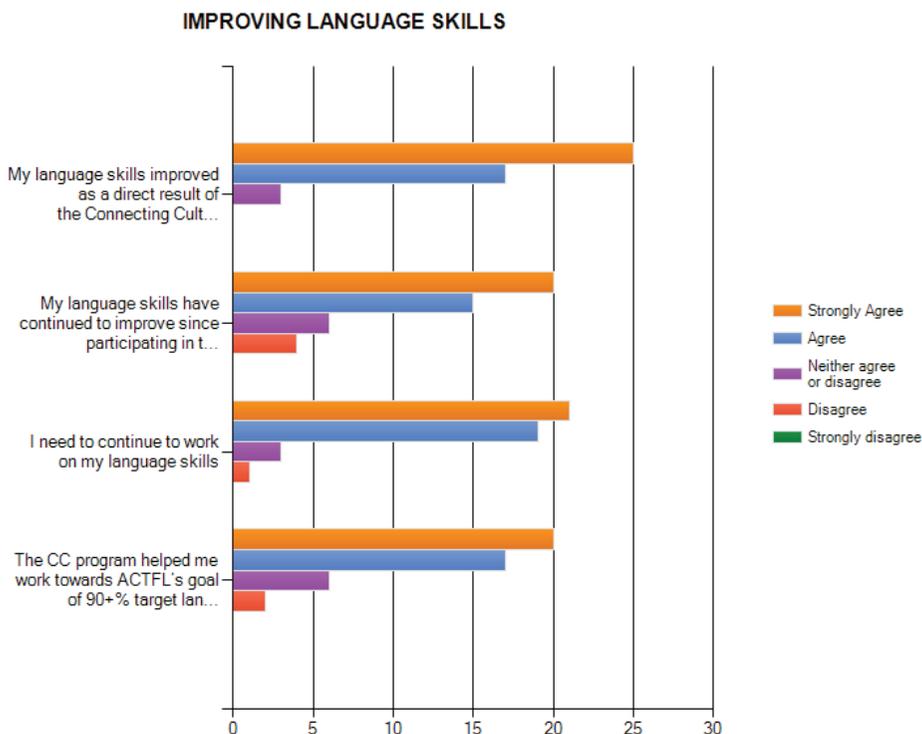
Results and Discussion

In order to tap participants’ opinions on the effectiveness of the *Connecting Cultures* program for professional development in the aforementioned four

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goal areas, Likert-type scales were created with varying numbers of items for each primary goal of the program. The first goal, improving language skills, contained four individual Likert items concerning language skill improvement during and after the program as well as increased TL use in classroom discourse since participating in the program. The opinion of participants vis-à-vis the effectiveness of the program for this goal area was overwhelmingly affirmative. Response percentages in the combined categories of Strongly Agree and Agree for each Likert item in this scale ranged from a high of 92.9% to a low of 80.9%, still quite positive. Figure 2 shows the responses for each item involving language skill improvement.

Figure 2. Improving Language Skills



Clearly, participants in the program felt their language skills not only improved during the program but continued to do so after, in some cases well after, completion of the course. Respondent comments underscore this:

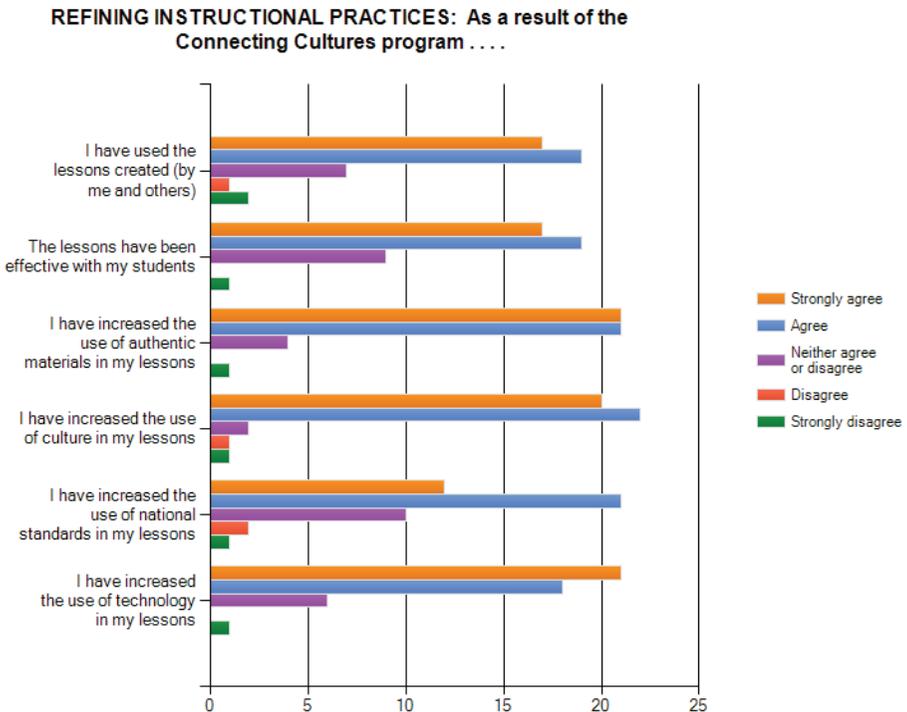
Being in the country where the language is spoken is the best way to improve one's language skills. The course being taught in the language, and the contract to speak only in Spanish while in the country were extremely beneficial.

The program has encouraged me to continue travel in order to put my language skills to true, realistic use. It has also encouraged me to continue to find other ways to get practice as I should use more TL in my classroom.

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The second goal, refining instructional practices, dealt with several subtopics. Subjects were first asked to evaluate the use of lessons they created during the course. They were then asked to comment on the role that culture presentations, the use of authentic materials, and attention to the national standards played as a direct result of the instruction received during the program. Finally, they were also asked to indicate if there was an increase in the use of technology after taking the course. Even though this was not a specific concentration of the initial offerings of the *Connecting Cultures* program, participants reported an increase in technology use (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree categories totaling 83.7%). This certainly may be due to a general increased availability of technology to teachers over the time period of the study. The highest percentages were reflected in items concerning the incorporation of more culture and authentic materials in regular classroom instruction (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree totaling 90.7% in both cases). This was a felicitous finding as it is a major objective of the program. The remaining lower scoring categories involved use of lessons created during the course (responses of 76.7% for both lesson use and effectiveness). While this is still a positive response, this percentage may be due to participants creating lessons “in a vacuum” during the in-country portion of the course. In other words, the subjects created lessons with authentic materials and directed toward the culture of the country in which the course was held, not necessarily aligning these lessons with their own curriculum back in the U.S. Figure 3 shows the distribution of responses on this dimension of the study.

Figure 3. Refining Instructional Practices



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The upturn in the incorporation of culture and the increased use of authentic materials in FL lessons are excellent benefits to students and a direct result of in-country immersion programs where participants are constantly surrounded by the TL culture and have ready access to myriad authentic materials of all types. Expanded survey responses corroborated these benefits:

That course was probably the best from which I had developed a good base, as well as the knowledge to teach foreign language in a way that was more beneficial to my students. I continue to use a lot of the methods that I learned in that class!

The courses provided for me a paradigm shift in thinking and creation of activities. It isn't that I continually use the original lesson, but elements in lessons are consistent.

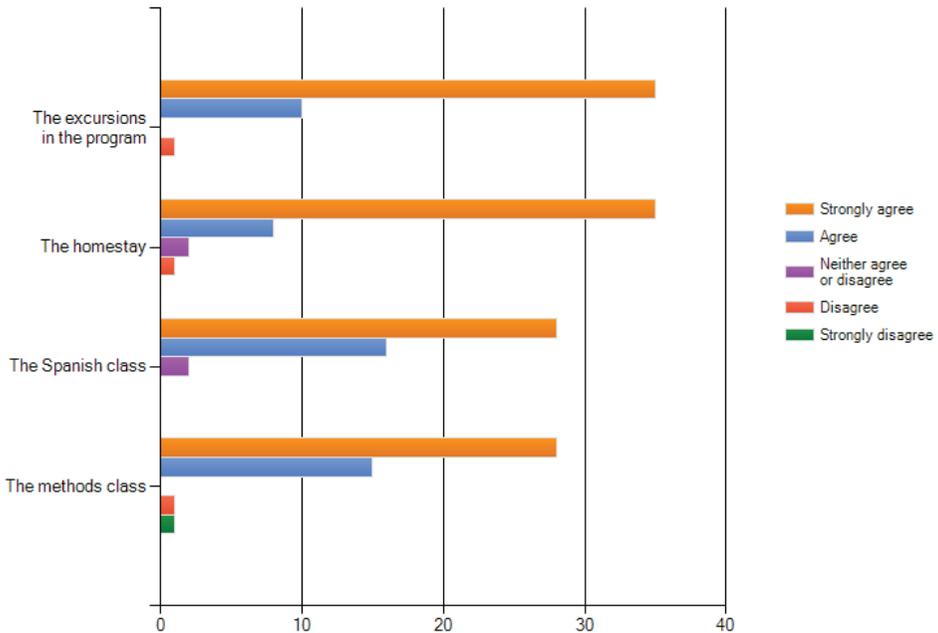
As enhanced cultural knowledge is a concomitant result of time spent in-country, it was also important to pinpoint the most successful vehicles for achieving this goal. Subjects were asked to proffer their opinions on each of the following main components of the *Connecting Cultures* program in effecting this goal: the culture-based excursions, the homestay, the Spanish class with a NS teacher, and the FL methodology course. Here, results offered the overall strongest affirmation and support of the program as an effective professional development model. Responses on all four items in this scale ranged from a high of 97.7% (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree) for both the excursion and Spanish class components to 95% (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree) for the homestay to 93% (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree) for the FL methodology class. The excursions were deemed the most effective in meeting this goal area, and indeed great effort and planning combined to ensure that all excursions were tied directly to the Spanish classes as well as the FL methodology course. In this way, subjects were exposed multiple times to related cultural artifacts, behaviors, and perspectives and thus could make connections between and among them. The homestay was also rated high, although during the initial offering of the course in Costa Rica, subjects were erroneously placed in homes with several other English-speaking students, resulting in difficulties with the language pledge. This situation was remedied for all subsequent iterations of the course in that country. While most subjects found the Spanish classes quite effective, some participants were NSs of Spanish and as such did not value these lessons as much. Figure 4 on the next page illustrates the subjects' perception of the effectiveness of the different components intended to enhance cultural knowledge of the subjects.

Although quite a bit of time was spent in the FL methods class addressing the notion of culture and the 3 Ps, the main focus was purposefully on instructional practices. As such, the subjects perhaps did not directly associate this goal area with the pedagogy course. In general, the *Connecting Cultures* program was seen as quite successful vis-à-vis the enhancement of cultural knowledge:

The excursions were great, as well as the homestay. I used information from one of the excursions to help introduce a reading from a legends book that I had bought while I was there. The students love it because it

Figure 4. Enhancing Cultural Knowledge

ENHANCING CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE: The following components of the Connecting Cultures program significantly expanded my knowledge of products, practices, and perspectives in the target culture.



personalizes things for them when you can say you have been there, and give them inside information on the culture. Books and the internet [sic] are great, but the actual experience is even better!!

Staying with a family and communicating with them is KEY.

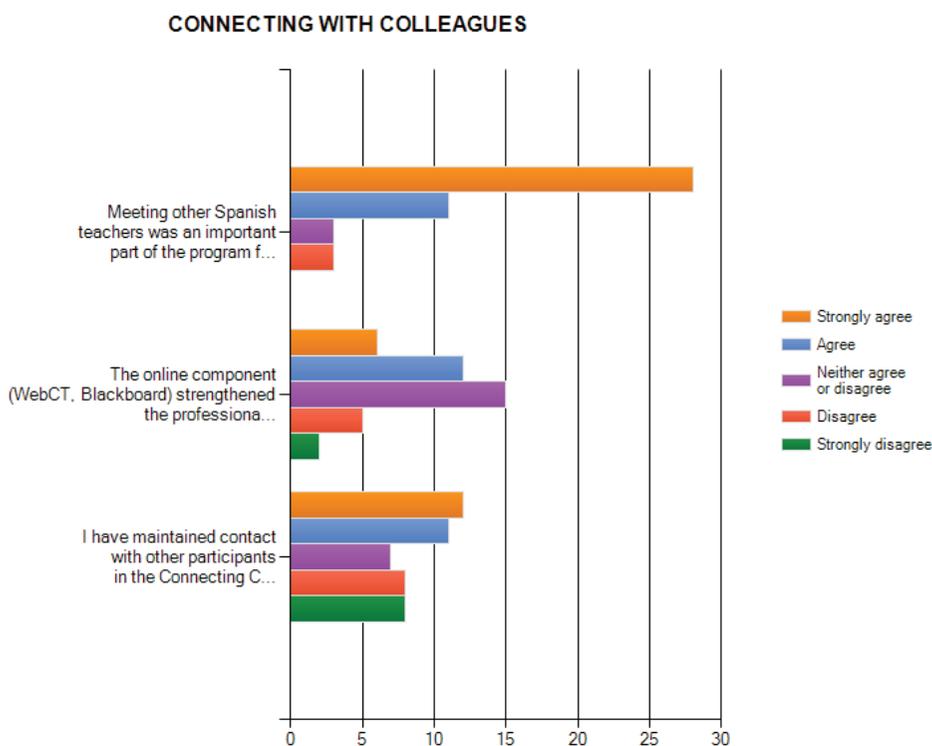
I walked away from the program feeling refreshed as a teacher (even though I had been teaching for only a few years). I also felt confident in my knowledge of Costa Rica as well as my ability to research more about the country to benefit my lessons.

The final goal area of connecting with colleagues presented the researchers with the most difficulty as one of three Likert-type items was applicable only to participants from 2001 on. This was clearly indicated on the survey, and those not involved in the later iterations of the course were directed to skip this item. The inclusion of a web-based extension and component to the course as of 2001 was deemed a vital portion of the revised course. In addition, the expansion of social media capability and the explosion of connectivity in the daily lives of many people in the U.S. justified the inclusion of this particular item to measure its effectiveness. Overall, the response rates for this scale were much lower. The component that the subjects considered most important was the initial connection made with other

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FL teachers during the course (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree totaling 88.1%). The use of online technology to strengthen these connections was rated by 43.2% (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree) of the subjects as effective in strengthening their professional network. Interestingly, 40.5% responded neutrally and 16.2% disagreed (responses of Disagree and Strongly Disagree). It is conceivable that those participating in the early iterations of the course with the online component were not yet totally integrated into the daily connectivity we see today; hence, they may not have stayed in contact with those particular FL teachers from their *Connecting Cultures* class. Another possible explanation for not maintaining contact might simply be due to the amount of time elapsed since their participation in the program. Figure 5 illustrates the responses to the query regarding connecting with colleagues.

Figure 5. Connecting with Colleagues



Meeting other Spanish teachers was clearly an important component of the program, regardless of the continuation of relationships among participants. Indeed, a few comments from respondents plainly demonstrate this:

While teaching, the friendships and connections made with other teachers was probably the greatest component of our ongoing professional development over the years.

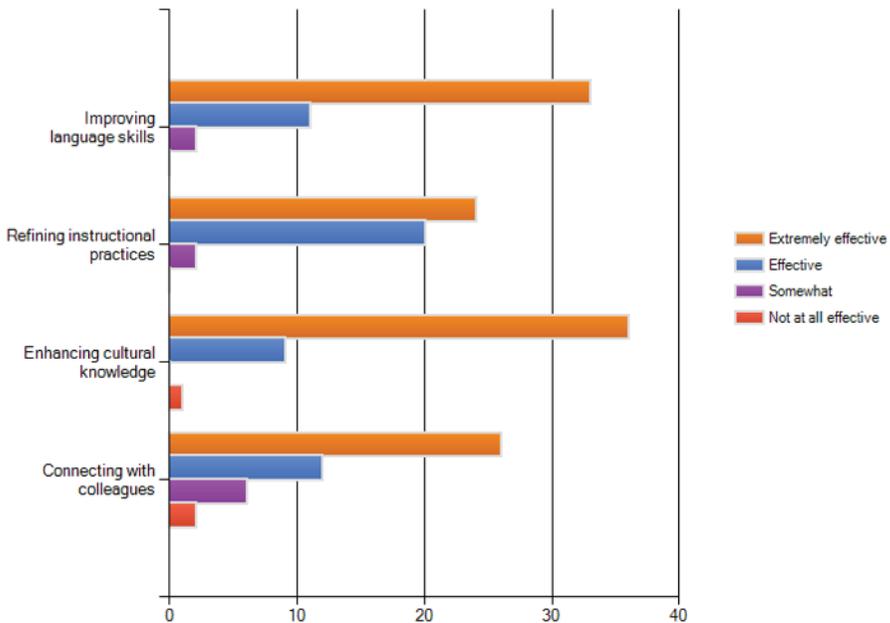
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I made lifetime connections with other teachers that we have maintained. What an enrichment they have been to me - to share life, ask for and receive advice, suggestions, ideas.

A composite representation of overall ratings by the subjects of the effectiveness of the program and its four goals shows quite positive responses. The goals of improving language skills (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree = 97.6%) and enhancing cultural knowledge (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree = 97.6%) were nearly tied in their ratings of effectiveness, with the goal of refining instructional practices coming in a very close third (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree = 95.3%). The goal of connecting with colleagues was a somewhat distant fourth (responses of Strongly Agree and Agree = 83.7%) although still rated quite highly. A compilation of the results from the four-part research question is represented in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Overall Effectiveness Rating of the Program

EFFECTIVENESS - Please rate the effectiveness of the Connecting Cultures program for each of the following:



Given the opportunity to offer recommendations for the program, respondents indicated a high rate of satisfaction with the program as it already stood:

The program is perfect for classroom teachers. The amount of time spent in the country is reasonable for teachers with families/responsibilities at home.

The program was well structured and effective. I highly recommend it.

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The survey results clearly show the *Connecting Cultures* program as an effective professional development model. Nevertheless, the data also indicate some areas where some issues can be addressed and some improvements can certainly be made in future iterations of the course. The issue of TL use in the classroom was always present, underscored by the language pledge required of all participants. With ACTFL's position statement recommending 90% TL use by both teachers and students (2010), this topic became more salient in the FL methodology component of the course. The emphasis on TL use in the classroom needs to continue if teachers are to comply with this directive from the national organization. Placing program participants in homestay situations where they are the only English-speaking guest will help create optimal conditions for TL use during this portion of the course. It would be helpful to participants to see more clearly the connections made in the FL methodology course involving sound pedagogical practices, use of authentic materials in lesson plans, and increased cultural knowledge.

In general, the survey design and execution successfully plumbed participant judgment regarding the four goal areas of the *Connecting Cultures* program. However, because researchers wished input from as many participants as possible, this created an inherent limitation due to the time period covered (twenty years) and the ability to contact subjects. Also, as responsive instructors, the researchers made adjustments to the course as it developed over the years. A few of these changes presented problems in the data collection, reporting, and interpretation (see above). Nevertheless, the researchers are confident that the total results largely confirm the effectiveness of this type of program as a professional development model for FL teachers.

Conclusion

The survey results reported in this article of participants in the *Connecting Cultures* program over a 20-year period were resoundingly positive. According to the participants, the program was successful in providing a short-term, focused professional development opportunity for Spanish teachers. *Connecting Cultures* was carefully designed to meet the unique needs of FL teachers in the areas of sustaining and improving language and cultural knowledge as well enhancing instructional practices. The teachers became study abroad students again and dedicated two weeks in-country improving their own skills and networking with colleagues. The host institution instructors worked with the teachers to increase their language proficiency and FL methodologists guided them through lesson development using authentic materials. The language pledge, the homestay, and focused cultural assignments ensured sustained interaction with NSs. When technology became available, the teachers were able to extend their program online when they returned to the U.S., further augmenting their experience.

Although all areas were deemed successful in meeting the teachers' professional development needs, enhancing cultural knowledge and improving language skills emerged as the most powerful components of the program. Improvement in these areas is perhaps more difficult to achieve without an immersion experience.

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Interestingly, the demographic data revealed that it is common for teachers to have longer in-country experiences during their college programs, but it is difficult to find the time and money to travel once they have gotten past those beginning years of their careers. This is borne out by the research (Schulz, 2007). The participants reported that their travel abroad since graduation was only for short periods of time and/or for pleasure or vacation. If teachers are to keep up their language skills and cultural knowledge, professional and financial incentives and support must be created in order for them to be able to immerse themselves in the target culture and language in a meaningful way.

Given the dearth of appropriate and applicable professional development opportunities available for FL teachers, it is imperative that the profession offer its practitioners ample possibilities to engage in activities and experiences that will enhance their TL skills, their cultural knowledge, their SLA acumen, and their collegial connections. These components have been identified as key factors in FL teacher job satisfaction, performance, and retention. The *Connecting Cultures* program provides a highly successful and workable model for others to follow.

Notes

1. LeLoup and Schmidt-Rinehart have coauthored several previous articles dealing with study abroad and/or reporting on professional development for foreign language teachers. Both authors contributed equally to this article.
2. As of July 2013 a de facto consolidation of NCATE and the Teacher Accreditation Council (TEAC) resulted in the formation of the Council for Accreditation of Educator Programs (CAEP) as the new accrediting body for educator preparation.
3. The complete questionnaire is available by contacting the authors. The majority of the questions/items can also be found in the tables and figures of this article.

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A Comparative Study of Beliefs among Elementary- and Intermediate-Level Students at a Historically Black University

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Abstract

This investigation compared the beliefs about foreign language (FL) learning held by African American students enrolled in elementary courses with those enrolled at the intermediate level. The following research question was addressed: Do African American students at the elementary level have significantly different beliefs from students at the intermediate level? The participants were students enrolled in first- and second-year Spanish courses at a Historically Black College/University (HBCU). The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) was used for data collection. Elementary-level students' responses were compared to those of the intermediate-level students by independent samples t-tests conducted on the items of the scale. Results showed that level of instruction had significant effects on student views about FL learning. More specifically, second-year students had a higher level of integrative motivation as they placed more value

The beliefs that students hold about foreign language (FL) learning have been linked to their satisfaction with the acquisition process, their motivation to pursue the study of the FL beyond the common graduation requirement, and their success at achieving proficiency.

on study abroad; having native instructors, acquaintances, and friends; and practicing with other FL learners. They also exhibited a higher level of instrumental motivation, being more aware than their elementary-level peers of the career benefits of FL study. Finally, second-year students expressed a higher concern for accuracy as well as a preference for early error correction and they were less willing to take risks with the FL. Research and teaching implications are discussed.

Background

The beliefs that students hold about foreign language (FL) learning have been linked to their satisfaction with

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the acquisition process, their motivation to pursue the study of the FL beyond the common graduation requirement, and their success at achieving proficiency (Charle Poza, 2013; Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988; Lassiter, 2003; Rifkin, 2000; Tumposky, 1991). Students have counterproductive views about how languages are learned as well as unrealistic expectations about the amount of time that it takes to reach a desired level of proficiency. These views can negatively influence their satisfaction with their FL courses and overall progress. Therefore, it is imperative for instructors and curriculum planners to identify and address FL learning beliefs in order to increase student satisfaction and motivation to continue FL study beyond the graduation requirement (Horwitz, 1988; Lassiter, 2003). This is particularly important in the case of African American students given that, according to the Digest of Education Statistics, 2011 published by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), only 4.1% of the total number of bachelor's degrees in FLs was awarded to African Americans in 2009-2010.

Although Charle Poza (2013) reported that African American students' views of how languages are learned were not different from those reported in studies about the general population, most studies have found FL beliefs to be conditioned by the learners' background (Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Renaud, 2009; Rifkin, 2000; Tumposky, 1991). Therefore, it remains important to conduct research on the beliefs of the African American student population in order to increase their participation in FL programs at institutions of higher learning in the United States.

In addition to cultural background, level of FL instruction has been found to influence beliefs (Oh, 1996; Rifkin, 2000), motivation (Shaaban & Gaith, 2000), and the types of classroom activities, form versus communication, that students favor (Mandell, 2002). Therefore, the present study investigates the relationship between level of instruction and beliefs among African American students with the purpose of increasing the participation of this student population in FL learning beyond the elementary level. It expands on the work of Charle Poza (2013), which focused on elementary-level students of Spanish at a Historically Black College/University (HBCU), and adds data about the beliefs of intermediate-level students at the same institution in order to compare both groups.

Review of the Literature

Extensive research has been devoted to identifying and addressing learners' preconceived ideas about FL teaching and learning. This line of inquiry was reinforced by the contributions of E. Horwitz in the 1980s. Horwitz (1985) describes the development of The Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), a scale that marked the beginning of a systematic approach to research about FL beliefs (Kuntz, 1996a; Horwitz, 1985). Initial studies focused on the commonly taught languages and on students enrolled in elementary-level courses at higher education institutions in the United States. Researchers later expanded their inquiry to learners of less commonly taught languages (Husseinali, 2006; Kuntz, 1996b) and to different areas of the world (Rodriguez Manzanaresis, & Murphy, 2010; Shaaban, & Ghaith, 2000; Tumposky, 1991; Wharton, 2005; Yang,

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1992). Perhaps the most comprehensive studies on FL beliefs using the BALLI in their instrumentation are those conducted by Kouritzin et al. (2009) and Rifkin (2000).

Kouritzin et al. (2009) surveyed over 6,000 students in three different countries, Japan, France, and Canada. Their study looked at how attitudes, motivation, and beliefs about FL learning differed in each country, as well as what factors of the social context influenced learners' views. The study concluded that FL learning beliefs were conditioned by the cultural and societal background of the learners. Rifkin (2000) noted that most studies focused on students from elementary FL courses, so he used the BALLI to survey over 1,000 learners of 10 FLs at several levels of instruction in three different institutions over a three-year period. He found that beliefs varied according to whether it was a commonly taught or a less commonly taught language, the kind of institution, and the level of instruction. Specifically, he found that the beliefs held by first-year students were significantly different from those of students enrolled in more advanced-level courses. Elementary-level students were more likely to think that speaking is easier than understanding, that translation is at the core of FL learning, and that learners should not be allowed to make errors to avoid difficulties with accuracy later on in the acquisition process. They were also less prone to take risks with the FL and less optimistic about both the level that they would ultimately achieve and the professional opportunities that knowing a FL would bring.

The findings of Rifkin (2000) are consistent with those of Oh (1996) who, also using the BALLI, found significant differences between first- and second-year students of Japanese in the United States. In this study, first-year learners expressed a preference for error correction, were less disposed to guessing words that they did not know, and were less optimistic about job prospects brought by FL proficiency than more advanced learners. Similarly, Shaaban & Gaith (2000) and Mandell (2002) found that level of study was related to motivation and to the students' preference for certain teaching approaches and classroom activities.

In terms of FL success, counterproductive beliefs can interfere with achievement and with acceptance of certain teaching approaches (Horwitz, 1988). In Horwitz's study, analysis of BALLI data showed that learners had restrictive views about how languages are learned, such as an excessive focus on translation, vocabulary memorization, and grammar. This can make learners less open and even resistant to communicative approaches (Horwitz, 1987, 1988) which in turn can hinder learning and reduce satisfaction (Rifkin, 2000). Horwitz (1988) also found that elementary-level students had high hopes about the level of proficiency that they would achieve, but underestimated the amount of time that it would take to reach that level. Horwitz concluded that this misconception leads to frustration when progress is not as fast as expected.

In terms of FL success, counterproductive beliefs can interfere with achievement and with acceptance of certain teaching approaches.

Although most studies focus on counterproductive beliefs that hinder success and satisfaction, Rodriguez Manzanarez and Murphy (2010) took a different approach and used the BALLI to look at the beliefs of successful FL learners.

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These authors found that participants associated their success with their ability to make bonds with the target culture. They also preferred the social and affective component of learning the FL, especially outside of the classroom and in authentic settings.

While research that explores beliefs among students from different cultural backgrounds is ample, little attention has been given specifically to beliefs among the African American student population. An early study on affective variables found a general disinterest in FL study among African Americans, coupled with a belief that FL study should be removed from the graduation requirements (LeBlanc, 1972). Although in a later study Davis and Markham (1991) showed more positive findings, with students being aware of the practical and inherent value of FL study Research since then has yielded mixed results. For instance, Moore (1998) found that most African Americans in one middle school were either not interested or had a negative attitude toward learning a FL.

More recent research has focused on the specific teaching approaches favored by African American students. Several studies have revealed that African Americans prefer less focus on grammar (Glynn, 2007; Moore, 2005), and more emphasis on speaking skills and cultural awareness (Davis & Markham, 1991; Moore, 1998, 2005). Anya (2011) studied the motivation of successful African American FL learners. The findings of this study are similar to those of Rodriguez Manzanarez and Murphy (2010): successful FL learners felt a sense of engagement with others in the community of learners, coupled with a desire to connect with the culture of the native speakers.

Watterson (2011) also explored the topic of African American students' need to connect with the culture of the native speakers in order to increase their participation in FL study. The inclusion of cultural lessons about the African Diaspora was found to be a major motivating factor among African American non-language majors. In addition, FL majors and minors reported the financial benefits of FL study in their chosen careers as their major motivating factor. Previous study abroad experience coupled with family members' views of foreign languages were also linked to FL attitudes.

Two studies exclusively devoted to FL beliefs among African American students using the BALLI are Lassiter (2003) and Charle Poza (2013). Lassiter (2003) looked at beliefs as a possible cause for the low interest beyond the graduation requirement at an HBCU. She found that many participants were seniors and took the FL as a graduation requirement, yet expected to be successful language learners, and overall held somewhat positive views about the importance of FL learning. Additionally, the participants valued the inclusion of FL study in the curriculum, but saw it mostly as the study of grammar, vocabulary, and translation. Similarly, Charle Poza (2013) used the BALLI to look at the beliefs of African American students enrolled in several sections of Beginning Spanish at an HBCU and their influence on the students' intention to continue beyond the requirement. Her findings also resemble those of Rodriguez Manzanarez and Murphy (2010) in that students planning to continue were more interested in

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learning about the culture, communicating with native speakers, and using the FL outside of class.

The present investigation compares the beliefs of African American students enrolled in first-year Spanish courses with those of African American students enrolled in second-year Spanish. It is an expansion of Charle Poza's 2013 study, which focused solely on elementary-level students, with the objective of providing insights into the relationship between beliefs and level of instruction among African American students. By providing insights into the broader subject of what makes African American students stay in FL classes, the ultimate goal of the study is to increase their participation beyond the elementary level, which is the common university requirement. The following research question is addressed: Do African American students at the elementary level have significantly different beliefs from those at the intermediate level?

Methods

Participants

The participants were students enrolled in elementary- and intermediate-level Spanish courses at an HBCU. For the elementary level, the survey was administered to all the sections of Spanish 101 and 102 offered at the university in the semester of data collection. The 4 non-African American students enrolled in these courses were removed from the analysis. A total of 62 African American students were enrolled in three sections of Spanish 101 and 90 were enrolled in five sections of Spanish 102. The response rate for Spanish 101 and 102 combined was 72.4% (Spanish 101, $n = 41$, Spanish 102, $n = 69$). For the intermediate level, the survey was administered to the only section of that level, Spanish 202, offered at the university at the time of data collection. One non-African American student enrolled was removed from the analysis. Of the 26 African American students enrolled, 24 (88.9%) completed the questionnaire.

The resulting sample of elementary-level students consisted of 110 African American students. Thirty-three were males and 77 were females. Fifteen percent were classified as freshmen, 31% were sophomores, 32% were juniors, and 22% were seniors. Seventy percent of the participants reported to be taking Spanish as a graduation requirement, but 36% expressed a desire to continue their language study beyond the graduation requirement of two semesters for most students and four semesters for honors students and those pursuing a Bachelor's of Arts. The sample of intermediate-level students consisted of 24 African American students. Six were males and 18 were females. Regarding class status, 17% were freshmen, 4% were sophomores, 12% were juniors, and 67% were seniors. Forty-two percent of the participants reported to be taking Spanish as a graduation requirement and, in spite of the fact that 67% were already seniors, 50% reported a desire to continue learning Spanish beyond the university requirement.

Instrument

The BALLI was selected for data collection as it is the standard instrument used to generate data on FL beliefs and is widely considered a suitable tool to

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conduct research on this variable (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006). The BALLI was originally developed for students and instructors of English as a second language (ESL) and was later expanded to the commonly taught FLs (Horwitz, 1988). The first FL version contained 34 Likert-scale items covering a variety of issues concerning FL teaching and learning. The items were organized under five themes and the scale was pilot-tested with 150 FL students at the University of Texas, who attested to its clarity and comprehensiveness. The BALLI 2.0, a new version of the scale which incorporates 10 new items, was published in Horwitz (2013). This latest iteration removed the five organizing themes of the original scale, which had produced conflicting views among researchers. Some questioned their validity because they were not generated by statistical factor analysis (Kuntz, 1996a), while others supported their inclusion based on the consistent findings of the numerous studies that have used the scale (Nikitina & Furuoka, 2006).

Procedure

Participants were administered the BALLI 2.0 (Horwitz, 2013) together with a demographic questionnaire during their regular Spanish lessons. All participants were given the survey at the end of the semester. The researcher was not the instructor for any of the sections surveyed. For the analysis, the responses of students at the elementary level were compared to those of students at the intermediate level.

Results

An independent samples t-test was conducted on each item of the BALLI to answer the research question of comparing African American students at the elementary level to African American students at the intermediate level. The statistical analysis yielded eight items of the BALLI that were significantly different between elementary- and intermediate-level participants, and all but one of these items were more prominently endorsed by intermediate-level learners than by those enrolled in elementary courses (Table 1).

Table 1. t-Test Results Comparing African American Elementary and Intermediate-Level Learners on BALLI Survey Items

Significantly Different BALLI Items between Both Levels	Level	N	M	SD	T	Df	P
11. It is best to learn Spanish in a Spanish-speaking country.	Elementary	108	3.44	1.10	-4.50	44	0.000**
	Intermediate	24	4.33	0.80			
19. It is better to have teachers who are native-speakers of Spanish.	Elementary	107	3.94	1.0	-3.64	48	0.000**
	Intermediate	24	4.54	0.66			
40. I would like to have Spanish-speaking friends.	Elementary	105	3.81	0.77	-3.32	41	0.002*
	Intermediate	22	4.27	0.55			

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14.	It's o.k. to guess if you don't know a word in Spanish.	Elementary	109	3.18	1.08	2.33	37	0.025*
		Intermediate	24	2.67	0.96			
20.	If I learn to speak Spanish very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.	Elementary	107	4.28	0.72	-2.30	37	0.026*
		Intermediate	24	4.63	0.65			
18.	It is a good idea to practice speaking with other people who are learning Spanish.	Elementary	108	4.10	0.80	-2.15	37	0.031*
		Intermediate	24	4.46	0.72			
28.	I would like to learn Spanish so that I can get to know Spanish speakers.	Elementary	106	3.61	1.09	-2.09	42	0.043*
		Intermediate	24	4.04	0.86			
21.	If beginning students are permitted to make errors in Spanish, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.	Elementary	107	3.01	1.18	-2.08	32	0.046*
		Intermediate	23	3.57	1.16			

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

Specifically, second-year students were more enthusiastic about learning Spanish in a country in which the language is spoken natively. Therefore, study abroad programs were more valued by those who move to the intermediate level, which indicates a desire to communicate with native speakers and to make connections with the culture of the countries where the FL is spoken natively. By the same token, the analysis revealed that intermediate-level students favored native instructors significantly more than their elementary-level peers. They also expressed a desire to get to know the native speakers of the language and even establish friendships with them, as shown by their significantly higher support of BALLI items 11, 19, 40, and 28. These findings are noteworthy because they show a higher degree of integrative motivation, or the kind that compels someone to make connections with the native speakers of the FL (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), among the intermediate-level participants of this investigation.

Instrumental motivation—that compels someone to study a FL for practical and career purposes—was also higher among intermediate-level students than among their elementary-level counterparts. Second-year students expressed a stronger endorsement of item 20 of the BALLI, which states that students will have better opportunities for a job if they are fluent in the FL. Therefore the intermediate-level participants of this study were more conscious of the professional opportunities that FL proficiency would bring than elementary-level participants.

In addition, t-test results showed that second-year learners placed higher importance on practicing with other learners. This is consistent with their higher endorsement of learning the language in the countries in which it is spoken natively

and making friends who are native speakers in that these beliefs show a desire to communicate in the FL beyond the classroom setting and in real-world situations.

The analysis also revealed that intermediate-level students favored a teaching approach that does not allow students to make errors, as shown by their higher agreement with item 21. Moreover, the only item of the BALLI that was significantly more endorsed by elementary-level students, number 14, referred to their willingness to guess when they did not know a word. These findings indicate a higher concern for accuracy among the intermediate-level participants of this investigation. Also, their reluctance to guess words indicates that this group was less prone to taking risks with the FL than their first-year peers.

Discussion

The present investigation compares the FL learning beliefs held by African American students enrolled in first and second-year Spanish courses at an HBCU. The data analysis revealed that, similar to the findings of other studies conducted using the BALLI (Rifkin, 2000; Oh, 1996), level of instruction made a difference in the views that African American students held about FL learning. This shows that those students who pursue the study of the FL beyond the elementary-level courses have attitudes about FL learning that make them successful.

The analysis revealed a higher level of both integrative and instrumental motivation among students who move on from the elementary to the intermediate level. This is consistent with the findings of previous research, not only about African Americans, but also about successful learners of all backgrounds (Charle Poza, 2013; Watterson, 2011; Rodriguez Manzanarez & Murphy, 2010; Lassiter, 2003; Rifkin, 2000). Moreover, the findings of the present investigation enumerate the specific beliefs that make motivated students successful, such as a desire to live in the culture rather than just learning about it in class, and an eagerness to develop relationships with the native speakers that range from teacher-student to friendship.

A preference for early error correction was also expressed by the intermediate-level participants of this study. This may be due to a general trend among FL learners and instructors of all backgrounds to make a strong emphasis on grammatical accuracy, as found by most research on FL beliefs (Lassiter, 2003; Oh, 1996; Horwitz, 1988). This concern about making errors may be confirmed by the fact that, contrary to the findings of Rifkin (2000) and Oh (1996), the only significantly different item that was endorsed less by intermediate-level students refers to willingness to guess unknown words. A possible explanation for this reluctance to take risks with the FL is that doing so may lead to an increase in the number errors that would make it more difficult to use the language accurately later on in the acquisition process. This finding should be of interest to FL instructors since unwillingness to take risks may be a sign of FL anxiety (Horwitz, 2002; Phillips, 1992; Ely, 1986).

Teaching Implications

The findings of this study are of value to FL instructors, textbook publishers, teacher trainers, and curriculum planners who serve students of all backgrounds, but they are of special interest to those serving African American students. These

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educators need to take action early in the FL acquisition process to address counterproductive beliefs and encourage those views that lead to success. Moreover, the beliefs that this investigation found to be more prevalent among intermediate-level students must be emphasized at the elementary level in order to increase the percentage of those who continue FL study beyond the graduation requirement.

Based on the findings of this investigation, FL programs must provide opportunities for students to practice outside of the classroom, in authentic situations, with native speakers and with other learners, both at home and abroad. Extracurricular activities like conversation partnerships, language tables, clubs, study groups, or pairing elementary-level students with those enrolled in more advanced courses constitute excellent opportunities for the creation of a community of learners and for instilling an appreciation of the intrinsic value of FL study. In the case of African American students, and when relevant to the specific FL, these activities should include

Based on the findings of this investigation, FL programs must provide opportunities for students to practice outside of the classroom, in authentic situations, with native speakers and with other learners, both at home and abroad.

content about Black speakers of the FL, their cultural and historical contributions, and their current social and political standing. In addition, extracurricular activities should include collaborative initiatives with Pan-Africana Studies programs. These opportunities will serve to diversify FL education to include the contributions of groups that are generally ignored in the curriculum and they will help African American students make connections between their own culture and that of the native speakers. In effect, this has been shown to increase motivation to pursue FL study among this student population (Watterson, 2011; Hines, 2007; Farfan-Cobb & Lassiter, 2003; Dahl, 2000).

Since the importance of learning the language in a country in which it is used natively was one of the most significant differences between the elementary- and intermediate-level participants of the present investigation, institutions of higher learning must provide accessible high quality study abroad programs and inform elementary-level students of their existence and benefits, both personal and professional. In the case of African American students, and for the reasons stated earlier, study abroad offerings should be expanded to include countries in Africa as well as countries with a strong presence of native speakers of African descent.

The present investigation also found a desire among intermediate-level students to communicate with the native speakers of the language, as shown by their preference of native FL instructors and friends. For that reason, FL programs and individual instructors must provide learners with as many opportunities to interact with native speakers as possible. Hiring native speakers of the FL as instructors is only one way to provide such opportunities, but there are excellent non-native FL instructors who are as effective at guiding students into high levels of proficiency as their native colleagues. This is especially true in the case of African American students for whom the need to have African American FL instructors to serve as role models supersedes having native instructors (Kubota, Austin & Saito-

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Abbott, 2003). Therefore, the profession must move beyond the exclusive hiring of native instructors and continue its efforts to provide FL learners with access to native speakers.

Having a good study abroad program provides multiple opportunities for communication with native speakers, but it is imperative for students to have access to native speakers at their home institutions as well. Thankfully, the use of technology-enhanced FL learning is much more generalized today than it was a decade ago. Instructors have greater access to affordable computer-mediated communication tools to bring native and non-native speakers together despite geographical distance.

Given this study's finding that instrumental motivation was more prevalent among students who enroll in intermediate-level courses, the potential professional opportunities derived from FL proficiency should also be emphasized at the elementary level. Presenting data on how FL proficiency can lead to better jobs and higher salaries or showing examples of job openings that require a FL are good ways of increasing students' instrumental motivation. Additionally, bringing guest speakers or former FL graduates to first-year courses to talk about the importance of FL proficiency in different professional and academic fields is a highly effective means of increasing this kind of motivation. Some of these guests should be Black speakers of the FL, both native and non-native, given the aforementioned need to incorporate the cultural contributions of Africa and the Diaspora in the FL learning experience, coupled with the low number of African American teachers who can serve as role models.

The last finding of this investigation was a higher concern for accuracy found among intermediate-level African American students. This fear of making errors may be connected to their higher unwillingness to take risks with the language, also revealed by the data. A possible explanation could be the excessive emphasis on grammatical and lexical accuracy that has prevailed among the FL profession for decades. Communicative approaches and holistic assessment based on proficiency have certainly changed the face of FL instruction, but grammatical accuracy remains a major emphasis in the everyday FL classroom. Therefore instructors need to take a second look at their teaching practices as well as their own beliefs and, if needed, receive training on teaching methodologies that emphasize communication and proficiency over grammatical accuracy.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study accomplished its goal of providing insights into the beliefs of African American students enrolled in language courses as well as the relationship between these beliefs and level of instruction, there are several limitations to be noted. First, the participants were selected based on their enrollment in FL courses during data collection at one specific institution. Second, given the size of the institution, the sample size was small, especially at the intermediate level. Therefore, further research is warranted to confirm the findings and to improve our understanding of the beliefs that motivate African American students to continue FL study from the elementary to the intermediate level.

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The findings of this study could be replicated with a larger sample of African American students from different institutions, both minority-serving and traditional. Additionally, the scope could be broadened to include elementary- and intermediate-level students of multiple backgrounds to provide further insights into the role of level of instruction and of cultural and ethnic backgrounds on FL beliefs.

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Exploring Identity in the Language Classroom

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Abstract

Language educators consider student motivation as fundamental in supporting student learning and central to making sound pedagogical decisions in order to help students develop competence in the target language. However, many teachers opt for using simplistic and prescriptive formulas or one-size-fits-all motivational models that claim positive learning results in the shortest amount of time. Unfortunately, teachers will soon discover that these models did not really make a difference in their students' levels of engagement and effort. There is a need to move away from fixed or static ideas of a language learner—and its simplistic rigidity— and, instead, think about learners' motivation as a multifaceted construct. This article outlines the current developments in the theory of language learning motivation in an effort to understand its complex nature, and identifies how identity constructs such as the *possible L2 selves* and *transportable identities* help place students' individualities at the center of pedagogical choices that support the multifaceted nature of language learners. Finally, this article provides practical examples of how to integrate these constructs into the design of everyday language learning activities.

Introduction

Motivation is an essential component in the process of acquiring a functional level of performance in a second language (L2). If one is working with a group of students who do not have a working knowledge of an L2 but are willing to put forth the effort necessary to reach a level of practical use of the target language, then these students will be more likely to attain their goal compared to a group

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of students who are bright but who do not want to commit the time and effort necessary to become proficient at least at the Intermediate level according to the ACTFL proficiency guidelines (2012). Therefore, language educators consider student motivation as fundamental in supporting learning and central to making sound pedagogical decisions in order to help students develop competence in the

It is necessary, however, that teachers stop searching for prescriptive motivational models that were designed with an archetypal student in mind. These models do not take into account the intricate reality of individual students and are based on a static definition of an otherwise complex concept, namely, motivation.

target language. It is necessary, however, that teachers stop searching for prescriptive motivational models that were designed with an archetypal student in mind. These models do not take into account the intricate reality of individual students and are based on a static definition of an otherwise complex concept, namely, motivation. Therefore, in order to promote sustainable student engagement that would result in the achievement of a functional knowledge of an L2, educators must see their students as unique individuals with transportable identities or, according to Zimmerman, identities that are part of the individuals as “they move through their daily routines” (as cited in Benwell and Stokoe, 2006, p.70), exhibiting a variety of interests such as that of a passionate gamer or an avid soccer fan. They can then design meaningful and relevant pedagogical environments that would support student engagement

and enhance language-learning motivation.

In this article, I will explore the role of identity in the language classroom from a construct called “Possible Language 2 Selves.” According to Markus and Nurius (1986), Possible Selves are future ideas of the self that one “would like to become, has to become, or is afraid of becoming” (p.954) and have proven to be powerful motivators of behavior (Dörnyei, 2005). Furthermore, the development of possible language selves helps position the learner at the center of pedagogical choices and learning environments, making teaching differentiation more in sync with the complex nature of student identity. This article will outline the current developments in the theory of language learning motivation, explain the meaning of “Possible Language 2 Selves,” and identify how this construct helps place students’ identities at the center of pedagogical choices. Lastly, practical examples will illustrate how to integrate this concept into the design of everyday language learning activities to support motivation and increase student engagement.

An Overview of Current Developments in the Field of L2 Motivation Theory

The discipline of educational psychology has strongly influenced the evolution of L2 motivation theory, particularly in the last five decades. Process and socio-dynamic theories have emerged, characterized by the need to understand motivational processes as they are being constructed across time and space in relation to the development of self or selves and a learner’s identity. There is a clear move from linear representations of motivation to a more organic and complex

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representation of the motivational construct. The two main conceptual approaches are Ushioda's (2009) "A Person in Context Relational View of Motivation" and Dörnyei's (2009) "L2 Motivational Self System" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Ushioda's (2009) framework addresses L2 learners as "real people in a particular cultural and historical context, and whose motivation and identities shape and are shaped by these contexts" (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 78). She suggests focusing the area of motivational inquiry on areas that are relevant to context. She poses as an example the microanalysis of classroom talk as a focused way to explore evolving motivation among the persons involved in the conversation at a specific time and place. A key motivational concern in the findings would be to explore differences in emergent motivation through the developing discourse among persons-in-context of those allowed to 'speak as themselves' or as 'language learners'.

Finally, Dörnyei (2005) developed The L2 Motivational Self System based on the concept of *possible selves* from social psychology (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and *integrative motivation* or motivation rooted on the desire to belong to the target culture from Gardner's (1985) framework to explain motivation in contexts in which the target language community was not readily available and where a framework with an imaginative or creative nature is more suitable. Possible selves are individuals' ideas of what they *would like* to become or what they *are afraid* of becoming (Markus and Nurius, 1986). They represent clear visions of oneself in the future, with a strong power to motivate action only if the learner has a desired future self-image. This self-image is different from the current learners' self or present belief or idea about who they are as learners. It is *elaborate* and *vivid*, it is perceived as realistically likely or *plausible* but not easily *attainable*, it is in *harmony* with expectancies of the learner's relatives or peers, it is *regularly activated*, it has clear and *effective procedural plans* and strategies, and it is counteracted by a *feared possible self* in the same realm (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2011, p. 84). Possible selves provide a dynamic interpretive conglomerate that could help us understand motivation at a deeper level because they link the learners' future visions with their emotional and cognitive systems, providing, in this way, a better understanding of these selves' motivational capacity.

Dörnyei's system has three sources of motivation to learn an L2:

1. The Ideal L2 Self represents the individuals' future image of themselves as L2 speakers, *i.e., the vision one has of a fluent speaker.*
2. The Ought-to L2 Self represents the attributes that one has to possess in order to avoid a negative outcome. For instance, *not taking a language class could mean not graduating on time.*
3. The L2 Learning Experience represents the potential influence that learning environments have on a learner's desire to engage in a particular behavior such as learning a language. A positive experience leads to a desire to invest time in learning the target language. (Dörnyei, 2009, p.29)

The area of research in language learning motivation is looking into more organic and complex approaches in order to understand this type of motivation more

holistically. However, research using socio-dynamic perspectives has been done in contexts in which acquiring the target language is highly valued. Little is known about the contexts in which the target language is not as highly regarded as those mentioned above. The construct of self and identity allow one to look deeper into the individual

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in the pursuit of comprehending why some students engage in a sustainable behavior that could lead to the acquisition of a working L2 knowledge. The construct of possible selves positions the learner's thoughts, feelings, and actions as key elements in the interpretation or development of motivated behavior.

The next section will explain how one could integrate future self-guides into the dynamics of a classroom. It will also look at the design of pedagogical practices.

Future Self-Guides in the Classroom

The *future self-guides* or *possible selves* construct offers a lens that helps us personalize and differentiate our pedagogical practices to enhance language learners' experiences, their curiosity for language learning, and L2 competence-orienting behavior that would help them attain a degree of functional L2 knowledge. This construct considers a learner as an individual with multidimensional identities and a variety of values and goals rather than as an individual with uniform values and needs. Language classes, for the most part, emphasize this uniformity and the idea of *monolithic entities* by focusing exclusively on PPP approaches (presentation, practice, production) to content or by stressing the role of a language learner as one who practices grammar structures and produces target-like forms. In Lamb's survey results, a student said "In school it's just about grammar, grammar, grammar, and grammar; I still learn about grammar since I was elementary school" (as cited in Ushioda, 2013, p. 26). Taylor (2008) states that by not stressing differentiation in the classroom, students get bored or disengaged because they do not find the information relevant and useful. Emphasizing uniformity leads to a lost opportunity to engage people in the process of L2 learning (Ushioda, 2013).

The future selves concept provides an approach with which language educators could design pedagogies that facilitate the support of these multidimensional identities, values, and goals that could enhance the relevance of language learning and the possibility for students to develop future images of themselves as speakers of the target language. Hadfield & Dörnyei (2013) offer a visionary motivational program that helps create the conditions to support the main sources of motivation to learn a target language: "a learner's vision of her/himself as an effective L2 speaker, the social pressure coming from the learner's environment, and positive learning experiences" (p. 4). They state that with a well-developed and supported image of oneself as a language speaker, the motivation to learn that language is automatic and powerful. Their program has six steps:

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1. Creating the vision

This step encourages learners to bring forth an ideal L2 self by using the power of imagination. The teacher would design pedagogical strategies that could help students create a vivid image of themselves as language speakers, for example, an image that is attractive, desirable, and that would combine perfectly with other vivid possible selves—a manager self or a musician self. The more vivid the image one has, the stronger the power this image exerts to motivate learning (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). These activities could involve mime, drama, poster making, journals, and visualizations among others. For instance, a typical element in a textbook is a dialogue that introduces the unit. Instead of using the characters' stories, one could use students' stories to better connect with the realities of the people in the class. It is imperative that teachers make an effort to know their students beyond their names and/or areas of interest displayed in a course list to design meaningful experiences that allow their students the possibility to create and connect their possible L2 self with other salient selves. According to Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013), the levels of creativity experienced in this stage strengthen learners' *sense of identity* and *self-worth* (p.14).

2. Strengthening the vision

This step stresses the importance of elaborating a future image that is vivid and well-defined in order for that image to be a motivator of action (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). The aim is to keep the created vision alive and to enrich it so that it remains salient in the students' self-concept. There are several ways to strengthen the ideal L2 self by developing projects about the students' lives or inviting role models who speak the target language and who work in areas of students' interest. For instance, an identity project for a beginner level could be to ask the students to develop an info-poster that illustrates a common day in the students' lives and their goals in five years rather than talking about an imaginary person's life from a textbook. If you have students who are interested in performing arts, they can all read a paragraph about the beginnings of a famous artist who spoke the target language and compare his or her life to their own lives in the target language. They could also compare the artist's goals with theirs. This step could help students "see their desired language selves with more clarity and, consequently, with more urgency for action" (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014, p. 65).

3. Substantiating the vision

In this step, the teacher would make sure that the ideal future self is possible and can be achieved. If the students do not see their future self guides as being plausible, these future images will quickly disappear from their working self-concept, deterring them from continuing in their goal to achieve that future image. In the case of language learning, it would be important for a student to set a realistic goal in terms of time and attainability of a desired level of the target language. For instance, a student enrolled in his or her first level of a language could not expect to become functionally proficient at the end of the semester. That would be unrealistic. At this point, the most common activities would be individual talks with the student to discuss realistic goals and misconceptions about the

language learning process. Explaining to students the ACTFL proficiency levels or the European Framework levels together with the use of “Can-do statements” could help the student set more realistic goals. Furthermore, Swender (2003) offers a list of professions and job positions according to proficiency levels that helps set realistic levels of expectation according to the linguistic demands of the job. For example, someone who works as a receptionist for a company and who occasionally has to

Explaining to students the ACTFL proficiency levels or the European Framework levels together with the use of “Can-do statements” could help the student set more realistic goals.

answer general questions about the workplace in the target language is expected to function at an Intermediate-High level of proficiency. A person at this level “can initiate, maintain, and bring to a close simple conversations by asking and responding to simple questions” (Swender, 2003, p. 525). Another activity aimed at the larger classroom community would be the use of a questionnaire about language learning beliefs and planning a discussion about the results in their native language for the lower levels or in the target language for the higher levels.

4. Operationalizing the vision

Once there is a well-defined and attainable future self-image, the next step would entail providing a path to make that self a reality. Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) state that the ideal L2 self needs to have a set of two important things that would facilitate the imagined future self in becoming real: “an imagery component and a repertoire of appropriate plans, scripts, and self-regulatory strategies” (p.99). The main goal of this stage is to transform vision into action. The teacher at this stage will provide the student with individual guidance and create a plan to make that self a reality. An example of an activity here would be to elaborate a poster in the target language that maps out the steps that are necessary in order to achieve that future self.

5. Keeping the vision alive

This stage acknowledges the importance of keeping future images alive in the person’s self-concept in order to avoid dormancy and, in many cases, the evaporation of those images. A person could have a number of possible selves competing with each other to remain relevant. However, only those selves that are strong, well defined, and salient would remain active. That is why it is imperative to keep them alive in the person’s working memory by using regular reminders or by priming them. Dörnyei and Kubanyiova (2014) define priming as a technique in psychology that activates mental mechanisms outside of the participant’s conscious awareness. For instance, if during the previous class students watched a film about Nelson Mandela’s life and his contributions to humankind and in the following class they are asked to name the most influential person in the world’s history, the name of Nelson Mandela would be more than likely the most popular choice. In the same way, it is important to incorporate in the design of classroom experiences activities that help the target language and its culture come alive for the learners. Activities that are authentic and take the language experiences beyond the classroom are powerful ways to prime the relevance of

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the target language use in the students' working self-concept. At this stage communicative approaches and task-based learning activities are a perfect fit to keep the vision alive because they are centered on everyday life experiences making it easier to find ways to connect with students' lives outside the classroom. For instance, a few weeks ago, a debate about color perception of a dress took over the social media. An instructor could take the opportunity to use the dress to help students create Internet memes as a marketing device in the target language. An Internet meme is a catchphrase or piece of media with the intention to imitate or mimic a piece of cultural information ("Meme," 2015). These memes could be in the form of pictures, videos, or #hashtags and in simple language that could be used in the lower levels of language classes. The use of memes is very common in social media and it could help increase the students' willingness to communicate in the target language because they serve as a mechanism for the students' own cultural expression.

In the same way, it is important to incorporate in the design of classroom experiences activities that help the target language and its culture come alive for the learners.

6. Counterbalancing the vision

This step emphasizes the two tendencies that regulate motivation: approach and avoid. The main point in this phase is to balance the future self-vision with the notion of what would happen if the desired self is not attained. According to Oyserman and Markus, desired future selves are the most powerful motivators when you also take into account both tendencies (as cited in Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013). Envisioning a future self would be the *approach* tendency, and discussing possible negative outcomes if the future self is not attained could stimulate students to *avoid* behaviors or habits that could result in failure. Discussing productive behaviors would increase the possibility of attaining the desired future self. However, one could also increase the possibility of failure because the student might feel disempowered by thoughts of failure. One way to approach this is to emphasize how to prevent negative outcomes. By creating a plan or a set of strategies, the student can be helped to develop a sense of control to avoid those negative outcomes and stress the importance of attaining the desired future image. This process could start with individual talks about fears and worries and then continue with the design of a doable set of strategies to reach the desired possible self. Another strategy is to share a case study written in the target language about previous students with strong possible L2 images and their self-barriers to attaining those images. Students could design a plan to be successful at achieving those images.

Having a vision matters in students' motivation (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2013; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013; Taylor, 2013). A vision could guide the design of pedagogical practices that help students envision themselves as L2 users, help them understand the value of language learning, and allow students to experience the value of language learning in their everyday life so they can take action (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). A vision program supports the design of transformative language classrooms where language is not

only a linguistic system but also “a social practice that organizes experiences and negotiates identities” (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2013, p. 114).

Student’s Identity in the Language Classroom

Most students enroll in language classes because it is a requirement. Thus, being in a language class feels imposed and completely unrelated to real life. Therefore, a common challenge for language teachers is to be able to engage students’ current selves in their L2 interactions in the classroom so they can speak as themselves with *their transportable identities* (Ushioda, 2013). Taking into account their transportable identities will facilitate the design of more meaningful and sound language experiences that could increase not only the likelihood of a possible L2 self formation but also the likelihood of achieving a working knowledge of the target language. One way to start is by considering students’ transportable identities in the everyday planning of language practices. The possible L2 selves construct offers the visionary motivational program described above that could guide teachers in planning experiences that would take into account a multifaceted identity and the development of a possible L2 self that would support other relevant possible selves and make the language classroom experience more applicable and meaningful to the student.

It is necessary to point out that the visionary motivational program offers six phases that language teachers could consider in their planning process, but these phases are in no way sequential. In one language class, the teacher could identify students at different stages in the development of their possible selves. The idea is to personalize classroom experiences that would facilitate the creation of possible L2 selves or enhance and support those that are already part of the students’ working self. Therefore, it is imperative that instructors not approach the visionary motivational program as strictly sequential phases but rather as a recursive process. The key is not to homogenize the process for all the students at the same time.

Combining the six stages process for developing students’ possible L2 selves, together with communicative approaches of language learning, can guide teachers in designing motivational learning experiences that could promote enough curiosity that would lead to long-lasting engagement in the process of learning a language in a classroom where there is a set curriculum, such as those provided by textbooks. The starting point is to approach language learning as a form of expression of students’ own identities, with the possibility to make this learning process relevant and long-lasting.

Figure 1 on the next page illustrates how educators could integrate their students’ transportable identities into a dynamic and flexible design of pedagogical experiences informed by Dörnyei’s visionary program.

The first step of the visionary motivational program is to “get to know the students” beyond the obvious level of name and academic areas of interest and get more information about their future goals and favorite activities. This information would help language teachers design course content, activities, and assessments that are closer and more relevant to students’ lives. This information would also help

Exploring identity in the language classroom

Figure 1.



teachers incorporate elements into the classroom experiences that would facilitate the inclusion of the vision program at several points in the course. The main goal of a language program is communication, but by pairing it with the future selves' vision program, the goal of communication would be enhanced by supporting the relevance of students' identities in the process. A short interest inventory would give teachers as much information as necessary about their students. Here is an example of questions that could be used weeks prior to the start of a semester or academic year to guide the design of pedagogical practices that support the complexity of students' continuously evolving self-concept and the formation potential of possible L2 selves. This questionnaire could be in the native language or target language depending on the proficiency level of the students.

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Name:

Major: (reasons for this major)

Minor: (reasons for this minor)

What do you like to do in your free time?

What would you like to do after finishing college?

Complete the following sentence: In 10 years, I will...

Why did you choose [whatever language the student is taking]?

What would you like to learn in this class?

What type of classroom activities do you like the most?

The possibility for the continuous development of communicative proficiency beyond the classroom is thus increased if students' identities are integrated into the design of pedagogical practices that allow them to speak as themselves.

Second, once they gather information from the questionnaire, teachers should design pedagogical activities that include experiences and topics of interest to the students. For instance, here is an example of a student's answers to the questionnaire:

Name: *James* (not his real name)

Major: (reasons for this major): *Communications because I am interested in working in broadcasting.*

Minor: (reasons for this minor): *Political science because I am interested in international affairs, and it is a good combination for my career as a broadcaster.*

What do you like to do in your free time? *Watching sports and reading.*

What would you like to do after finishing college? *Work as a news anchor*

Complete the following sentence: In 10 years, I will *work for a major news broadcaster such as CNN or ABC.*

Why did you choose Spanish? *Because it was suggested by my advisor*

What would you like to learn in this class? *How to speak Spanish*

What type of classroom activities do you like the most? *Games, culture, and interactive activities*

This student's interests and reason(s) to be in the Spanish class are a good representation of many of our students. A sample of activities and/or modifications to common exercises in the target language and culture that may take into account his interest in broadcasting, sports, and international affairs would include readings about sports news and international events, a podcast about a recent event in a L2-speaking country, a project about famous L2-speaking people in sports or the creation of a classroom newspaper or short videos. Figure 2 provides an example of a set of typical activities for an intermediate language class that have been modified to take into account James' interests and those of others with similar pursuits. It is important to point out that although this particular example is tailored to meet the needs of a specific student the teacher may group students together in accordance with their common interests and goals. This would not only promote greater communication among the students but would also save the teacher from being overwhelmed by having to design individual activities for each student:

Exploring identity in the language classroom

Table 1.

	Activities	Modified Version
Goals	1. To identify and name words related to the airport and traveling 2. To make travel arrangements	
Introduction	1. To read the introductory dialogue from the textbook and answer the following questions: a. Who is traveling? b. Where? c. Where are they? d. How long is the trip?	1. Ask the students to close their eyes and try to remember their last vacation trip for two minutes. Ask them to try to remember as much information as they can. 2. Tell the students that those events are taking place right now (address the present tense). Ask the same questions and add ones that are more personal, such as: Who is traveling with you? How do you feel at this moment? 3. They can share their answers with two other students and report differences and similarities. The teacher could also ask them to compare their trip with the one from the dialogue. [adapted from Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013)]
Vocabulary Practice	2. Fill in the blanks with the words from the vocabulary list. a. Three friends are waiting in ____ b. They have to buy ____ trip tickets to Colombia.	4. The fill-in-the-blanks activity could be personalized by using James' name and famous peoples' names from the media. It could also include places familiar to James.
Communication	3. Dialogue between a travel agent and a customer. Students are designated as Student A and Student B and use the clues from the book to create the dialogue.	5. The teacher organizes the classroom as an airport with a large central place and four information areas (help desk, transport desk, tourist information, and flight information). Each student is given a role card with complicated or authentic traveling situations. For instance, James' card could be that he is flying to Colombia to start a job as a news anchor at a major news network, but his luggage did not arrive on time. James would also have to book a hotel near the network's main office. The teacher asks the students to imagine that they are at the airport and that they have to go to the appropriate desk to find the information they need. They might have to visit more than one desk. Once they solve their problem, they sit and observe the ones that are still working on solving their situation [adapted from Hadfield and Dörnyei (2013, p.268)].
Assessment	4. One provided by the book	6. The content of the questions could be personalized with information given during the three stages of the lesson.

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The left column contains activities that any educator could find in a regular language classroom to help students achieve the goal of making travel arrangements. These activities are normally disconnected from the realities of a regular language student. They also support the checklist requirement approach to studying language. For instance, one can find a regular unit starting with a dialogue between two students with common L2 names at the airport ready to go to a target language-speaking country and talking about the steps to go through customs while in line. Teachers would normally ask their students to read the dialogue. However, how many of our students are named Mauricio and find themselves talking about the nuances of taking off their shoes at the inspection line after doing it for 10+ years? How would they be able to apply the vocabulary when they are only asked to repeat, rather than to discuss, for example, the reasons behind a strict security protocol in the USA? The activities in the left column stress the approach of language study as another distant academic subject, whereas the right column describes more personalized activities that illustrate several stages of the motivational vision program.

The activity from the introduction, picturing a recent trip, is an example of a visualization activity that exemplifies the steps of creating, strengthening, and keeping the vision alive. It also invites the students to bring their L2 selves into the experience rather than talking about unknown people with whom they have nothing in common. The vocabulary exercise could help the students remember the terminology of the lesson by making connections with an actual self—James' self—and increasing the meaningfulness and familiarity of the material (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2013), which is a required step in nourishing the vision of a possible L2 self. The airport exercise is an example of an activity that helps keep the vision of a possible L2 self alive in the student and invites the student to be a participant in the target language's imagined community. These exercises facilitate a more meaningful connection between the self and the target language, which, in turn, could help develop possible L2 selves and increase language-learning

... in order to promote autonomous learning, it is necessary to encourage students to develop and express their own identities through the language they are learning.

motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). Ushioda (2009) states that in order to promote autonomous learning, it is necessary to encourage students to develop and express their own identities through the language they are learning. However, let us stress that one activity could be relevant to some but not all. It is important to make sure that we address different interests at different times. For instance, one activity could take into account a wide variety of experiences such as the visualization

exercise of the last vacation trip described in Figure 2 above. This exercise allows the students to speak as themselves and to accomplish the communicative task. This task accommodates a diversity of backgrounds and worldliness. Furthermore, many students share similar hobbies. As suggested earlier, language teachers could arrange their students in smaller groups by interests, making the personalization of activities more manageable. Group mixer activities could also help include a diversity of interests and passions.

Exploring identity in the language classroom

Finally, it might be necessary to hold one-to-one meetings with students who are disengaged and who do not seem to connect with the material in the classroom. These meetings would offer the opportunity for the students to express their fears and worries, and by identifying possible learning barriers, thereby avoid the possibility of a *fear self* (failing the class). This stage will help complement the 'approach motivation' of visualizing an ideal future self (Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013) by addressing an 'avoid motivation,' that of failing the class. In such a situation, one needs to discuss and create a plan that would make the possibility of failing the class remote if the student gets involved in his own learning process. During the meeting, the teacher would identify what the possible causes for the lack of interest and failure are, provide a plan with a helpful list of strategies to help the student succeed (e.g., visualize a goal, make rules to attain it, develop a routine, or make use of the environment), and, more importantly, express confidence in the students' ability to persevere and triumph in the end. Teachers have to let their students know that they believe in their efforts.

In summary, language learning motivation is complex and would benefit greatly from a construct that starts from the individual by facilitating the development of possible L2 selves, rather than relying on external mechanisms, such as textbooks, which are mostly irrelevant to students' lives. The development of possible L2 selves draws upon the imagination and identity of the students, and serves as a powerful motivator for learning in the language classroom. This article invites the language teaching community to explore the many possibilities offered by this future image construct in the design of engaging instructional strategies that would enhance the possibility of a continuous development of communicative proficiency beyond the language classroom.

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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

Sawaie, Mohammed. *Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar*. New York: Routledge, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-415-71004-6. pp. 457. Price: \$47.95.

Arabic grammar is, no doubt, a complicated topic, and any reference work that sets out to provide a comprehensive grammar of Modern Standard Arabic must strike a fine balance between thoroughness and accessibility. Mohammed Sawaie's *Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar* is a refreshingly clear, practical and uncluttered treatment of major grammar points that succeeds admirably, as it avoids getting lost in esoteric linguistic terminology and classifications. As such, it will be a welcome reference for most teachers and advanced students of Arabic.

Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar is divided into 38 sections, most devoted to a specific part of speech. While some grammatical terminology is used in identifying the chapters, the titles are relatively straightforward and easy to use, such as "prepositions that precede nouns or pronouns" and "prepositions that precede nouns but not pronouns." The author assumes relatively little background knowledge, beginning each section with a fairly simple introduction, for example, "the function of adjectives." The section on the case system, for example, begins with "The Case System in English," before progressing to "The Case System in Arabic," so as to provide some context for addressing this most vexing of topics. The sections are largely independent, making reference where needed to other parts of the book. This sort of cross-referencing is not often required, however. In general, a reader looking for a clear explanation of adverbs in Arabic, for example, can read only the adverb chapter and come out with a clear understanding without having to flip to other sections of the book.

The author introduces Arabic grammatical terminology to the reader without assuming that such terms are already known. The book also has indices organized by English grammatical terminology and Arabic grammar terms. This in itself is very

helpful as Arabic students are likely to encounter references to Arabic grammar terms in textbooks without any explanation. A minor, but very helpful characteristic of the book is that it relies on Arabic script, with no English transliteration, to render Arabic words, unlike some other texts. For any reader sufficiently versed in Arabic to be attempting the subjects in a comprehensive grammar, transliteration would be merely distracting and confusing.

This text makes generous use of examples to show the usage of each concept in action. This is a welcome departure from many of the leading Arabic grammars on the market today, which tend to dive into long expositions on grammar rules and exceptions, particularly regarding cases, without sufficient, clear examples to show contrasts between one grammatical situation and another. The explanations are very helpful, such as providing comments that the choice of a certain structure “carries an educated speech register.” Unlike many Arabic grammar texts, this book addresses cases without assuming they are the primary focus of all language study. A significant strength of this text, as well, is that it was obviously written from scratch for a contemporary audience and not cobbled together from existing texts. The classic Arabic grammars, despite the tremendous regard they deserve as foundational works in the field, are nonetheless difficult for most students today to read.

Although *Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar* is primarily a reference tool, not a workbook, Routledge has provided extensive exercise sheets on its website free of charge--another welcome departure from many of the texts on the market today. These provide rigorous practice on grammar points. These exercises require a fairly strong Arabic vocabulary, however, and are clearly not aimed at beginners (the instructions are for the most part in Arabic). Nonetheless, it is easy to envision teachers selecting and adapting some of these for practice in class.

Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar is not the only comprehensive grammar available, of course, and its suitability will depend on the user's desire for detail versus ease of use. This text tends to be more on the accessible side than the most comparable text, Mohammad Alhawary's *Modern Standard Arabic Grammar* (2011), which tends slightly more toward the technical. Karin Ryding's *Reference Grammar of Modern Standard Arabic* (2005) is more detailed and technical and less accessible for beginners and intermediate students. The *Practice Makes Perfect* series books, on the other hand, are much less comprehensive and provide mostly workbook drills of basic grammar points.

Fundamentals of Arabic Grammar is a worthwhile reference work for teachers of Arabic. Advanced level students or those aiming for the advanced level may want to procure their own personal copy as well. For beginning and intermediate students, this material is best presented through the intervention of a teacher, despite the admirable job the author has done in simplifying it as much as possible. For those teachers who have struggled to find adequate grammar references--not overly complicated, yet thorough enough to be effective--this book is definitely worth considering.

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Chinese

Ning, C. Y. & Montanaro, J. S. *Encounters: Chinese Language and Culture Book I. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 2011. ISBN: 978-0300161625.*

Ning, C. Y. & Montanaro, J. S. *Encounters: Chinese Language and Culture Book I. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. 2012 ISBN: 978-0300161632.*

Chinese programs have been growing rapidly in popularity during the past decades and Chinese language ability has become a skill much in demand according to the U.S. Department of Education (2013). It is estimated that over 60,000 K-12 students and 60,976 college students are currently taking Chinese (Robelen, 2010; Furman et al, 2010). As a result of such tremendous growth, Chinese teachers desperately need a textbook series that incorporates the best practices and principles of second language acquisition and pedagogies. *Encounters: Chinese Language and Culture* (hereafter *Encounters*) answers this call by providing a learner-centered, performance-oriented and integrated curriculum with meaningful activities and authentic materials.

Encounters exemplifies the effective use of technology in modern CFL learning and teaching. It consists of student texts, character writing workbooks, a companion Website, screenplays, CD-ROMs and annotated instructor editions of the textbooks. Each textbook includes ten units, covering a full array of major conversational topics at the novice and intermediate levels. Each unit tells a dramatic story filmed in well-known cities in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, Guilin, and Qinghai. All the core learning materials are presented with video episodes focusing on communication and cultural exploration in real-life contexts. Both CFL learners and teachers can benefit enormously from these multimedia resources and well-organized materials since they involve daily conversations in a wide range of settings such as dorms, classrooms, business conference rooms, restaurants and homes.

Another highlight of *Encounters* is the abundance of authentic materials included to engage students in meaningful language activities and cultural discussions. First of all, the authors adopt four-character idioms and/or widely-used proverbs as unit titles for both of their textbooks. Take the title of Unit 17, for instance: "East, west, home is best" or 金窝银窝不如自己的草窝, captures Chinese cultural values about home and family relationships, and naturally motivates learners to compare and contrast their home culture with the target Chinese culture. Students thus not only get exposed to the structures and language building blocks covered in these lessons, but also are exposed to authentic and culturally rich expressions. Additionally, each unit comprises a range of print and non-print authentic materials, such as business cards, maps, restaurant menus, newspaper excerpts, hand-written notes, and real-life scenes in the videos. Thanks to these authentic materials it is extremely convenient for CFL teachers to use the pre-designed tasks appropriate to the language proficiency and age level of the learners.

Encounters aims to facilitate learning with comprehensible input (watching the stories and reading the visuals or texts) and a variety of hands-on activities (guided pair work, group work and independent tasks) with built-in instructions and procedures. It serves both students and teachers extremely well in this respect: the color-coded,

annotated instructor edition reduces the amount of time and effort on the part of teachers with regard to lesson planning, while students truly enjoy the various tasks that not only focus on grammatical structures, but also do learned-centered activities through interpretive reading, presentational writing and interpersonal small group discussions. Another feature that students really adore is the etymology and sentence examples provided in the character workbook. In short, *Encounters* looks like a great textbook series for beginning and intermediate Chinese courses. CFL students and teachers may find it particularly suitable for learner-centered, culturally-enriched, technology-enhanced classrooms.

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Publisher's Response

Yale University Press thanks *The NECTFL Review* and reviewer Ke Peng for the detailed and positive review of Cynthia Ning's *Encounters: Chinese Language and Culture Book 1*. *Encounters* represents a new generation of language programs, weaving a tapestry of Chinese language and culture that also employs a range of techniques to encourage rapid and confident student progress. Featuring a dramatic series filmed entirely in China, the program's highly communicative approach immerses learners in the Chinese language and culture through video episodes that directly correspond to units in the combination textbook-workbook. If instructors would like to know more about *Encounters*, they may do so at <http://encounterschinese.com/> or request an examination copy of this or any of our language textbooks at yalebooks.com/languageexam; selected books are also available to view online at yalebooks.com/e-exam.

Dawn Angileri
Academic Discipline Marketer
Yale University Press

French

Amon, Evelyne, Judith Muyskens, and Alice C. Omaggio Hadley. *Vis-à-vis*. 6th Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-259-13702-0. Accompanied by an Instructor's Annotated Edition, a Workbook/Laboratory Manual, digital Instructor's Manual, Testing Program, audiotapes, integrated DVD, and Connect French digital Learning Center.

In the opinion of this reviewer, *Vis-à-vis* is an incredible first-year French program, one of the best on the market today. Like its five predecessors, the sixth edition of *Vis-à-vis* comes with a zillion ancillaries (though “virtual” because Internet-based technology has greatly reduced the weight of the former audiovisual component), most of which are well conceived and easy to use. All the various components fit together like the pieces of a giant three-dimensional puzzle even though the learning curve for the neophyte instructor is relatively steep. Each of the sixteen chapters is rather on the long side (thirty pages or so), so the instructor will want to pick and choose judiciously from the abundance of materials and activities available (or consider incorporating the last part of *Vis-à-vis* into a third-semester course, which is what I usually end up doing, finishing up *Vis-à-vis* in a third semester and throwing in some “lit and flic” (literature and film) for good measure).

Vis-à-vis is based on a balanced four-skills approach to learning French through a variety of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities, while introducing students to the richness and diversity of the Francophone world. The organization is clear and user-friendly almost to a fault, and the *Instructor's Manual* is exemplary in its attention to practical matters. Inexperienced instructors entering the profession will find in it a gold mine of suggestions about everything from teaching and scheduling to testing and grading.

The 467-page-text (and 343-page long Workbook/Lab Manual [both texts have the exact same number of pages as the fifth edition, incidentally, making it easy for instructors to recycle the fifth edition])-- is divided into sixteen chapters, each consisting of four *leçons* and a two-page cultural section titled *Le blog de* (named after one of the fifth edition's recurring characters--Léa, Hassan, Juliette, and Hector) and a section titled *Reportage* (consisting of a cultural photo essay integrated with the chapter video clip). Chapters open with a beautiful color picture and concise chapter outline detailing the communicative objectives of the chapter, along with the chapter vocabulary, grammar, and culture, all of which are beautifully integrated with each other to teach a given theme (e.g., school, likes and dislikes, family, dress, food, holidays, travel, the city, media, cultural heritage, to name some of the more striking chapter themes). The paper quality is not great, nor is the color, but I can report that the fifth edition lasted the duration so I remain optimistic about the durability of the sixth edition.

Fortunately, grammar topics have not been shuffled around at all since the fifth edition, making it quite painless for instructors to make the transition to the new, sixth edition, but the changes are still substantive enough to warrant the epithet “new.” The main difference, as far as I can tell, is the new learning platform, *Connect French/LearnSmart*, a fully integrated Website that not only provides crystal-clear recordings

of the 64 mini-dialogues in *Vis-à-Vis* but also a “learning system that uses a series of adaptive questions to pinpoint the unique knowledge gaps of each individual student. *LearnSmart* then provides them with “an adaptive learning tool that allows students to work through vocabulary and grammar modules, using smart technology to focus their time on the areas where they are the weakest” (Katie Crouch Mc Graw-Hill). This extraordinary Website has to be experienced to be believed. The authors are hopeful that “students retain more knowledge, learn faster, study more efficiently, and come to class better prepared to participate” (inside front cover). Reduced class hours has forced a growing reliance on technology, such as this hybrid style learning tool; however, it is important to point out that it complements rather than replaces the traditional classroom by providing “more opportunities for oral communication, pronunciation practice, in and outside the classroom” (inside front cover). Another remarkable innovation in the sixth edition is the *Grammaire Interactive* tutorials, which work hand-in hand with *LearnSmart* to “provide students with the latest digital tools to improve their course outcomes” (inside front cover). These tutorials, taught by a sultry, animated French teacher who made this baby boomer here think of one of his childhood crushes, the comic book character Archie’s blond-haired girlfriend Betty, is sure to please. She is incredibly articulate and entertaining in her own right. Who said you need a real live person to teach French?

Long time users of *Vis-à-vis* will recognize the following features:

- The *Le blog de* section exposes students to contemporary language and to the vast diversity of life and culture in the French-speaking world;
- *Le parler jeune* introduces students to contemporary vocabulary as it is actually spoken by young people today;
- *Prononcez bien!* provides pronunciation tips to allow students to practice difficult sounds and words and perfect their accents;
- *Reportage* readings explore cultural, social, and historical topics that address current interests and technological advancements of the twenty-first century.

Moreover, in order to more actively engage students in the material found in each chapter of the *Vis-à-vis* program, the *Leçon 4: Perspectives* section of each chapter has been revised to make it more dynamic and to give instructors more flexibility in their lesson planning. This section, which integrates the vocabulary, grammar, and themes of the first three *leçons*, but still includes the following sub sections:

- *Lecture* readings, some of which have been replaced;
- As in previous editions, the *Pour s’amuser* feature contains jokes, puzzles, quotations, and other brief activities;
- Video activities in *Le vidéoblog de* focus on vocabulary, comprehension, and cross-cultural comparisons;
- Images throughout have been updated and refreshed in order to appeal to the so-called millennial students, who, as we all know by now, are increasingly visual learners.

Sadly, the only feature that has been dropped is the *La vie en chantant* section, which included links to an iTunes playlist, brief biographies of singers and musical groups, and pre- and post-listening exercises for each song featured.

Just as in the fifth edition, coverage of the Francophone world is substantive and especially evident in the following program components:

- the *Blog de* section in each chapter;
- the all-new Video program, shot entirely on location, whose recurring characters introduce us to life in their native France, Martinique, Morocco, and Canada (the *Bienvenue* section in each chapter contains up-to-date cultural vignettes, especially dealing with the Cajuns in Louisiana);
- the *Reportage* readings (many of which are new), which explore cultural, social, and historical topics addressing the interests of today's students and are integrated with the content of the blogs;
- and, finally, the readings--nine of which are new--add to the contemporary character of the text and provide a good introduction to life across the Francophone world, though some instructors might object that the emphasis is rather on the Francophone at the expense of the French mother culture.

In addition, as the preface to the sixth edition spells out, "each chapter contains the following exciting enhancements to promote practice and competence" (many of which have been improved):

- Interactive vocabulary presentations (*Paroles*) with audio allow students to listen, record, and practice the new vocabulary at home;
- Interactive text book and workbook activities for vocabulary and grammar in Connect French, many of which are auto-graded;
- Blackboard Instant Messaging provides the necessary tools for students to work in pairs online or to practice speaking before coming to class;
- The Voice Board feature allows individuals to record their own voice as many times as they wish before they post their recording to which other students may respond;
- New *Prononcez bien!* Activities with a recording feature provide students with opportunities for discrete-word and contextualized practice that gives them more confidence in their speaking abilities."

I know what you are thinking. As an instructor, how does one possibly make use of all the various components and high tech gimmicks that come with this new edition and not burden students with a lot of busywork? The claim "teaching an introductory language course has never been simpler" (*Vis-à-Vis* xviii), therefore, is a half truth at best; it will take even a seasoned instructor a while to learn how to navigate all these resources and figure out how to best use them (and which ones to leave out!). In the past I have always liked to have students hand in various assignments. In the future, I will have to accept the fact that students can do a lot on their own, hopefully, not because I, the teacher, threatens them but because they want to learn.

The *Workbook/Laboratory Manual* is completely unchanged from the fifth edition, and the veteran user of *Vis-à-vis* will breathe a sigh of relief, knowing that s/he will not have to redo the entire class syllabus. However, I still prefer the bold-faced rubrics, making it easy to identify the beginning and end of an exercise. The exercises in the *Workbook/Laboratory Manual* underwent some cosmetic changes for the fifth edition (mostly for the better) and remain the same in the sixth, but they are splendid; quite

frankly, it is hard to imagine how they could be further improved. This reviewer is of the opinion that (oral) Lab exercises are an integral part of any first-year program; I regularly assign most of them, which, though sometimes quite tedious, give students the opportunity to improve their oral comprehension skills. Here I should add that there is also the Online Workbook/Laboratory Manual, which provides an enhanced and interactive version of the hard cover lab manual, including instant feedback, automatic grading and scoring, and a grade report feature that can be viewed online or printed and makes it possible for students to do lab assignments at home and not in the “language lab” (which probably does not exist anymore anyway on most campuses, having long ago been converted into a multipurpose computer lab). However, instructors will have to tailor make their Workbook/lab assignments because the online Workbook/Lab Manual is not just another online version of the hardcopy text. In addition, I personally have students submit a selection of exercises just to be assured that they are actually doing their homework and to be able to inspect the quality of their written work.

In the past I have used a companion reader, such as *C'est la Vie* (2005), a wonderful anthology of short stories also published by McGraw-Hill and specifically designed with the “high beginners” in mind, those proverbial *faux débutants* who always make up a sizeable portion of our first-year French students. This nifty reader by Evelyn Amos and Carolyn Nash consists of four original stories that bring the Francophone world to life through the experiences of students and young professionals in France, Guadeloupe, Belgium, and Canada. (*C'est la Vie* was reviewed in the pages of *The NECTFL Review*, no. 57, Spring 2005.)

The only chapter that appears to have undergone any real change is the last, Chapter 16, on the subjunctive, where several of the *Structures* readings have been updated with more subject current material. However, only five (!) of the readings (out of a total of sixteen are new). Several *Lectures* from preceding editions have been revamped with new pictures, though. Here, let me point out something obvious, that it is essential to provide readings that are not only up-to-date but also capable of interesting the average 18-year-old American student. In this respect I have to admit that the sixth edition is disappointing. One complaint I have heard in the past has been that many readings were not only dull but impossible to use in the classroom without resorting to major pedagogical acrobatics.

The popular *Bienvenue* cultural video selection appears after every fourth chapter and presents cultural footage from various Francophone cities and regions throughout the world (Paris, Québec, Dakar, Brussels, and Fort-de-France, Louisiana, Morocco, Switzerland, and Tahiti). The video is available on DVD, as well as in Connect French, a digital platform that brings together all the online and media resources of the *Vis-à-vis* program. These short video clips present a “day in the life” of each city and are linguistically more accessible to first-year students than many of the segments in previous editions. Overall, the video is simply superb and is integrated with the *Le Blog de* section in each chapter: Léa, Hassan, Juliette, and Hector strike me as very “real” people and talk and behave the way “real” people do. The camera work and acting are first-rate, and the backdrop is always appropriate and culturally relevant to the chapter theme. Moreover, each video segment is accompanied by a host of follow-up activities. It is too bad that the authors have not included the scripts from the appendices in the

online *Instructor's Edition*, as was the case in the first couple of editions of *Vis-à-vis*; these were immensely useful to this instructor, who often needed to do some last-minute prep at home before class and who now must face the prospect of taking more than one component of the *Vis-à-vis* program home with him every day or perhaps keeping a print out of an old edition the *Instructor's Manual* (where, thankfully, the script is still available) on the kitchen table. The video remains unchanged from the fifth edition, but it is truly excellent and I wouldn't change a thing.

Furthermore, the *Vis-à-vis* online resources have been expanded and streamlined thanks to the creation of the aforementioned Connect French digital platform. This valuable online resource is a godsend to students and teachers alike and includes a potpourri of materials: interactive eBook, complete Workbook/Laboratory manual, grammar tutorials, and audio and video resources" (*Vis-à-vis* xviii). Upon closer inspection, let me add the following comments. Think of Connect French as a "house" with many rooms, such as "Workbook" (it is customized and is only available online in an assignable version), and LearnSmart, which is a student-based online resource enabling both users and teachers to make novel use of what used to be just a textbook; the former find ample opportunity to practice their active language skills (students are challenged to test their comprehension of a given topic, for example); the latter can monitor students' progress and actually intervene when appropriate.

Among the many "administrative capabilities" (*Vis-à-vis* xviii) of the program the following deserve special mention: the ability to customize syllabi and assignments; an integrated grade book; the ability to monitor students' progress; access to all instructor's resources, including the Digital Transparencies, Instructor's Manual, Connect French User's Guide, pre-made exams, and a customized testing program (*Vis-à-vis* xviii).

The 200-page *Instructor's Manual*, which is available in downloadable Word or PDF versions in *Learn French* as well as on a separate CD-ROM,¹ offers more detailed teaching suggestions, sample lesson plans, and video scripts. Even a seasoned teacher will find them useful, especially the ones about scheduling. The sections on language proficiency and ACTFL's guidelines help instructors implement assessment on a daily basis and contain many helpful suggestions about how instructors can use French in the classroom during every class. Finally, the accompanying Testing Program is exceptionally well conceived and provides a comprehensive selection of quizzes, exams, and dictations. The Instructor's Edition of the *Vis-à-vis Online Learning Center* contains the same features as the Student Edition as well as the Testing Program, Instructor's Manual, Audio script, and Digital Transparencies. A username and password can be obtained free of charge from your friendly regional McGraw-Hill sales representative.

I teach the first-year sequence and have been a faithful user of *Vis-à-vis* (and the seven editions of its predecessor *Rendez-vous*) ever since I entered the profession full-time in the mid-1980s and therefore have a frame of reference (along with a very long memory!). When I reviewed the second, third, and fifth editions of *Vis-à-vis* for

1. This CD-ROM includes a potpourri of useful items, such as an Audio script, Digital Transparencies, Information Gap Activities, Instruction Manual, maps, *Prononcez Bien*, Testing Program, Verb Charts, and Writing prompts.

The NECTFL Review, I focused on the chapters I happened to be doing in class at the time. For the sake of consistency I will proceed the same way here and consider chapter 7 (which I just finished in French 101) and chapter 12 (in French 102), in order to examine a few specifics and discuss the changes made in the sixth edition.

The title of Chapter 7, *Les Plaisirs de la Cuisine*, remains the same, as does the chapter content and organization of material. This chapter continues the study of French food and introduces students to the delights of French cuisine. In the preceding chapter--on the vagaries of the *article partitif*--students learned basic food items and how to order a meal in a restaurant. Since prices were listed in euros, this is as good a time as any to introduce a cultural unit on the euro (time permitting, of course). Prices, of course, have gone up since the last edition, and this is reflected in the menu. In Chapter 7 it is time to go shopping in the neighborhood stores and then cook a gourmet meal on one's own. The chapter's grammar lesson is unchanged and focuses on interrogative and demonstrative adjectives and the verbs *vouloir*, *pouvoir*, and *devoir*. The grammar and vocabulary exercises are the same as in the first three editions, but many cultural items (photos, cultural vignettes, etc.) and introduce students to the delights of French cuisine. Miraculously, the prices of French groceries have survived the fifth edition and have not changed at all except in the second and third columns (181). Why, the price of some prices have even come down (*framboises entières*). Must be among the belated positive effects of the Single European Market and the influx of migrant labor! Teaching French food is tricky, and the authors take a rather standard approach, relating it to pertinent grammar constructions such as the partitive article; however, the focus is consistent, throughout, and, I think, manageable even at the first-year level. The *Le Blog d'Hassan* takes us on a visit to a North African market in the Place Monge in Paris, and the *Reportage* section, immediately following, introduces students to a variety of typical dishes from around the Francophone world. A lot of these skits are educational (and incredibly professional!), since they cover everyday themes such as shopping, ordering a meal in a restaurant, and finding one's way about town, and in many cases echo the chapter theme. They are superb; I have seen nothing nearly as good anywhere.

Chapter 12, *La Passion pour les Arts*, provides an introduction to the arts in France and, happily, still includes a review of the main *époques* and some of the masterpieces one associates with, for example, the medieval period, the seventeenth century, and other would-be accomplishments of dead white males. The grammar lesson continues the study of direct and indirect object pronouns, as well as the use of prepositions with verbs (which used to be covered in a later chapter in an earlier edition). Most of the material remains unchanged from previous editions, and the reading selection is still Jacques Prévert's well-known poem *Déjeuner du matin*, which, when one thinks of it, might find a better home in Chapter 8 in a future edition (which teaches the *passé composé*, *justement*). In the *Le Blog de* section Juliette talks about how she learned to paint at a young age and in the *Le Vidéoblog de* section hooks up with a friend on the Pont des Arts just across from the Musée d'Orsay. As much as I like traditional French culture, I would, however, update the exercises on page 324 if for no other reason than because our students—like it or not—simply don't know even half of the artists mentioned.

If you are looking for a new first-year French program, look no further. If student testimonials and outcomes assessment are any indication, *Vis-à-vis* really “works.” There are several other very good first-year French program “out there,” but *Vis-à-Vis* has always clicked with me and my students and I am not planning changing anytime soon. As my tennis coach in my native Sweden reminded me time and again: Why change a winning strategy? My only reservation is cost and digital accessibility. The new edition of *Vis-à-Vis* costs several hundred dollars, including access to Learn French. However, I have been assured by McGraw-Hill that “the best value for students is to purchase the online code with access to the full electronic text and workbook lab manual. They could then choose to buy a loose-leaf text for only \$40 from within ConnectFrench. This cuts down the cost directly to a student. That being said, a student who purchases a used book can still buy they access card separately” (Heather Coyss). Our college book store routinely buys back and recycles books (and we are not unique in this) and I am naïve enough to think that this practice should not affect digital access codes. In this day and age, cost is major concern to me and my students. As I see it, students will have two options: I. purchase an online access pass valid for two years, which enables users to download a loose-leaf text for \$40 and to access printable select Workbook exercises; II. Purchase a traditional text, a hardcover Workbook, and an online access pass. Either way is fine, as long as students have a hardcover “text” in class; I do not want to see an all online classroom in which students navigate between Facebook, email, and whatever we happen to be doing in class. They have enough trouble already now keeping their hands of their cell phones. It should be added that a variety of online features are already available free of charge at <http://www.mhhe.com/visavis6e> and include the oral component of the Workbook/Lab Manual. Now, in all fairness to the publishers, all quality products have gone up in cost and the combination of an online platform and a traditional text does cost considerably more. However, in the opinion of this reviewer, students will get their money’s worth, for two semesters or even three. Instructors have to remember that they do not have to adopt every single feature; there is enough for to satisfy everyone, and more. *Vis-à-vis* is an overall excellent learning machine with few if any peers on the market today but I hope (and I say this half in jest) there will still be a place for a teacher in a traditional classroom in the seventh edition. Last but certainly not least, McGraw-Hill provides regularly scheduled tutorials and webinars, as well as frequent updates of the its high quality support system, and can contacted via internet and telephone.

Tom Conner
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Publisher’s Response

McGraw-Hill is delighted to have the opportunity to respond to Professor Tom Conner’s exhaustive and overall excellent review of the sixth edition of *Vis-à-vis*. A longtime and loyal user of *Vis-à-vis*, he describes it as “an incredible first-year French program, one of the best on the market today.” According to Professor Conner, *Vis-*

à-vis takes “a balanced four-skills approach to learning French through a variety of listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities, while introducing students to the richness and diversity of the Francophone world.” He recommends the rich and expansive instructor’s resources and describes them as a “gold mine” for inexperienced instructors.

In his review, Professor Conner begins outlining the “clear and user-friendly organization of *Vis-à-vis* and goes on to give an overview of each chapter which includes chapter vocabulary, grammar, and culture, all “beautifully integrated.” He indicates that minimal changes in grammar sequencing will make for an easy transition from one edition to the next, and highlights some of the biggest updates to the 6th edition, including all-new digital tools such as Connect French, LearnSmart and interactive Grammar Tutorials—an “integrated website” that “has to be experienced to be believed.”

In addition to some of the newer components, Professor Conner outlines some of the time-tested hallmarks of *Vis-à-vis*, including *Le blog de...*, the video, and the readings—all representing “substantive” coverage of the Francophone world. He also lists some of the major enhancements of the 6th edition, including interactive vocabulary and grammar activities in Connect French, online paired communication practice through Blackboard Instant Messaging, and an expanded pronunciation section.

Professor Conner calls Connect French a “valuable online resource [that] is a godsend to students and teachers alike.” He goes on to advise instructors of Introductory French, “If you are looking for a new first-year French program, look no further. If student testimonials and outcomes assessment are any indication, *Vis-à-vis* really ‘works.’”

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

Katherine K. Crouch
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McGraw-Hill Higher Education

Jansma, Kimberly and Margaret Ann Kassen. *Motifs: An Introduction to French. Enhanced Sixth Edition.* Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2016. Student Edition of the text with iLrn: Heinle Learning Center ISBN: 978-1-305-59608-5. Annotated Instructor’s Edition ISBN-13: 978-1-305-26279-9. For more information about Cengage Learning Solutions, visit www.cengage.com. For orders and pricing information, visit www.cengagebrain.com.

Highly experienced pedagogical researchers and instructors Kimberly Jansma and Margaret Ann Kassen give us *Motifs*, a beginning-level French program now in its sixth edition. Most appealing is its realistic approach to learning about Francophone culture, especially those aspects not solely based on the western European tradition:

Motifs has carefully selected contexts in which our students might reasonably expect to communicate. It provides the appropriate tools in the form of structures,

vocabulary, communication strategies, and cultural background to make this possible. In the process of discovering the language, students are introduced to the French-speaking world in a way that challenges them to look at their own cultural practices more objectively. (AIE-1)

Motifs is comprised of fourteen “modules” or chapters and a concluding *module de récapitulation* aimed at helping students prepare for the final examination. Each module is divided into seven color-coded parts: *Thèmes* (purple); *Pratiques de conversation* (blue); *Structures* (green); *Perspectives culturelles* (magenta); *À lire, à découvrir et à écrire* (red); *Vidéothèque* (sea green); and *Vocabulaire* (orange). The color-coding is a practical and easy way for both student and instructor alike to remain organized. When referring to the teaching of grammar with *Motifs*’ end-of-chapter green pages, the authors explain succinctly and quite objectively the flexibility of options for each instructor’s individual methodological approach:

The green pages contain explanations of new structures in English accompanied by self-correcting exercises. Students can therefore study grammar at their own pace, freeing up class time. These pages lend themselves to a variety of approaches. Some instructors, such as those in intensive programs or teaching classes meeting fewer times a week, assign the grammar explanations and exercises in advance. This technique is sometimes referred to as “flipping the classroom.” Others prefer introducing the structures in class and then assigning grammar study as follow-up for homework. Both approaches can be equally effective. (AIE-1)

Modules 1-9 each detail five grammar points and Modules 10-14 explore four. Furthermore, every module has a “Tout Ensemble” section, a comprehensive grammar exercise at the end that requires mastery of several structures in order to complete it successfully. One of the hallmarks of *Motifs*’s organization is its thematic organization. The chapter themes, which help learners connect vocabulary, grammar structures and real-world language functions in meaningful contexts, are as follows:

1. *Les camarades et la salle de classe.*
2. *La vie universitaire.*
3. *Chez l’étudiant.*
4. *Travail et loisirs.*
5. *On sort?*
6. *Qu’est-ce qui s’est passé?*
7. *On mange bien.*
8. *Souvenirs.*
9. *À la découverte du monde francophone.*
10. *La maison et la routine quotidienne.*
11. *Voyager en France.*
12. *Les jeunes face à l’avenir.*
13. *La santé et le Bonheur.*
14. *La vie sentimentale.*
15. *Fictions (La littérature francophone).*

Probably the most exciting new component of the sixth edition is *Vidéo Voyages*, high quality video segments that supplement each module’s cultural content. These

segments are accessible in iLrn and are referenced in each chapter's *Vidéo* section. The diversity of Francophone countries presented and the relevance of topics to today's students are noteworthy. For example, in the very first module, the *Vidéo Voyages* is about a music festival in Senegal. Other examples are the second module's *Vidéo Voyages*, whose subject is Algeria's passionate soccer fans, and that of the ninth module that focuses on *le gwoka*, a traditional music from Guadeloupe. Not being familiar myself with *le gwoka*, I was delighted to learn about it via the engaging video presentation. Another significant addition to the sixth edition is the pronunciation activities in the main textbook. Previous editions of *Motifs* had pronunciation activities in the online workbook, but in this edition, to complement the online activities, in-class, pair based pronunciation activities have been added to help raise learner awareness of, for example, intonation, differences in pronunciation of masculine and feminine forms, adding emphasis, and the contrast of *du* vs. *de*. Moreover, the *Voix en direct* and *Voix en direct (suite)* unscripted interviews with Canadian, Guinean, and Tunisian speakers contrast nicely with those of French individuals so as to show students the variances found in real-life spontaneous language.

In conclusion, *Motifs* is a well-conceived and well-planned beginning-level French textbook. *Motifs* provides teachers with an excellent platform to teach French grammar and offer an introduction to the varied and rich culture of the Francophone world.

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Morton, Jacqueline. *English Grammar for Students of French*. Ann Arbor, MI: The Olivia and Hill Press, 2013. Pp. 173. ISBN: 978-0-934034-42-5.

English Grammar for Students of French is a study guide for English-speaking students learning French. It is part of a series for English speakers studying a variety of languages that has the common goal of providing learners with a solid foundation in English grammar before they embark upon the daunting task of learning a foreign language. The author states in the introduction that this text is to be used as a supplemental guide and includes tips on how to effectively use this text but also on how to learn a new language period, something the majority of students have never undertaken before. Learning a foreign language can be especially difficult for those unsure of how to study or where to begin; the author provides helpful strategies in the Introduction (“Tips for Learning Grammar,” “Tips for Learning Vocabulary,” “Tips For Learning Word Forms,” “Tips for Effective Study”) and throughout the text, advising students on how to effectively study a foreign language and emphasizing the importance of regular practice.

With 45 different sections, ranging from “What’s in a Word?” to “What is meant by Active and Passive Voice?”, the presentation of each topic follows the same basic format: first, the author asks a thematic question (such as the aforementioned questions) followed by a brief answer and explanation of the English grammar equivalent, capped by a more detailed, example-based explanation of the passive voice in French. Each section also offers study tips, step-by-step analysis, a list of common mistakes and exceptions, and multiple

examples with opportunities for practice. Moreover, sections in the text itself and other topics of study students may be exposed to outside class are cross-referenced throughout the text if students are in need of further clarification or context in order to master a specific concept.

As a supplemental guide to learning French, this text is a highly useful and valuable asset to any student or instructor; however, having a strong command of English grammar before taking up a foreign language would certainly help. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case today, which makes *English Grammar for Students of French* such a useful resource thanks to its highly practical format and thorough focus.

The simplistic but yet clear format is a great help to all students. Each topic occupies from two to five pages, and each section comprises multiple examples organized in such a way that a student should experience little confusion. The step-by-step analyses are eminently clear and comprehensive, while each additional explanation is exceptionally concise, showing students how to easily implement on their own what they have just studied.

The format of the guide itself is structured in a logical and progressive manner, beginning with simple questions (i.e., “What’s in a Word?” and “What is a Noun?”) to more complicated topics that beginning students may never have been exposed to (i.e., “What is a Demonstrative Pronoun?” and “What is Meant by Active and Passive Voice?”). The wide range of material is helpful for beginning students but also to intermediate and advanced learners, who perhaps need a review of basic grammar topics. The table of contents spans three pages and clearly lists the topics in their order of complexity. Students can either work from the beginning or pick and choose à la carte and select a topic of their choosing. As a student of French myself, I appreciate the layout of the text, the fact that the pages are not overly crowded, the attention to detail, which never overwhelms the reader, and the format of the phrases themselves, with boldfaced or italicized words. In addition, the text does not overly complicate the material, which might distract and discourage students from studying grammar. For example, even complicated subjects, such as relative pronouns and active and passive voice (sections 43 and 45), are effectively summarized and presented concisely.

This is the type of text that students of French should add to their personal library, but it would also be of value to instructors, who can draw upon concepts that students traditionally struggle with, as well as find useful tips on how to better explain complicated grammar topics. I will be keeping this text handy as I continue my French studies, and I highly recommend it as a supplemental guide to any student or instructor who wishes to learn, review, or teach French.

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Publisher’s Response

As publishers of the O&H Study guides, we wish to thank Ms. Moore for her clear and concise review of the seventh edition of *English Grammar for Students of French*. In

a few paragraphs she has admirably summarized the purpose of the book and outlined its organization. We are pleased that this supplementary text remains popular with today's students and teachers.

Please note that by downloading the correlations on our Website (www.oliviahill.com), users of *English Grammar for Students of French* can learn which pages to read in preparation for each grammar point introduced in the French textbook they are using.

Jacqueline Morton

Creator and editor of the O&H Study Guide Series

The Olivia and Hill Press

www.oliviahill.com

Oukada, Larbi, Didier Bertrand, and Janet L. Solberg. *Controverses*, 3rd Edition. Boston: Cengage, 2016. Includes Premium Web Site Instant Access. ISBN-10: 130539190X, ISBN-13: 9781305391901). Student Activities Manual. ISBN-10: 1305105796, ISBN-13: 9781305105799). Pp 304. \$103.75

Controverses is designed as a conversation textbook for intermediate and advanced students of French. Based on the communicative approach to language teaching, the manual is structured around relevant, but often controversial and highly debated topics, such as globalization, social justice, gender equality, and immigration, among others. Since these topics are not liked only to France or French-speaking countries, but are rather transnational in scope and nature, students will be able to address and discuss them in a broader comparative context.

The textbook is divided into eight units, preceded by a preliminary chapter, which features vocabulary (some of which should be familiar) that students will find useful in getting to know one another. Some of the communicative activities the authors suggest in this chapter involve standing up, walking around the classroom and talking to as many students as possible about one another's pastimes, leisure activities, future plans and career choices. The preliminary chapter ends with a thorough description of the guiding principles of writing a composition, focusing on the notion of thesis, antithesis and synthesis as students prepare to write their first assignment, an essay about the importance of French in the USA.

The binary structure of each of the eight chapters that follow relies on a number of reading passages with opposing points of view, *Point* and *Contre-point*, which can serve as a springboard for discussions, presentations, and group projects. The passages represent a wide variety of text types, print media, Internet communications, statements from advocacy groups, graphs and charts. Some of the topics discussed are friendship and social networks, individual and collective liberties, or the advantages and the disadvantages of the latest technology. After a brief outline of the chapter's theme, students are exposed to vocabulary and encouraged to use it in a series of preliminary activities connecting the newly acquired knowledge with what they may already know or believe.

The *Point* and *Contre-point* texts are accompanied by several sections focusing on the development of particular language skills. *Les mots pour le dire* and *Étude de vocabulaire* introduce key expressions needed to understand and express personal opinions on the

topic in question. In order for students to practice pronunciation, some of the vocabulary is recorded by native speakers in the *De quoi parle-t-on* section.

Another important section, *Qu'en pensez-vous*, challenges students' knowledge and engages them in discussions of what they already know. It provides a great opportunity to develop their interpersonal communicative skills. This section also helps them develop other features of human communication, such as gestures or circumlocution. As they practice various expressions used to agree and disagree with one another's opinion, they should be able to defend a personal point of view in a more effective and eloquent manner. A variety of well-designed written and listening activities will help sharpen their skills and build their oral and written accuracy.

The *Lecture* section is preceded by a series of questions, *Remue méninges*, which challenge students' critical thinking and prepare them to analyze and discuss the reading passage. Pre- and post-reading activities lead to the *Rédaction guidée* section, where students enhance their writing skills by engaging with one of the topics provided. The learners are asked to present and describe the topic and then express arguments pro and con. In addition, the *Atelier d'écriture* included in the accompanying *Cahier d'activités* is specifically structured to further develop students' written expression and teach them how to describe something how to develop persuasive arguments and how to write for different purposes.

At the end of each chapter, students have an opportunity to review the material and exchange ideas with one another using the engaging *Réplique et synthèse* activities and additional discussion topics and questions for oral and written practice.

Even though *Controverses* is primarily a conversation textbook, new grammar is also introduced and "old" grammar systematically reviewed. In order to practice grammar, students will primarily use the *Cahier d'activités*, which provides more in-depth explanations of various concepts and structures. The authors deliberately chose to write grammatical explanations in English. The idea behind this strategy is that students will be able to work more independently, making comparisons between English and French, which will allow instructors to reserve less class time for explicit grammar explanations and to focus mostly on content and communication. Grammar exercises are structured in contextualized settings, and can be done orally in class or assigned as written homework assignments.

Controverses does a first-rate job presenting effective and efficient methods of linking disciplines or elements of knowledge. The numerous links, *liens*, developed to blend together various aspects of language learning, will help students make connections and synthesize their thoughts. *Liens grammaticaux* connect the grammar overview in the textbook to the more extensive grammar practice in the *Cahier d'activités*. *Liens socioculturels* provide additional tables, charts that will help students better understand Francophone cultures and link and compare them to their own. *Liens interdisciplinaires* include texts from literature and social sciences to expand the theme studied in each chapter. *Liens communautaires* encourage students to do outside research and to extend the learning of French beyond the classroom.

Some important changes have been made in this new edition. The theme of education has been moved to Chapter I and Chapter II now features the theme of friendship and social networks. Cultural context has been updated and revised throughout the textbook and new listening activities have been added. Both the manual and the *Cahier d'activités*

have been expanded to include several new grammar topics, such as *Il est* versus *C'est* and various negative expressions.

Published for the first time over ten years ago, *Controverses* has proven to be one of the most successful, user-friendly and content-rich conversation manuals available on the market. This new, completely revised edition will no doubt continue the success of the previous editions by offering students up-to-date, challenging and thought-provoking themes that will not only help develop and perfect their language skills, but also sharpen and enhance their creative thinking.

Andrzej Dziejczak
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 University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
 Oshkosh-Wisconsin

Publisher's Response

Cengage Learning would like to thank Dr. Dziejczak for reviewing *Controverses* and for his praise of the authors' solid third edition, citing the up-to-date, challenging and thought-provoking themes, because this is exactly what we aim for with every new edition of the text.

We would like to remind readers that we have a Premium Website dedicated to *Controverses*, that is, a portal to an online suite of digital resources. Students have access to the complete in-text audio program in mp3 format, auto-graded vocabulary and grammar quizzes for each chapter, cultural web search activities tied to chapter topics, links to online resources for cultural enrichment, Google Earth coordinates for exploring the Francophone world, and guided writing activities to help them create well-argued compositions. Premium password-protected content resources include the complete SAM audio program, audio-enhanced flashcards, grammar tutorial videos, a searchable glossary, and links to pronunciation podcasts. Students can access the premium assets using the printed access card packaged with the text. Locked instructor assets include the text and SAM answer key and audio script, a comprehensive instructor's guide with resources for student evaluation, sample syllabi, teaching suggestions, and a transition guide for the new edition.

Cengage Learning wishes to thank *The NECTFL Review* and the reviewer for the thoughtful and positive review, and welcomes French instructors to request a review copy of the text, at www.cengage.com/french.

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Schofer, Peter and Donald B. Rice. *Autour de la littérature. Écriture et lecture aux cours moyens de français*. Boston, MA: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2013. Pp. 257. ISBN-13: 978-1-111-83590-3.

Veterans in the profession like myself know Peter Schofer and Donald B. Rice as the authors of *Poèmes, Pièces et Proses*, a far more traditional literature reader widely used in “intro to French lit” courses through the 1980s and early 1990s. At that point, when the Francophone revolution began in earnest and the canon became increasingly suspect to a growing number of people in academe, messrs. Schofer and Rice must have had an “aha” moment and decided to “go Francophone or bust.” The intelligently conceived and highly successful reader under review here is currently in its sixth edition and hopefully will continue to prosper despite the recent and very premature death of M. Rice in 2010 at the age of only 72. The co-author of *Allons-y*, teacher and scholar par excellence, will be dearly missed.

My gut feeling is that the authors have learned much from the pioneering approach of colleagues in German, who have long been at the forefront of innovative textbook design by creating interactive texts that encourage and demand the active participation of students in the learning process and feature a workbook format, whereby pages can be easily be detached and then submitted to the instructor. And, just like the many German readers I have reviewed in these pages, this one too contains so many wonderful selections that instructors will be hard pressed to narrow down their reading list. Despite its deceptively low-key appearance, this is by far the most challenging “introduction to French literature” text (though the authors would likely oppose this term) on the market today, precisely because, just like of Robert Reimer, Reinhard Zachau, and Jeanne Schueller in German (all published by Focus Publishing), *Autour de la littérature* “breaks down the fear and mistrust that many students have of literature” (foreword) by encouraging their direct involvement with “literary” texts. Just like monsieur Jourdain in Molière’s *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (who spoke in prose without being aware of it!) students will learn how to do “lit crit” and learn how to “read and write literary language” (IE-12) without even realizing it. “The texts are sources for playing with and writing different types of language, not monuments to be explored in every detail” (IE-12). After all, this is a text to be used in an intermediate language class, not in a junior or senior seminar. In the pages that follow I will attempt to review the organization and content of the text as well as its philosophy.

As the preface makes clear, “the sixth edition of *Autour de la littérature* retains its unique approach to literature, encouraging students to play and create with the language as they explore both classical and nontraditional French and Francophone literature” (Preface). Moreover, “this book is meant to be very different” (IE-10) by empowering students to implement the language skills they have studied in a more formal context in a second-year intermediate language class in which grammar review is paired with reading, writing and speaking French. The authors stress the “playful” approach taken, by which they, presumably, mean that students are invited to explore literature on their own terms rather than obsess about traditional periods, genres, and styles of writing; however, at the same time, it is clear that *Autour de la littérature* is very much a hands-on, work-intensive class since expectations in the areas of interpretation and self-expression are very high. The exercises and activities put high demands on students by being very much work intensive in my opinion. Again, initial impressions are deceptive. Moreover, students are expected to

“perform” as writers in their own right insofar as they are called upon to write “literature” and not just be passive readers. In more traditional readers, students are asked to produce standard-type answers to rote comprehension questions; here, by contrast, they are also inspired to become writers in their own right and to engage with the text under study and to imagine, for example, the thoughts and feelings of characters or to speculate on plot and theme. Upon closer inspection, however, many of these questions are not unlike what one might find in other readers, though they are all very much appropriate for the intended audience and cleverly designed to promote both understanding and empathy.

The sixth edition consists of 29 texts (three of which are new, all of them Francophone, naturally) arranged according to three levels of difficulty. “As the book progresses, the texts get longer, the sentences more complex, the vocabulary more specialized, the ideas and literary problems more sophisticated, and the questions more demanding of distance from the text itself” (IE-12). Moreover, several selections are not technically literary “texts,” such as ads, songs and film. But that is precisely the point: the authors want to expand the traditional canon to include not only many Francophone texts but also other media so as to overcome students’ natural and cultural resistance to all things “literary.” “Literature and the literary do not exist in isolation from the rest of society” (IE-21). As the iconic Symbolist poet Mallarmé famously stated, literature is just “letters and words” (IE-11). Also new to the sixth edition are a novel organization of discussion topics, an expanded list of primarily Francophone websites, and redesigned comprehension questions. The texts selected are a blend of well-known classical “French” texts and much lesser known, non-canonical texts by a host of Francophone writers from around the world that incorporate poetry, prose and theatre.

Level I (“Textes moins difficiles”). This section includes, for example, Jean d’Arras’s medieval recounting of the legend of Mélusine and Victor Hugo’s moving poem *Demain dès l’Aube*, as well as a poem by down-to-earth, vernacular, and popular French poet Jacques Prévert, but also selections by Bernard Dadié of the Ivory Coast and French Canadian writer Monique Proulx. The text by Samuel Beckett, *Acte sans Paroles*, I think, is more problematic insofar as it does not represent Beckett at his best, nor does it make any overtures to the neophyte reader. There is also Albert Lamorisse’s 1956 film *Le Ballon rouge*, a nostalgic evocation of a young boy and his balloon, set in Edith Piaf’s Parisian neighborhood of Menilmontant. Instructors will agree that film is a popular medium in the FL classroom (“ours is a visual civilization” [IE-22]), and this particular film is especially apt to connect with students despite or perhaps because it is set in an almost mythic and romanticized era that no longer exists. Moreover, film often “sneaks” in a lot of literary techniques, such as repetition, parallelism, antithesis, reminding students that literature and other media and forms of discourse have more in common than they might think and reinforcing one of the course objectives, namely that literature does not exist in an existential and cultural vacuum.

Level II (“Textes de difficulté moyenne”). Here, Marie de France’s romance *Le Lai du Laustic* starts things off nicely and is followed by poems by Verlaine, Apollinaire, as well as selections from the works of Ionesco (*Le Maître*), Maryse Condé (*Leçon d’histoire*) and Birago Diop (*L’Os*). The film selected in this section is Louis Malle’s now classic story about the Holocaust, *Au Revoir les enfants*, which gives a human face to the Holocaust and

remains a favorite with students. If students have already worked with this film I would recommend the Franco-American film *Sarah's Key* (2010).

Level III (“Textes plus difficiles”). At the most advanced level the authors offer a nice blend of French and Francophone texts and film, including poems by Rimbaud, short stories by the likes of Anne Hébert (*Pluie*), Zola (*Le Grand Michu*), Gabrielle Roy (*La Vallée Houdou*), Assia Djebar (*Il n’y a pas d’exil*), Colette (*La Main*), and Claire Denis’s autobiographical film *Chocolat* (1988), which traces the narrator’s return to her childhood Cameroon.

Because the text represents such a novel approach Schofer and Rice provide a very detailed but also quite intimidating 30 page + introduction and teacher’s guide, clearly outlining the organization of the text and how best to use it in the intermediate classroom. Every text is presented according to a “tripartite format” (IE-13): *Pré-lecture* (pre-reading exercises designed to place students in the situation of an author); *Lecture* (the text itself followed by questions designed to set up class work on the text); *Post-lecture* (writing activities designed to give students the chance to write about or around what they have read)” (IE-13).

In the Pre-lecture section students are asked to “think, write, and talk about a situation that they will encounter in the text” (IE13), enabling them to better interact with the text under study because they have acquired a practical understanding of the language through word associations, stories, dialogues, and, occasionally, grammar (when a specific grammar point, say the *passé simple*, requires/calls for acknowledgment). These exercises are not graded; the authors are not big fans of written homework since, according to their reasoning, this would take the fun out of reading and writing.

The *Lecture* section typically does not deal with plot and character, as is usually the case in most traditional readers but rather focuses on the basic story line. An icon in the text designates a question that actually appears on the companion Website, not in the text proper. However, there are also numerous questions in the hard copy of the text, in the section title *Questions sur le texte*. Again, authors recommend that instructors not grade these questions, if they choose to assign them rather than cover them in class.

Post-lecture activities include a few traditional discussion and composition assignments but these are geared to appeal to students’ creativity and curiosity. The first section, *Imitations*, is especially noteworthy. “For example, after reading a medieval text, students are asked to write their own version of the text, changing the key symbolic element” (IE-16). The *Commentaries* section presents literary analysis, for example, of tropes; the Oral Activities assign discussion topics; and Web Explorations invite students to explore a given Francophone country’s past; however, not all texts contain these features.

The authors also provide several models for organizing class that take into account the fact that some classes are stronger than others. In general, instructors will have to determine which level (I, II, or III) is appropriate and select the most suitable texts for their class. However, the authors recommend that literature be taught every day in the intermediate classroom so as not to become that “elephant in the room” reserved for one or maybe two days; ideally, students should work on literature and language together, in tandem.

Finally, the Website includes: 1. A reading tutorial for the prose text; 2. Color copies of the ads; and 3. Websites and questions for the post-lecture activities mentioned above. The questions are designed to help students better understand what they read and provide

students with immediate feedback. The Audio Program includes approximately one third of the poems, songs and plays covered in the text.

It is unclear at what level to best use this book. The authors talk about using the text in third, fourth, and fifth semester French (IE-9), as if it were that easy to keep using the same text in three different courses. But why not, really, especially if the instructor also uses another text for grammar review. I can see using *Autour de la littérature* in a year-long intermediary course to hone the four language skills in context and also provide a first-rate introduction to French and Francophone literature. The organization of the text into levels of difficulty as well as the “large number and variety of texts (more than would ever be used in any single course” [IE-9]) greatly facilitates such a pragmatic approach, making it possible to tailor-make a course to the needs and abilities of that amorphous population known as “intermediary” learners. The texts chosen, for the most part, are very pedagogical and likely to appeal to a broad cross section of students. If you are bored with business as usual and are not afraid of trying something radically different, this just might be what you have been looking for. I know that right now I am very committed to trying out *Autour de la littérature* just to see if it is right for me and my students. My only gripe, as it were, would be the emphasis on Francophone literature as though the “mother culture” had somehow become irrelevant or something to be ashamed about. Granted, Francophone literature has produced some irrefutable masterpieces and the issues raised by writers, such as Assia Djebar are highly relevant in today’s globalized multi-everything culture but of the 15 Nobel prizes awarded to France (the highest number won by any nation) all went to white French-born writers (including J.M.G. Le Clézio). The Irish-born Samuel Beckett is the sole Nobel laureate featured in *Autour de la littérature* and could have been accompanied by someone like Camus or Gide without in any way compromising the quality of the selections.

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Publisher’s Response

The product team at Cengage Learning would like to thank Dr. Tom Conner for his positive and thoughtful review of *Autour de la littérature*, 6th edition. He has captured the essence of the text, and also brings to attention the Premium Website. We would like to point out that the Website now also includes auto-graded reading comprehension quizzes, which are appreciated by professors and students alike.

Cengage Learning wishes to thank *The NECTFL Review* and the reviewer for the thoughtful and positive review, and welcomes French instructors to request a review copy of the text, at www.cengage.com/french.

Martine Edwards
Senior Product Manager, World Languages
Cengage Learning

Scott, Joseph and Elizabeth Zwanziger. *En Parlant: A Framework for Exercising Interpersonal Communication*. Yarmouth, ME: Wayside Publishing, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-938026-69-0. Pp. 246. \$21.56. To take advantage of a 20% school-pricing discount, visit www.waysidepublishing.com.

Despite all the fancy pedagogical bells and whistles that come with modern technology, one of the hardest things to promote in any foreign language class is active and authentic conversation. Furthermore, we all know that our students frequently are afraid of sounding “stupid” in front of their peers. Thus, it is essential to provide the right learning tools to assist students in developing their speaking skills. Depending on the instructor’s individual teaching style, one such tool for entry-level French classes is Joseph Scott and Elizabeth Zwanziger’s *En Parlant: A Framework for Exercising Interpersonal Communication*. The authors explain what they hope to accomplish:

The entire book is a support system for working out loud with peers. There are more than a thousand questions that one can ask a classmate as well as thousands of suggestions for question formation. As the conversational topics change, vocabulary (with English translation) is provided to aid both question comprehension andEi

En Parlant is comprised of an introductory chapter (which presents four examples of *Conversation quotidienne* to explain to instructors and students how to best use the text) and six themed chapters. The six themes, covering fifty conversational topics, are: *Les gens autour de nous; Moi; La vie de tous les jours; La vie est belle; Les développements technologiques; and Le monde complexe*. Especially helpful is the coding system for the suggested level of difficulty for each conversational topic: 1 = first year, beginners; 1-2 = first or second year; 2-3 = second or third year. Equally helpful are *les petites personnes* diagrams inside the front and back covers of the book. These diagrams provide a visual cue for basic gestures based on the natural use of personal pronouns (subject pronouns, direct object pronouns, indirect object pronouns, pronominal pronouns, and stressed or emphatic pronouns).

Yet, *En Parlant* is much more than just a simple compilation of conversational topics. For example, *En Parlant* fosters mastery of specific grammatical concepts through repetition in alternation. Scott and Zwanziger explain:

Learning is reinforced by alternating repetition, for the speaker learns to think what a partner is going to say while repeating the pattern. Thinking and speaking rapidly align in small doses such that eventually thinking and speaking are one and the same: this is both the practice and the goal of *En Parlant*. Speaking enough French eventually makes students internalize grammatical rules so that speaking is no longer impeded by thinking of a rule and its application before making a statement. (ix)

It also is important to be aware of how Scott and Zwanziger intend *En Parlant* to be used for grammatical reinforcement:

The authors decided it was impossible to pretend to match grammar topics to conversations but that it was important that grammar topics be always present as students work together. The index in the back of the book identifies specific presentational patterns which will facilitate grammatical learning. (ix)

Another useful feature of *En Parlant* are the writing activities associated with each conversational topic. At the beginning of each chapter one finds a text-message writing activity,

and in the second part there is another one on writing e-mail. Both of these activities facilitate written interpersonal communication. Because written interpersonal communication is part of the current Advanced Placement (AP) French Language and Culture Examination, these specific writing activities would be an excellent addition to a pre-AP curriculum.

In conclusion, *En Parlant* supports engaged student conversation in the first three years of French language classes. The six themed chapters cover a wide variety of conversational topics that will appeal to an equally wide variety of student interests.

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Publisher's Response

Thank you, Professor Eileen Angelini, for your detailed review of our newest conversational support system, *En Parlant*. I appreciate the opportunity to respond and agree with you that fear of embarrassment impedes student progress. In fact, fear may be the single most challenging hurdle for many language learners. The authors accepted the challenge and faced it head on. *En Parlant's* philosophy and strategies are founded on the seemingly obvious principle that students learn to speak French by speaking. *On apprend à parler en parlant*.

Working in pairs, students act as teachers to their peers. The privacy of one-on-one conversations creates an optimal learning environment where students are free to make mistakes.

Professor Angelini brought attention to the manner in which *En Parlant* carefully supports "active and authentic conversation." The text encourages students to participate daily in "Conversation quotidienne." The text's 50 conversation topics, divided into 6 contexts, are relevant to students' lives, encouraging them to push the boundaries of their knowledge in order to convey aspects of their own lives. Simultaneously, physical action reinforces learning as students benefit from using simple gestures with the assistance of *les petites personnes*. Gestures coupled with rapid repetition break down the shy façades of students.

One important aspect of *En Parlant* that Professor Angelini did not explicitly discuss is the comprehensive introduction detailing methods for achieving success with *En Parlant*. Employing *En Parlant's* strategies early in language learning will indeed prove invaluable to students who eventually tackle the Advanced Placement Examination. With minimal supervision, novice and intermediate French students will enjoy and aspire to improve upon their interpersonal communication skills. For any readers who may be interested, this spring we will be introducing the Spanish version of *En Parlant*, *Conversemos juntos*.

Greg Greuel
 President
 Wayside Publishing

Japanese

Hasegawa, Yoko. *The Routledge Course in Japanese Translation*. London and New York: Routledge, 2012. Pp. 358. ISBN: 978-0-415-48686-6 (paperback). \$55.95. ISBN: 978-0-415-60752-0 (hardback). \$145.00. For additional information please visit <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415486866/>

The Routledge Course in Japanese Translation is a stimulating textbook for teaching the theory and practice of translation to and from Japanese. The intended audiences are: (i) advanced learners of Japanese at both undergraduate and graduate levels who are interested in translation; (ii) undergraduate and graduate students with advanced knowledge of Japanese who are interested in contrastive linguistics, text analysis, and/or intercultural communication; (iii) graduate students who specialize in teaching Japanese as a foreign language; (iv) scholars who specialize in the field of Japanese Linguistics or in the broader fields of Japanese Studies. This book targets learners with a minimum high-intermediate level of Japanese proficiency (Level N2 of Japanese Language Proficiency Test) and a near-native fluency of English. It is designed to raise awareness of the many considerations that must be taken into account when translating a text with special attention to the structural differences between Japanese and English and to cross-cultural dissimilarities in stylistics. It is intended to be used for gaining deep insights about the languages and the act of translation rather than for training professional translators.

The Routledge Course in Japanese Translation consists of eight chapters. Chapter 1 (Introduction) outlines the history of foreign language pedagogy and foundational knowledge about the act of translation. Chapters 2 and 3 (Semantics I and Semantics II) present a number of aspects of semantics, including propositional meanings and figurative meanings and their relevance to translation. Chapter 4 (Discourse Genre) surveys major discourse genres, such as narrative discourse, procedural discourse, and expository discourse and possible translation approaches for each of them. Chapter 5 (Understanding the Source Text) shows linguistic and pragmatic characteristics of the Japanese language and the potential translation problems that they may cause. Chapter 6 (Translation Techniques) reviews and categorizes translation techniques, including calque, transposition, addition, and omission. Chapter 7 (Translation Studies) outlines the historical development of translation studies, fundamental issues such as faithfulness and naturalness paradox, translation approaches, and ethics of translation. Chapter 8 (Translation Projects) presents step-by-step guidelines for those who are engaging in translation projects for the first time.

The Routledge Course in Japanese Translation offers a number of unique and useful features. It introduces many abstract concepts from Japanese linguistics, but makes them tangibly understandable for any student of Japanese by utilizing unthreatening explanations with authentic translation examples. Each section also offers exercises, through which students can experience crucial decision-making steps needed for translating texts between Japanese and English. For example, Section 5.2 discusses predicates and arguments, which are quite abstract. Unlike particles and verb conjugations, such abstract notions are not usually included in Japanese language textbooks. However, they are explained clearly with many Japanese and English short example sentences, which are compared and contrasted to reveal the difference

between the two language systems. The discussion of predicates and arguments help the students see why a pronoun can be omitted in Japanese, but not in English, and why a meaningless pronoun needs to be added in English, just as “it” in “it rained this morning,” but not in Japanese. Then, an authentic text (the opening of Shimizu Yoshinori’s novel, *Kokugo Nyūshi Mondai Hisshōhō* (Japanese Entrance Exams for Earnest Young Men) is presented, along with its English translation by Jeffrey Hunter as well as its back-translation, showing exactly which pronouns were added or deleted through translation and how such addition and deletion of pronouns are vital for producing maximally natural translation while keeping faithfulness to the original source text. The exercise in this section asks to recover the hidden (covert, presupposed) arguments in another authentic Japanese text, an excerpt from *Keiryaku to Kekka* (The Scheme and the Result) written by Shin’ichi Hoshi. This hands-on approach enables the students to clearly see what considerations are needed for translating texts between Japanese and English with a full linguistic explanation. Evidently, this book does not “prescribe,” but “shows” what are involved in translating. The rest of this chapter (Chapter 5: Understanding the Source Text) also includes topics such as the differences between the particles *wa* and *ga*, context-based constraints on the relationship between verbs in the *te*-forms (connectives), a variety of relative clauses (gapless, internally-headed, and multi-layered relative clauses), the special morphological process (evidentiality) that expresses evidence as in *samu-garu* (to show the signs of feeling cold) as opposed to *samui* (to feel cold) and more. The entire textbook covers a wide-range of topics including semantic, lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic, pragmatic, rhetorical, socio-cultural, and socio-political aspects of the Japanese and English languages and their relevance to translation. The textbook includes numerous authentic materials in varied genres, which are all enjoyable to read. It also includes thorough scholarly citations that are very useful for those who are interested in conducting research in linguistics and translation studies.

Overall, this textbook serves as an excellent venue to learn Japanese linguistics, gain insights into translation strategies, appreciate Japanese literature, and significantly improve one’s Japanese language skills. It can be used as a self-study resource or as a one-semester-course textbook for advanced Japanese students. It could also be used by native speakers of Japanese interested in learning English and translation.

Finally, this textbook advocates for the revival of the grammar-translation method for teaching languages, which was dominant from the early nineteenth- to the early twentieth century. Although it is true that the grammar-translation method does not effectively foster oral communicative competence, the value of employing translation activities in the advanced language classroom should be reappraised. As the author claims, translation involves far more than finding formal equivalence. Accordingly, with the right textbook—such as *The Routledge Course in Japanese Translation*, filled with authentic texts in a variety of genres and with precisely relevant explanations based on linguistics and translation studies—advanced students of foreign languages can engage in real-life, purposeful, creative, student-centered, and communication-driven text-based activities through translation. In the current globalized world, written communication is as important as oral communication. In addition, reading and writing skills are essential for any profession in a globalized context. Studying

translation can bring many eye-opening, exciting, educational, and practical opportunities to advanced language learners.

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Publisher's Response

The publishers would like to thank Dr. Sato for her review, and offer the following comments. We have been very pleased by the reception of Professor Hasegawa's textbook. I can vouch personally for its effective pedagogy, having sat in on Yoko Hasegawa's classes at Berkeley and experienced first-hand her interactive classroom, and especially her engagement with students. It was clear to me that the immersion into the language was deep and structurally sound. Her students' enthusiasm and sense of purpose as they went about applying their growing knowledge were truly a joy to see.

Andrea Hartill
Senior Publisher, Language Learning
Routledge
www.routledge.com/Languages

Pedagogy

López-Burton, Norma and Denise Minor. *On Being a Language Teacher: A Personal and Practical Guide to Success*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014. ISBN-13: 978-0300186895.

On Being a Language Teacher is as enjoyable as it is enriching. It will take its well-earned space on any language teacher's methods and materials bookshelf between titles on classroom activities and denser theoretical works. In a readable and personal tone, Burton and Minor focus on deepening the art and honing the craft of language teaching and reach out to the entire corps of language teachers, ranging from Visiting Assistant Instructors to Full Professors.

The authors give a highly personal and practical guide to language instruction; its accessibility and versatility render it eminently useful. The book was written with several audiences in mind: college professors, high school teachers, first-time T.A.s, community college instructors, and native speakers hired to teach abroad. The book helps all these groups answer the questions: "What am I going to do the first day, the first week, the first month?" and beyond" (xi). Alongside practical tools and a concise overview of current research in second language acquisition, personal anecdotes about the authors' own development as teachers blend into the book's pragmatic approach. As Minor writes at the beginning of the book, "It has been almost three decades since I first stepped into a classroom as a language teacher. I can still see the stairs leading up

to the tiny language academy on the second story above a clothes shop in downtown Irún, Spain” (ix). The authors’ humor and wisdom, along with their numerous years on the job, come across on each page.

The book is divided into four parts: “In the Classroom,” “Theory,” “Beyond the Basics,” and “The Future.” The book’s 16 chapters cover the following topics:

- Chapter 1: The First Day of Class and Lesson Planning
- Chapter 2: Introducing Grammar and Vocabulary
- Chapter 3: Communicative Tasks
- Chapter 4: Teaching Culture
- Chapter 5: History of Second Language Acquisition
- Chapter 6: Standards of Foreign Language Teaching: The Five C’s
- Chapter 7: Factors Impacting Second Language Acquisition
- Chapter 8: Types of Teachers; Dos and Don’ts
- Chapter 9: The Captain of the Ship: Classroom Management
- Chapter 10: Heritage Language Learners
- Chapter 11: Including Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences in a Language Classroom
- Chapter 12: The Use of Technology
- Chapter 13: Assessment
- Chapter 14: Hitting the Job Market: Getting a Job at a University
- Chapter 15: Hitting the Job Market: Getting a Job at a High School
- Chapter 16: Surviving the Political Jungle

In addition to providing a ready-made sets of ideas and tips for lesson planning and activities, the authors skillfully delve into heavier topics, such as the sometimes confusing terrain of second language acquisition theory, how to create a behavior intervention plan when facing a disruptive student, understanding the academic needs of heritage speakers, and successfully making the material and classroom process accessible to students with disabilities. Burton’s chapter devoted to technology speaks the language of both the technophile and the technophobe. It provides ample evidence to support the golden rule of using technology in the classroom: have a reliable backup in case technology fails. It also encourages the most tech-resistant of educators to enhance their teaching with the plethora of Internet resources and communication tools available today. Two informative chapters give recommendations for getting a job at the college or the high school level and preparing recent graduates for the realities of the job market; an appendix includes sample classroom activities.

Each chapter closes with a set of scenarios and reflection questions, making it an ideal book for discussion if used in teacher training courses or shared, more informally, among colleagues. The publisher also promises an accompanying website with videos illustrating model teaching (however, the website was still in development at the time of this review and therefore could not be covered in this review).

In short, *On Being a Language Teacher* brims with helpful, pertinent, and relevant information. A key reference tool for beginning teachers, it can also inspire and inform more experienced educators’ teaching practices.

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Publisher's Response

Yale University Press thanks the *NECTFL Review* and reviewer Sage Goellner for the detailed and positive review Norma López-Burton's and Denise Minor's *On Being a Language Teacher*. As Professor Goellner described, the book is a highly personal and practical guide to language instruction. We also appreciate the acknowledgement of how the authors skillfully delve into heavier topics, such as the sometimes confusing terrain of second language acquisition theory, disruptive students, understanding the academic needs of heritage speakers, students with disabilities, and technology. If instructors would like to request an examination copy of this or any of our language textbooks, they may do so at yalebooks.com/languageexam; selected books are also available to view online at yalebooks.com/e-exam.

Dawn Angileri
Academic Discipline Marketer
Yale University Press

Portuguese

Sobral, Patricia Isabel and Clémence Jouët-Pastré. *Mapeando a Língua Portuguesa através das Artes*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-58510-343-0 (paperback). Pp. 246 + xviii + 8 (Appendix and Glossary). *Caderno de Produção*. ISBN: 978-1-58510-416-1.

Mapeando a Língua Portuguesa através das Artes is a textbook aimed at adult students at the intermediate and advanced levels of Portuguese, which, as the Preface states, “interweaves the arts and language acquisition.” Ancillary components include audio and video files (available for free streaming on FocusBookstore.com), a print workbook (*Caderno de Produção*), and, for instructors, answer keys to the textbook and workbook, as well as transcripts of the audio and video files that accompany the book (all are in PDF format and free).

The book is organized into 12 thematically-based units, each of which focuses on a different art form. These include units on photography, dance, music, painting, sculpture and architecture, poetry, theater, film, literature and literary criticism, and arts and crafts. As bookends, the first unit prepares students to reflect on art in general, and the last unit reflects on the art of being. There is a glossary at the end of the book, which students should find very helpful.

The organization of each unit is the same. A photograph or another form of visual image introduces each unit. For example, Unit 6, on sculpture and architecture, opens with a photograph of a stone sculpture. This is followed by the section *Primeiros acordes*, which makes students think about what sculpture and architecture mean to them by asking them to write all the words that come to mind when they hear the words “sculpture” or “architecture.” Students are to follow up by sharing their ideas

with a classmate and then with the entire class. Images and quotes from sculptors and architects appear next, followed by activities that focus on the students' personal experiences and perspectives, such as the first two activities in Unit 6 that have students rank how closely they relate to each of the previous quotes, and then discuss their views in small groups and finally with the class as a whole. The final activity in this section encourages students to expand on the unit theme through questions about their own experiences and opinions, such as "Have you ever made a sculpture? If so, out of what material? Clay? If not, why not? Are there any sculptors in your family? or "Do you prefer modern architecture or older buildings, churches, temples, etc.?"

Each unit also includes three grammar sections dispersed throughout the unit. The explanations, given entirely in Portuguese, are brief and often are accompanied by easy-to-follow charts. There are generally two to three exercises on each grammar lesson that move from more directed, to more open-ended tasks. The Unit 6 grammar lessons teach augmentatives and diminutives, written accents, and the future subjunctive. The first exercise for this latter lesson lists statements about various activities related to sculpture and architecture, and asks students to identify someone in their group who will carry out each activity. One statement, for example, asks students to "Find someone in your group who, if they go to Brazil, will definitely go to Brasilia to appreciate the architecture of the capital city." The second exercise asks students to write several questions using the future subjunctive for an interview of a classmate. The third exercise asks students to write sentences with the future subjunctive stating what a friend might do or see if he or she travels to a Lusophone country. The Workbook, to which I did not have access for this review, includes further explanations, examples and exercises. According to the Preface, the Workbook "is an integral and interactive part of the textbook," and gives students "ample opportunities to recycle vocabulary and expand their lexical repertoire." An icon in the form of a workbook marks the places in the textbook exercises that correspond to further practice opportunities in the Workbook.

Following each grammar lesson is a reading on the unit theme. Many of these readings, which range from about one to three pages in length, are written by artists or experts in the study of the art form under consideration. Each reading has both pre- and post-reading exercises for small-group work. In Unit 6 two of the readings are by and/or about two architects and their work, and the third reading is about modern architecture in general.

The two other sources of information on the unit theme come from an audio file and a video file. Pre- and post-listening and viewing exercises are provided for these sections as well.

Each unit ends with four sections that provide opportunities for further practice, such as recycling unit vocabulary, individual and group classroom projects, debate topics, and the creation of a portfolio of a student's work, which naturally increases in length unit by unit. The Unit 6 section providing group projects for the classroom includes one that instructs students to bring to class a photo of a sculpture they admire. The photos are to be displayed in class with a blank sheet of paper next to each photo. Students are instructed to move around the classroom, observing the sculpture photos

and must then write something about that sculpture. Afterwards, in groups, students discuss the written comments left by their classmates.

Mapeando a Língua Portuguesa através das Artes has many fine qualities. Through its structure and content it helps make art, in all of its forms, more accessible and appealing to students at a time when many departments of world languages are struggling to find ways in their curriculum to attract students without sacrificing the study of literature and aesthetic expression in general. As this review has tried to show, each unit closely ties language acquisition to cultural content so that both skills and knowledge are furthered. The readings are short enough to keep students' active attention, but also long enough to provide meaningful engagement with the topic and with written expression in Portuguese. Physically, the book is appealing too. The dimensions make it very handy to carry around and to use in the different classroom activities. The icons for workbook, audio files, and video files are clear and easily understood. Exercises are numbered consecutively throughout the unit and include the unit number as well, a feature which helps to simplify syllabi and homework assignments. Also, the colored background to the readings help define them as such, setting them apart from the other textual material in the book and suggesting that they are themselves creative works of art. This is a very well-conceived and elegant textbook for second-year Portuguese courses. I expect it to be much in demand.

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Publisher's Response

Hackett is very grateful to Professor Day for his thoughtful review of this groundbreaking text, originally published by founding Focus Publisher Ron Pullins. We're very pleased to announce that *Mapeando* recently received the "Award of Distinction in Teaching and Promotion of the Portuguese Language in the United States" from the American Organization of Teachers of Portuguese, and look forward to our publication of an updated edition in September 2015.

Rick Todhunter, Editor
Hackett Publishing Co., Inc.
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Spanish

Amores, Maria J., Jose Luis Suarez-Garcia, and Annie Rutter Wendel. *Experience Spanish (un mundo sin limites)*. 2nd edition. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2015. Includes: Online LearnSmart, Practice Spanish, and Connect Spanish LearnSmart. ISBN: 978-0-073543444-2 (student) and ISBN: 978-1-259-28507-3 (instructor).

Experience Spanish uses “Culture as Core” as its driving theme, presented via learning experiences that are adaptive to students’ personal needs and learning styles. The text consists of 15 chapters, which may fit a two-semester or a three-quarter model covering the spectrum of Spanish grammar and usage. The online ancillaries are extensive enough to accommodate courses offering limited instructor contact or hybrid models. The chapters feature high frequency vocabulary, grammar explanations, writing and video, and reading with cultural exposure evident in all sections and activities. The online component provides homework, testing and enrichment activities which are unique and innovative.

Experience Spanish is a complete package. Instructors receive an annotated text and McGraw-Hill Connect Spanish website resources. The student edition consists of the text and the McGraw-Hill website, which is accessible via laptops and tablets. Practice Spanish Mini-games are optimized for Smartphones. The unique feature of *Experience Spanish* is that the most popular forms of technology are employed in a variety of ways to make it one of the most versatile teaching systems available.

Experience Spanish is well structured while capable of customization. Each chapter is comprised of two sections, each with a five-stage presentation. The sections are introduced by a picture that serves as a “hook” to pique cultural interest in the theme and suggest goals for each lesson. Each lesson begins with **Vocabulary** presented along with cultural and linguistic notes. The vocabulary is reinforced through communicative exercises in small group, large group or single group settings. Next, a **Grammar** presentation is introduced and immediately moves the student to link the vocabulary and grammar into oral and written exercises focused around cultural themes, such as: Famous Hispanic persons, regional customs, literature, geography, ecotourism, and contemporary issues such as the gender roles in Hispanic life. Two grammar elements are presented in each section. Then, in **Writing and Video** the student uses a guide process to create a composition reinforcing the vocabulary and grammar of the lesson. There is also a video component in this section that focuses on an aspect of the very diverse culture of the Spanish-speaking world. The final sections, **Reading and Culture**, cap the chapter with a reading related to the cultural vignettes presented throughout the lesson. Again, activities for the single student, small groups and large groups are included to reinforce each explanation.

For practice, online homework can be customized in a variety of ways to fit individual needs. For example, LearnSmart analyzes the areas in which a student is having problems and can automatically adjust activities accordingly. The system also focuses on elements students classically are most likely to forget and features recursive activity of these elements. An independent survey shows that students using LearnSmart are 35 percent more likely to finish the course and are 13 percent more likely to pass the class.

Navigating *Experience Spanish* is a varied and creative journey. **Connect Spanish** is the online project component that supplements the text. The website offers the **Practice Spanish** virtual study abroad game. This ongoing activity provides a gaming form of learning very popular with students. The virtual study abroad recognizes the variety of learning styles and learning speeds present in each class and links it with popular game-play. It is available as a separate application or as part of the Connect Spanish

learning component. **Study abroad** is an interactive virtual study abroad experience with surprise additions. The activity can be accessed on a laptop, tablet, or mini-computer. Students begin with mini-games that prepare them for the vocabulary and grammar needed for each of 13 “quests” they encounter. They are then projected into typical authentic situations (with their personalized avatar), for example, navigating a plaza, getting something to eat, finding a lost friend or addressing a medical problem; situations that actually arise in a travel abroad experience. Each quest adds intrigue by introducing a twist like helping solve a museum robbery.

Other components are introduced as the student gains more basic knowledge of the language. **Entrada Cultural** is encountered before Chapter 1 and subsequently after each even-numbered chapter and focuses on a particular region of the Spanish-speaking world. **Lectura cultural** prefaces Chapter 4 and every chapter thereafter to offer the student a reading based on the topic and region of the lesson. **Concurso de Video blogs** is a competition composed of groups of six students who create and enter two video blogs about their country. They will then interact with students from a variety of Spanish-speaking countries. **Conexiones Culturales en Vivo** begins with chapter three and then after odd-numbered chapters. This component is a series of videos that revisit topics of the previous chapters and compare them to that topic in three different countries, thereby demonstrating and accentuating the diversity of the Spanish-speaking world.

As a Spanish teacher with 30 plus years experience at the high school and university level, I find this text to be the most complete and adaptable program on the market today. Its greatest strength is that it equips the educator with an “arsenal” of contemporary technological formats to attract today’s savvy students. Its versatility is a two sided coin: the teacher’s can easily adapt to his/her teaching styles while at the same time allowing for students’ diverse learning styles. McGraw-Hill provides excellent tutorials, faculty visits by actual users of the program, webinars, and frequent updates for a high quality support system. They may easily be contacted via internet and telephone. Their support makes *Experience Spanish* easily adaptable by veteran teachers and beginners as well.

Joe LaValle

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Publisher’s Response

McGraw-Hill is delighted to have the opportunity to respond to Professor LaValle’s review of the second edition of *Experience Spanish*. He begins by noting the “culture is core” theme and outlining many of the components that make up the “complete package.” He applauds the way *Experience Spanish* leverages popular technology in a variety of ways, making it “one of the most versatile teaching programs available.”

Professor LaValle begins his analysis of each chapter’s structure by calling it “well structured while capable of customization.” He notes that following the introduction of vocabulary and grammar for the chapter, it “immediately moves the student to link

the vocabulary and grammar into oral and written exercises focused around cultural themes,” tying it back to the emphasis on culture throughout. Writing, reading, and video components further integrate the “diverse culture of the Spanish-speaking world.”

Professor LaValle goes on to highlight online resources that promote language practice, specifically Connect Spanish, LearnSmart, and *Practice Spanish: Study Abroad*, stating that these components can be “customized in a variety of ways to fit individual needs.” For example, LearnSmart can identify a student’s knowledge gaps and “automatically adjust activities accordingly.” Furthermore, he gives an overview of *Practice Spanish: Study Abroad*, calling it an “interactive virtual study abroad experience” that is “very popular with students.”

Finally, Professor LaValle calls *Experience Spanish* “the most complete and adaptable program on the market today,” catering to diverse teaching and learning styles. He also indicates that McGraw-Hill provides support that is “excellent” and “high quality.”

McGraw-Hill World Languages is committed to publishing high quality foreign language print and digital materials, and we are proud to include *Experience Spanish* among our many successful programs. We again thank Professor LaValle for sharing his review of *Experience Spanish* with the readership of *The NECTFL Review*.

Katherine K. Crouch
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Brown, Joan L. and Carmen Martín Gaité. *Conversaciones Creadoras: Mastering Spanish Conversation, Fourth Edition*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, 2016. Instructor’s Edition ISBN: 978-1-285-83738-3 Student Copy ISBN: 978-1-285-73384-5 To learn more about Cengage Learning, visit www.cengage.com To purchase Cengage Learning products, visit www.cengagebrain.com

There is no shortage of a variety of Spanish conversation textbooks on the market today. Given the importance of conversation in the Spanish major and minor curricula, perhaps the wisest path of action is to determine which textbook’s methodological approach is best suited to one’s individual teaching style and best responds to the needs of students. What is immediately intriguing about Joan L. Brown and Carmen Martín Gaité’s *Conversaciones Creadoras: Mastering Spanish Conversation* is when they state the following in their introduction to the Instructor’s Edition:

Conversaciones creadoras is based on action learning, also known as experiential learning. This method was identified by the U.S. military, while trying to answer a vexing question: How could fighter pilots know the right answers on tests, but then “die” in war games by making mistakes that contradicted their classroom answers? The reason, we now know, is that experiential learning is different from academic learning. To fully internalize a new skill for future retrieval, it must be performed. (IE-5)

Designed for students at the intermediate to advanced levels, each of the twelve chapters thus centers on the completion of a *conversación creadora*. Divided among four units, the chapter topics are:

Unidad 1: Los viajes y el transporte

Capítulo 1: La geografía y el turismo;

Capítulo 2: Los aeropuertos y el transporte; y,

Capítulo 3: Los automóviles y la seguridad vial.

Unidad 2: Las familias, las amistades y la vida diaria

Capítulo 4: La comida y las amistades;

Capítulo 5: La familia y el entretenimiento en casa; y,

Capítulo 6: El comercio y la seguridad ciudadana.

Unidad 3: La educación, la salud y los deportes

Capítulo 7: La educación y las profesiones;

Capítulo 8: La salud y la enfermedad; y,

Capítulo 9: Los deportes profesionales y de aficionados.

Unidad 4: La cultura, los empleos y la vivienda

Capítulo 10: Los eventos culturales y la vida social;

Capítulo 11: Las telecomunicaciones y los empleos; y,

Capítulo 12: La vivienda y las zonas residenciales.

Each chapter is divided into eleven sections: *Notas culturales* (two brief cultural readings); *Comprensión y comparación* (six reading comprehension questions on Hispanic America and four on Spain); *Conexión Internet* (four activities that build upon the *Notas culturales*); *Vocabulario básico* (with pronunciation and practice support provided by the Premium Website); *Práctica del Vocabulario básico* (fifty practice items); *Conversación creadora* (a mini-drama created by Gaité that allows students to make inferences and use Spanish strategically); *Comprensión* (for the chapter's *Conversación creadora*); *Conclusión* (open-ended activity that promotes individual student creativity); *Enlace gramatical* (grammar review and practice); *Escenas* (conflict resolution role-plays); and *Más actividades creadoras* (eight additional activities: *Dibujos*, *Uso de mapas y documentos*; *Cortometraje*; *A escuchar*; *Respuestas individuales*; *Contestaciones en parejas*; *Proyectos para grupos*; and, *Discusiones generales*). Rounding out each chapter is *Vocabulario útil*, a word and expression bank that is thematically organized according to parts of speech. Also extremely useful in this day and age of mandatory assessment reports are the well-conceived rubrics for evaluation and grading that are provided in the Introduction to the Instructor's Edition (IE 14-15) These rubrics provide the means to assess objectively a student's oral production on a scale of one to six in the areas of comprehensibility, fluency, accuracy, communicated content, and effort, thereby allowing for detailed constructive feedback to be provided to the student so that he/she is aware of the specific areas that need improvement or those areas where he/she has made the most progress. Indeed, *Conversaciones Creadoras* is jammed pack with a plethora of diverse materials for both instructors and students alike that will foster a student's ability to achieve success in the goal of thinking and speaking independently in Spanish

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Publisher's Response

We thank Dr. Angelini for her enthusiastic and positive review of *Conversaciones creadoras*, 4th edition. It is important to note that this book implements SLA research findings about learning and retention by bringing real-life experiences into the classroom. Students go beyond rote learning, to having experiences that are both enjoyable and memorable.

I would also like to point out what is new to the 4th edition of this innovative and proven book. The 4th edition offers two new “creative conversations” by National-Prizewinning author Carmen Martín Gaité, one set in a travel agency in Miami and the other in a private home in Seville. Twelve award-winning short films from throughout the Spanish-speaking world now extend each chapter’s cultural and lexical content. New audio and visual flashcards and multi-level games on the Premium Website make vocabulary acquisition fun. Cultural notes now include recent controversies, spurring discussion. All photographs are new. The integrative grammar-review sections have expanded mastery exercises, and many of the information-gap and deductive-reasoning activities are new. Students now learn how to search the web in Spanish through the *Conexión* Internet activities, which feature curated links that they use independently. Also for the 4th edition, the Instructor Companion Website has been expanded to provide comprehensive support for teaching. A new Test Bank with two sets of tests for each chapter, comprehensive chapter Answer Keys, film summaries and scripts, and transcripts of the native-speaker interviews are part of this support. An online Instructor’s Manual supplies correlations of the book’s contents with the *ACTFL World-Readiness (National) Standards* and the *21st Century Skills Map*. It also provides extensive resources for teaching, syllabus design, and assessment, along with detailed lesson plans for each chapter.

These features are all part of the “plethora of diverse materials for both instructors and students” that Dr. Angelini astutely observed.

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