

NECTFL ***REVIEW***

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



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

Number 79

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Beginning in 2018, the **NECTFL Review** will be published in March and September.

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From the 2017 Conference Chair



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I'd like to begin by wishing everyone a Happy New Year; may 2017 be prosperous and above all, healthy for each and every one of you.

I would like to welcome you to the January Edition of the *NECTFL Review*. First, I would like to thank each of the contributors to the *NECTFL Review*. The articles are timely and provide the reader with thought-provoking information and viewpoints. Robert Terry, our editor, has been hard at work compiling all these articles that will surely pique everyone's interest. Many thanks to Bob for his continued work and sharing of his expertise that allow us all to benefit from this fantastic review.

As I look to 2017, I am thrilled that we are returning to New York City once again for our annual conference. We will be at the Hilton Mid-Town once again from February 9–11. This year's theme is *Improving World Language Education: Standards for Success*, and we have already posted the preliminary conference program on our website (www.nectfl.org). Please take some time to look at the wonderful array of sessions that are being offered this year to expand your knowledge in the teaching of world languages. Offerings span from elementary to university levels, with labs and round-table sessions as well. There are excellent pre-conference workshops from which to choose on Thursday. Beginning on Friday, we have a wonderful opening session planned featuring Angèle Kingué and Becky Fox will close the conference for us as she synthesizes all that we learned through the focus of the strands. I believe that you will be pleased with the knowledge and expertise of all our presenters as they connect the standards to our teaching.

As in the past, the Awards and Recognition ceremony will be on Friday evening. We will announce the NECTFL Teacher of the Year, as well as the recipients of the Stephen A. Freeman Award for the best published article, the Brooks Award for Distinguished Service and Leadership in the Profession, and the James W. Dodge Foreign Language Advocate Award. We will also announce the Mead Scholarship recipients at this time.

In closing, I would like to thank John Carlino for all he does for NECTFL and the entire Board of Directors for their work and support throughout the year. I would like to thank the 14 states of our region who continue to work with us in many ways. Above all, many thanks to each of you for standing by NECTFL. Because of you, we are able to maintain the *NECTFL Review* and provide the best possible conference for you each year. It truly is a team effort!

Sincerely,

Carole Smart
NECTFL Conference Chair 2017

A Message from the Executive Director of NECTFL



Greetings and best wishes for the New Year!

The 63rd Annual Northeast Conference is right around the corner—February 9-11 in New York City. Our 2017 Chair, Carole Smart, the NECTFL Board of Directors, as well as headquarters staff have all been working hard to prepare for this year’s conference—with a theme, workshops, and sessions that are sure to inspire: *Strengthening World Language Education: Standards for Success*.

Professional development is a central component of good teaching at any level and it is truly our honor to be a source of such high-quality, world language-specific professional development for our constituents.

Come, learn, share, grow, and disseminate your new knowledge among your colleagues. We are very much looking forward to seeing you in New York!

Best regards,

John Carlino
Executive Director

NECTFL ADDRESS

The logo for NECTFL, featuring the letters 'N', 'E', 'C', 'T', 'F', and 'L' in a stylized, overlapping arrangement. The letters are light blue and have a white outline, giving them a 3D effect. They are centered behind the address text.

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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.
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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.**
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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.
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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.
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 - 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).
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- ❑ All numbers above nine must appear as Arabic numerals ["nine school districts" vs. "10 textbooks"]; numbers below 10 must be written out.
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- ❑ Use standard postal abbreviations for states in all reference items [e.g., NC, IL, NY, MS], but not in the text itself.
- ❑ Please do not set up automatic tabs at the beginning of the article (i.e., as part of a style); rather you should use the tab key (and not the space bar) on your computer each time you begin a new paragraph. The standard indent is only ¼ [0.25"] inch.
- ❑ Please note the differences between the use and appearance of hyphens and dashes. Dashes (which should be used sparingly) should appear as the correct typographic symbol (—) or as two hyphens (--). If your computer automatically converts two hyphens to a dash, that is fine. APA guidelines, as well as those for other style manuals, suggest that commas, parentheses, and other marks of punctuation are generally more effective than dashes.
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 - ❑ The text of the article
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- ❑ 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].

Change in Dates of Publication

Beginning in 2018, the *NECTFL Review* will be published in March and September.

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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Betting on the Minor

Jorge H. Cubillos, *University of Delaware*

Abstract

The recent decline in enrollments in the humanities (and particularly in modern languages) is of great concern for the profession, and underscores the need to reflect on the state and future direction of language departments across the U.S. While this declining trend applies to the traditional language major, it does not seem to affect the language minor, which in recent years has managed to sustain (and in some cases, increase) its enrollments (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015). This article reports on the results of an undergraduate student survey (n=152) conducted among language minors (in all languages) at a mid-sized university in the mid-Atlantic region. This survey sought to identify the reasons that motivate undergraduate students to choose the language minor today, the factors that play a role in that decision, and their level of satisfaction with the current minor curriculum. Survey results illustrate not only the changing demographics in college language programs within the Northeast region, but also the changing academic needs and motivations that our undergraduate students bring to the language minor. Curricular implications of these findings are discussed, as well as the need for investing in new interdisciplinary language minors.

The persistent decline in post-secondary enrollments in the humanities has been the cause of great alarm among academics who fear that it will soon lead to the disappearance of major academic fields such as philosophy and anthropology from college campuses across the U.S. (Lewin, 2013; Ferrall, 2011, p. 40). Along with a general weakening of student interest in the humanities, significant fluctuations have also been reported for language majors (ADFL Bulletin, 2009,

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

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p. 77), and not surprisingly, funding for many language departments has either been reduced, or in some extreme cases, completely eliminated (Lipski, 2015, p. 61; Berman, 2011).

These fluctuating enrollment trends have often been attributed to the economics of selecting a major: simply put, American students are not inclined to incur large financial debt for academic programs with questionable repayment potential (Malcolm, 2016; Sheehy, 2012). Recent MLA job reports also indicate that the number of language positions in academia are indeed scarce, and that they have not rebounded from their sharp downturn in 2005 (Jaschik, 2016; Lusin, 2012, p. 95). In view of such dire job prospects, today's undergraduates have started to search in language programs for the skills associated with success in today's global economy (skills such as linguistic and cultural proficiency), rather than the traditional literary aptitudes required for a career in the professoriate (Rifkin, 2012, p. 70; Committee for Economic Development, 2006, p. 15; Grosse & Voght, 1991, p. 191).

...American students are not inclined to incur large financial debt for academic programs with questionable repayment potential

According to recent MLA (Modern Language Association) reports, total student enrollments in languages other than English have indeed been in a downward trend since 2010 (Goldberg et al., 2015, p. 19). While troublesome, these enrollment losses do not appear to have affected all programs (or all languages) equally. Only about half of the institutions of higher education in the U.S. (51.2%) reported declining language enrollments in 2013, while 48.8% reported increased or stable numbers. Also, while languages like Spanish, French, and Arabic have experienced losses, Chinese, Portuguese, and Korean have reported significant gains. Despite these mixed results, there seems to be substantial societal agreement on the need for expanded language study at the college level in this country (Friedman, 2015; Skorton & Altschuler, 2012), and students who enroll in language courses today appear to be going much further in their studies than ever before (Goldberg et al., 2015, p. 13).

...there seems to be substantial societal agreement on the need for expanded language study at the college level in this country, and students who enroll in language courses today appear to be going much further in their studies than ever before...

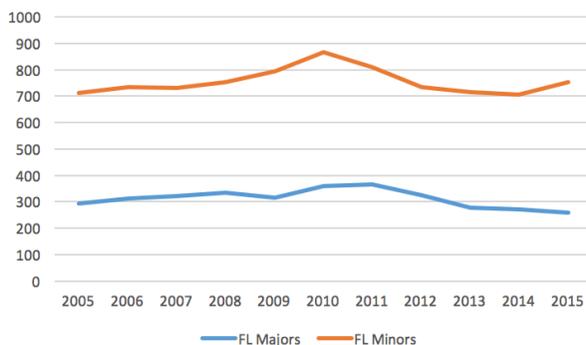
To better understand the complex dynamics of language program enrollments in the U.S., the case of the language program in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at University of Delaware (a mid-size research university in the mid-Atlantic region) will be examined. This department offers undergraduate majors and minors in eight different languages (Ancient Greek, French, German, Italian, Latin, Russian, and Spanish), along with minors in three additional languages (Arabic, Chinese, and Hebrew). At the graduate level it offers two MA tracks (Literature and Pedagogy) in four different languages (French, German, Italian, and Spanish). This department employs about 60 full-time faculty members (including 22 in the tenure track), 20 adjuncts, and about 20 teaching assistants. While overall undergraduate student enrollments at this university have been relatively stable over the past decade (see Table 1), the number of language majors is experiencing a downward trend (see Figure 1). In contrast, language minor enrollments at this institution are on the rise, and minors outnumber language majors by more than 2 to 1.

Betting on the Minor

Table 1. Undergraduate Enrollments at the University of Delaware 2005-2015

	FL Majors	FL Minors	English Minors	History Minors	Philosophy Minors	Overall Undergraduate Enrollments
2005	294	711	102	295	160	16,350
2006	313	734	72	277	140	15,849
2007	321	732	78	279	159	15,983
2008	334	752	95	287	140	16,075
2009	314	795	98	249	114	16,521
2010	359	865	76	234	109	16,661
2011	365	811	85	239	76	17,092
2012	326	734	69	201	54	17,484
2013	277	714	71	227	71	17,729
2014	270	707	67	185	64	18,222
2015	259	753	78	187	68	17,575

Figure 1. Ten Years of Language Enrollments at the University of Delaware (2005-2015)



Considering the strong enrollment figures for language minors at this university, it is important to ask the following questions: What are the factors that make the language minor so much more appealing than the major? Why are enrollment figures in the language minor experiencing an increase and not a decline like other fields within the humanities (such as English, History, and Philosophy which have experienced a decline of 24%, 37%, and 58% respectively since 2005)? And of course, what do these trends mean for the future of this (and similar) language departments across the U.S.?

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In order to address these questions, an anonymous and voluntary survey was distributed to all undergraduate language minors at the University of Delaware in the spring of 2016. The 152 responses received were distributed per language of concentration as follows:

Table 2. Distribution of Responses per Language

Q1. In what language are you minoring?		
Answer	Response	%
Ancient Greek or Latin	0	0%
Arabic	2	1%
Chinese	6	4%
French	23	13%
German	7	5%
Italian	15	10%
Japanese	5	3%
Russian	2	1%
Spanish	92	63%
Total	152	100%

The survey itself (Appendix 1) contained 18 questions aimed at establishing the motives and circumstances that surrounded the students' decision to join the language minor, the language-study background of the respondents, their professional goals and priorities, and their degree of satisfaction with their current language program. Students were also invited to make comments and suggestions on how to enhance or develop the current minor curriculum.

At this university, the number of required credits for the language minor ranges from 18 to 21 (depending on the language), and students are usually required to complete at least 6 courses at the 200-level (intermediate) or above. Some languages like German and Russian regulate only in general terms the types of courses required (2 at the 200-level, 2 at the 300-level, 2 at the 400-level), while others have more specific expectations (Spanish, for instance, requires three literature courses as part of its 21-credit minor).

Who are the language minors?

One of the questions in the survey sought to determine the academic major of students enrolled in the language minor. The answers to this question (see Table 3), revealed that a significant block of respondents were either business (24%) or natural sciences (18%) majors. This connection across disparate disciplines is perhaps one of the most interesting findings of this survey: undergraduate students at this institution already recognize the need to establish links across diverse academic fields (even when those academic fields lack any formal institutional ties in the form of joint majors or minors).

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Table 3. Distribution of Majors among Respondents

Q5. Which is your area of concentration? Pick the area that best represents your <u>major</u>		
Answer	Response	%
Arts (Art Conservation, Fine Arts, Music, etc.)	3	2%
Business (Accounting, Economics, International Business, etc.)	37	24%
Education (Early Childhood Education, Elementary Teacher Education, etc.)	3	2%
Environment (Agriculture and Natural Resources, Animal and Food Sciences, etc.)	14	9%
Humanities (Comparative Literature, Black American Studies, Communications, English, etc.)	20	13%
International (Asian Studies, European Studies, etc.)	13	9%
Math (Applied Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, etc.)	1	1%
Natural Science (Applied Nutrition, Biology, Chemistry, etc.)	28	18%
Social Science (Anthropology, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Sociology, etc.)	22	14%
Technology (Engineering, Computer Science, Management Information Systems, etc.)	11	7%
Total	152	100%

In terms of the language background of students who have chosen the language minor, it is also interesting to note that there were very few heritage speakers in the sample (only 4% of the total), and that the vast majority of students (73%) completed at least one course of the basic language requirement series. These findings suggest that the language profile of language minors is quite different from that of language majors. According to a previous unpublished departmental survey conducted in 2012, about 20% of language majors were heritage speakers, and the majority of students in the major (64%) bypassed the basic language

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requirement due to AP credit earned in high school. Evidently the amount of prior contact with the target language of language minors is much more limited, and consequently they require a curriculum that addresses their specific linguistic needs (not just an abbreviated version of the traditional language major).

With regard to the decision of joining the language minor, the survey revealed that about half of the respondents (52%) made their sub-specialty decision during their freshman year, 42% during their sophomore year, 5% as juniors, and 1% in their senior year. This trend has significant recruitment implications, since it is fair to assume that a significant number of these undergraduate students already had a clear idea about their minor(s) prior to arrival, and that the range and scope of the language minor options offered by this institution were important factors in their school selection.

While 52% of the students surveyed had already made a minor decision by the time they arrived at the university, the remaining group (48%) made their minor decision soon after their freshman year. These students represent the segment of the undergraduate population that was persuaded by their college language experience (or by other external factors) to invest further in their language training. In view of the timing of their decision, it is important to ask: What made these students choose to add a language minor to their undergraduate program? Were there any particular experiences or influences that shaped their decision? And if so, what were they? These questions are explored in more detail in the next section.

Why do undergraduate students choose to become language minors?

When asked about the reasons for deciding to declare a language minor, a significant number of the students surveyed cited affective reasons. The words “love” or “enjoy” the target language were present in about 61% of the responses, which underscores the significance of a positive language learning history as a factor in the decision to declare a language minor in college. In contrast with the emotional attachment to the language, 39% of the respondents indicated pragmatic and professional reasons for this choice (mostly as part of a general strategy to become “better rounded” professionals or to stand out in today’s competitive job market).

Students were also asked about influential factors (or individuals) in their decision to become language minors. Their responses (summarized in Table 4) highlight the crucial role that introductory courses play in motivating students to pursue a language minor (a factor mentioned by 72% of respondents). Parents and study abroad experiences also stand out as powerful motivators of the decision to declare a language minor, as both were described as “influential” by about a third of respondents.

What are the academic expectations of language minors?

Beyond the factors that motivated students to declare their language minor, the survey sought to establish the academic expectations that these learners bring to the language minor program. Table 5 shows those priorities, broken down by

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Table 4. Factors that Influenced the Decision to Join the Minor

Q9. Which of the following factors (or individuals) influenced your decision to become a language minor? (Check all that apply)

Answer	Responses	%
My parents	43	31%
My academic advisor	9	6%
My language professors	48	35%
Other language minors	5	4%
A favorable experience in a language class	100	72%
A favorable study abroad experience	41	29%
Information about the usefulness of a language minor (from a news article, a website, etc.)	53	38%
Other	25	18%
Total	139	100%

Table 5. Academic Expectations of Language Minors

Q14. How important to you are the following language skills?

Question	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Not Important	Total Responses
Native-like pronunciation	73 (53%)	59 (43%)	5 (4%)	0	0	137
Fluency (ease of speaking)	121 (89%)	15 (11%)	0	0	0	136
Grammatical precision	67 (50%)	54 (40%)	12 (9%)	2 (1%)	0	135
Facility for writing	56 (41%)	67 (44%)	12 (9%)	1 (.7%)	0	136
Reading comprehension	83 (61%)	47 (34%)	2 (1.5%)	3 (2.2%)	1 (.7%)	136
Listening comprehension	126 (93%)	9 (6%)	1 (.7%)	0	0	136
Cultural awareness	87 (64%)	43 (32%)	4 (3%)	1 (.7%)	1 (.7%)	136

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individual language skill. The vast majority of respondents expressed a great deal of interest in the development of oral communication skills (89% marked “fluency” as their highest priority). In contrast, 61% expressed interest in developing their reading comprehension, and only 41% mentioned writing as one of their main language learning targets. Cultural awareness ranked somewhere in the middle, with 64% of participants marking it as “Very Important” on their scale of personal curricular priorities.

How satisfied are these students with their language program?

The final set of questions sought to establish student satisfaction with the language minor curriculum and with other academic aspects of the language program (such as the faculty, course offerings, study abroad opportunities, and advising). The results of the survey indicate that more than half of the respondents were either very, or extremely satisfied, with their language minor program. Among the favorite aspects of the language minor were study abroad opportunities (38%), the faculty (34%), and the number of credits required (21%). In contrast, a small yet important segment of the students surveyed expressed disappointment about other aspects of the program such as lack of career planning assistance (5%), limited course offerings (4.5%), and scarce co-curricular opportunities such as internships, language clubs, and honor societies (4.5%) (See Table 6).

Table 6. Student Opinions about Key Aspects of the Language Minor

Q16. What is your opinion about the following aspects of the program?						
Question	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Total Responses
Course offerings	23 (17%)	49 (36%)	40 (30%)	16 (12%)	6 (4%)	134
Faculty	46 (34%)	60 (45%)	22 (16%)	4 (3%)	2 (1%)	134
Study abroad opportunities	51 (38%)	37 (28%)	27 (20%)	14 (10%)	4 (3%)	133
Number of credits required	28 (21%)	47 (35%)	38 (28%)	16 (12%)	5 (4%)	134
Advising	23 (17%)	43 (32%)	41 (31%)	22 (17%)	3 (2%)	132
Co-curricular opportunities (internships, language clubs, honor societies, etc.)	12 (9%)	32 (24%)	46 (34%)	38 (28%)	6 (4%)	134
Career Planning	6 (4%)	15 (11%)	56 (42%)	49 (37%)	7 (5%)	133

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When asked for suggestions for improvement, the vast majority of student responses focused on the curriculum. Among the suggestions, it was common to find adamant requests for additional oral communication courses. Respondents also indicated interest in contemporary cultural and literary topics, courses geared toward other disciplines (such as health care, hospitality and law enforcement), more co-curricular opportunities (especially internships), and more affordable and/or diverse study abroad opportunities (particularly for upper-level students).

Pedagogical and curricular implications

These survey findings provide insights into the current state of affairs of post-secondary language programs at a mid-size university, which may be applicable to similar universities in the region and across the U.S. They also suggest some curricular and administrative priorities that may be implemented by language departments in order to respond to the changing trends in student enrollments:

- The professional and academic needs of undergraduate language students are changing. These survey results suggest that current language minors have a very practical (and increasingly, profession-oriented) need for languages other than English. Since these undergraduates are not on the traditional path to a career in the professoriate, or a language teaching career at the middle/high school level, they deserve a specialized language curriculum developed with their actual professional needs in mind.

...current language minors have a very practical (and increasingly, profession-oriented) need for languages other than English.
- Undergraduate students expect the language minor to deliver higher levels of linguistic proficiency. Given the practical needs and interests of the new language minors, a more proficiency-oriented curriculum is in order, featuring specific courses and/or learning experiences relevant to their professional fields (such as business, health care, hospitality, and law enforcement).
- The language requirement is a vital gateway for the minor. As revealed by this survey, a significant number of students are deciding to pursue a minor as a result of positive learning experiences in introductory courses. Investing in the quality of introductory courses is therefore vital for any language department interested in growing its minor enrollments.

Faculty are in urgent need of professional development to address the changing needs and expectations of twenty-first-century learners.

 - Faculty are in urgent need of professional development to address the changing needs and expectations of twenty-first-century learners. The new profession-oriented language programs will require new courses and up-to-date pedagogical approaches (Basturkmen, 2012; Fryer, 2012; Grosse & Voght, 2012), which of course, cannot be implemented unless there is institutional support for faculty training and development.
- There is a growing need for new language minors (especially those geared toward the professions) organized around measurable linguistic outcomes.

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Language departments need to do a better job at documenting the proficiency development of their students and at tracking job placements after graduation. Completion of the profession-oriented minor should also be based on the objective achievement of targeted competencies, not just “seat time.” (O’Sullivan, 2012).

Language departments need to pursue new interdisciplinary collaborations. [...] Language programs should also initiate (or enhance) their collaboration with other academic units ...

- Language departments need to pursue new interdisciplinary collaborations. This would require strategic academic partnerships across campus, and actually taking the time to understand the changing needs for language in today’s society. Language programs should also initiate (or enhance) their collaboration with other academic units (for instance, establishing joint programs with medical schools and nursing programs, as well as strategic partnerships with international studies programs) to further the professional goals of language learners. There is a growing body of research in the field of Cultures and Languages across the Curriculum (CLAC), which can provide a solid theoretical foundation for these interdisciplinary efforts (Plough, 2016; Bettencourt, 2011).
- Study abroad opportunities should also be more accessible to language students. In view of the linguistic and cultural needs of current and future language minors, it is important to expand the number (and quality) of study abroad opportunities. As respondents to the survey indicate, many would like to participate in such programs, but cannot due to lack of offerings or funds. Language departments need to invest in their study-abroad offerings by making them more relevant (and much more affordable) to their minors.
- Language departments also need to become more proactive and persuasive when promoting their minor programs. Since a vast number of students are making their minor decisions early in their programs (during their freshman and sophomore years), language departments should invest in outreach programs for incoming students, making sure that they are aware of the curricular options available, and encouraging them to pursue language study beyond the completion of the language requirement.
- Development of new language minors today should be inspired by a sincere commitment to linguistic and cultural proficiency. The results of this survey highlight the fact that most undergraduate students make their minor decision based on an affective connection with the target language and its culture. Language teachers must not lose sight of this fact as they redevelop the basic language requirement to foster those impactful personal and affective connections with the target language that motivate learners to pursue language study beyond the requirement. Language departments must be able to state that by the end of the minor programs, students will be able to demonstrate tangible cross-cultural competencies (ideally as a result of cultural immersion experiences), along with the linguistics skills required to communicate successfully with individuals from that target language community.

Betting on the Minor

While it may be true that the traditional language major is going through challenging times, language departments have in the language minor a powerful, yet under-tapped resource. Today's undergraduates are increasingly aware of the value of language learning and they want to make it a significant part of their college experience (The Associated Press, 2010). While it is true that students may be satisfied with the traditional minor curriculum, we can (and should) do much better. In fact, we must offer these students a much more specialized (and relevant) language-learning experience by combining the best of the humanistic tradition (already available in language departments through literary studies), with pedagogical innovations such as proficiency-oriented language instruction, experiential learning, and "language-for-specific-purpose" course design (Fryer, 2012; Lear, 2012).

...we must offer these students a much more specialized (and relevant) language-learning experience by combining the best of the humanistic tradition [...] with pedagogical innovations such as proficiency-oriented language instruction, experiential learning, and "language-for-specific-purpose" course design....

Investing in the profession-oriented language minor does not just make sense, but it may be crucial for the future of language departments in the U.S. The creation of these new programs can bring together diverse academic fields in true interdisciplinary spirit. Furthermore, by creating strategic partnerships with multiple departments and units across campus, enrollments in upper-division language courses are likely to grow, since the profession-oriented minors presumably will require a combination of new and existing language courses (Fryer, 2012).

With these new curricular opportunities (and increased student enrollments), there is also a very real potential for additional faculty hires (particularly recent graduates from PhD programs in Literature, Cultural Studies and Applied Linguistics, trained on the most recent developments in their respective fields), which can infuse a language department with new ideas, new vitality, and new purpose. In view of such favorable prospects, one could argue that investing in the profession-oriented language minor may very well be among the best decisions that language departments can make right now to guarantee their relevance (and solvency) into the foreseeable future.

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Appendix 1

Survey of Language Minors

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey. We will be asking you questions about your experience as a Language Minor at the University of Delaware. This survey should take about 5 minutes to complete.

Q1 In what language are you minoring?

- Ancient Greek or Latin
- Arabic
- Chinese
- French
- German
- Italian
- Japanese
- Russian
- Spanish

Q2 What is your current class standing?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

Q3 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Another gender identity
- I prefer not to respond

Q4 Are you minoring in a language that your parents (or close relatives) speak at home?

- Yes
- No

Q5 Which is your area of concentration? (Pick the area that best represents your major)

- Arts (Art Conservation, Fine Arts, Music, etc.)

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- Business (Accounting, Economics, International Business, etc.)
 - Education (Early Childhood Education, Elementary Teacher Education, etc.)
 - Environment (Agriculture and Natural Resources, Animal and Food Sciences, etc.)
 - Humanities (Comparative Literature, Black American Studies, Communications, English, etc.)
 - International (Asian Studies, European Studies, etc.)
 - Math (Applied Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, etc.)
 - Natural Science (Applied Nutrition, Biology, Chemistry, etc.)
 - Social Science (Anthropology, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Sociology, etc.)
 - Technology (Engineering, Computer Science, Management Information Systems, etc.)
- Q6 What was the level of the first language course that you took in college?
- An elementary language course (such as XXX101 or XXX105)
 - An elementary-intermediate language course (such as XXX102 or XXX106)
 - An intermediate language course (such as XXX112 or XXX107)
 - An advanced language course (200-level or above)
- Q7 When did you declare your language minor?
- As a freshman
 - As a sophomore
 - As a junior
 - As a senior
- Q8 Why did you choose to become a language minor?
- Q9 Which of the following factors (or individuals) influenced your decision to become a language minor? (Check all that apply)
- My parents
 - My academic advisor
 - My language professors
 - Other language minors
 - A favorable experience in a language class
 - A favorable study abroad experience
 - Information about the usefulness of a language minor (from a news article, a website, etc.)
 - Other (please explain) _____
- Q10 How easy has it been for you to obtain information (or guidance) about your language minor?
- Very Difficult
 - Difficult
 - Neutral
 - Easy
 - Very Easy

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Q11 Which of the following resources do you normally use to get information (or guidance) about your language minor? (Check all that apply)

- The departmental website
- A minor advisor
- Other academic advisors
- Language professors (who are not my advisors)
- Students who are also language minors
- Another source (please indicate which one) _____

Q12 Are you considering to participate (or have you participated) in a study abroad program for your language minor?

- Yes, I have participated in a study abroad program for my minor
- Yes, I plan to study abroad as part of my language minor
- I would like to, but I am not sure if I will be able to study abroad for my minor
- No, I am not planning to study abroad for my language minor

Q13 Why are you not sure, or why are you not planning to participate in a study abroad program?

Q14 How important to you are the following language skills?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Not at all Important
Native-like pronunciation					
Fluency (ease of speaking)					
Grammatical precision					
Facility for writing					
Reading comprehension					
Listening comprehension					
Cultural awareness					

Q15 How would you describe your experience as a language minor so far?

- Extremely satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied

Q16 What is your opinion about the following aspects of the program?

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	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Course offerings					
Faculty					
Study abroad opportunities					
Number of credits required					
Advisement					
Enrichment opportunities (internships, language clubs, honor societies, etc.)					
Career Planning					

Q17 If the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures were to enhance its language offerings for minors, what course topics or subjects would you like them to offer?

Q18 Do you have any other recommendations for the Department on how to improve its language minors?

Assuring Foreign Language Teachers' Proficiency: Validation of Self-Evaluation Rubric for Advanced Low Level (SARAL)

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Abstract

Programs that prepare beginning foreign language teachers may seek national recognition through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which require a minimum level of Advanced Low (AL) on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). This study describes the creation and validation of a self-assessment rubric that foreign language teacher candidates could use to compare their oral proficiency level with the Advanced Low (AL) level.

To create the rubric, descriptors taken directly from the AL level narrative in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines were used and then expanded to add specificity, resulting in the Self-Assessment Rubric for Advanced Low Level (SARAL). Results from the application of SARAL were compared to actual OPI scores obtained

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from the 32 teacher candidates participating in the study. A two-way Chi-square coefficient by Phi analysis was computed to assess the relationship between the ratings obtained by the SARAL and those obtained from results on the OPI. A significant difference ($<.01$) between the two assessments was found. According to this statistical analysis, the rubric presented here can be considered to have a moderate-to-high validity index (.631, $p < .01$).

Given the positive results of the study, foreign language teacher preparation programs could adopt this rubric to help candidates become more aware of their current oral proficiency level so they can chart their path toward achieving the AL level in an inexpensive and practical way.

Introduction

The level of language proficiency of foreign language teachers is a major concern for teacher educators.

The level of language proficiency of foreign language teachers is a major concern for teacher educators. Graduates from foreign language programs might not be as proficient as they should be for their role as foreign language teachers (Schulz, 2000). Furthermore, these graduates tend to be unaware of their own proficiency level. One way to know one's language proficiency is to take the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI). The interview is interactive and naturally adaptive. It is administered by a highly and rigorously trained tester, then double rated by a second tester. This makes the OPI highly validated and reliable, thus ideal to assess candidates' oral proficiency levels for licensure purposes. Valid and reliable oral proficiency tests such as the OPI and its various versions (face-to-face interview, the telephonic interview, the OPI by computer (OPIc), and the Academic Institutional Upgrade) are commercially available, but they can be costly for students. Most recently, ACTFL has made available the *Can-Do Statements*, which consist of a series of performance indicators to help learners identify what they need to do to function at a specific level of proficiency. The *Can-Do Statements* are said to "provide a tool for learners to chart their progress and for educators to organize and support the learning" (NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2014). However, these statements might not be comprehensive or descriptive enough to provide a full and accurate picture of foreign language teachers' oral proficiency levels.

An alternative to the OPI might be a no-cost, valid, and reliable tool that teacher candidates could use to self-evaluate their proficiency level. The objective of this study is to propose and validate a self-assessment rubric that teacher candidates can use to monitor their own progress along the proficiency continuum toward the AL level: The Self-Assessment Rubric for Advanced Low Level (SARAL).

The objective of this study is to propose and validate a self-assessment rubric that teacher candidates can use to monitor their own progress along the proficiency continuum toward the AL level: The Self-Assessment Rubric for Advanced Low Level (SARAL).

Literature Review

More than twenty years ago, Heffernan recognized that the most serious problem facing education is the lack of linguistic competence on the part of applicants to foreign language education programs (1991). Heffernan

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remarked that there is a need for faculties of education to move toward setting common standards for linguistic, cultural, and communicative proficiency for all second language education candidates. Unfortunately, as Schulz (2002) points out, “numerous foreign language teachers in the schools have neither the communicative competence nor the confidence to use the target language as means of classroom communication” (p. 291). In some cases, the virtual absence of teachers with enough language proficiency, coupled with financial restrictions, have resulted in an increasing number of K-12 school systems, and even universities, opting to implement computer-based foreign language programs and to do away with in-person language instruction (Rundquist, 2010; Lord, 2015). This is an important problem because in a foreign language class the language is both the subject studied and the medium of instruction, thus “teachers must be able to speak the language in order to teach it” (Chambless, 2012, p. 142).

Fortunately, these situations are currently being addressed with the recent movement toward higher levels of teacher accountability. The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), recently replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), called for a “highly qualified” teacher in every classroom, defined as a teacher with full certification, a college degree, and demonstrated content knowledge in the subject being taught (Sullivan, 2011). Consequently, the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) has set the minimal level of oral proficiency of foreign language teachers as AL (Intermediate High [IH] for teachers of less-commonly taught languages), as described in the ACTFL (2012) Proficiency Guidelines.

By achieving the AL proficiency level, foreign language teachers recognize the “crucial role of input in the target language that focuses on meaning and prompts communicative interaction” (Chambless, 2012, p. 144). Institutions preparing foreign language teachers for state licensure might choose to be recognized by ACTFL/CAEP, which requires assessing candidates’ oral proficiency with an official form of the OPI (Chambless, 2012). There are 21 states that require OPI testing of their teacher candidates (Chambless, 2012). However, not all states require the OPI for certain components of their foreign language teacher certification process. Although

By achieving the [Advanced Low] proficiency level, foreign language teachers recognize the “crucial role of input in the target language that focuses on meaning and prompts communicative interaction.”

the speaking section of the Praxis II test (ETS, 2014) measures oral proficiency with less rigor than the OPI, teacher candidates in 47 states and three territories must take it in order to obtain a teaching licensure (Chambless, 2012). A passing score on the Praxis II requires demonstrating language proficiency in the target language equivalent to the IH or AL level, as described in the ACTFL’s Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 2012). According to the ACTFL/CAEP Program Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers (ACTFL/CAEP, 2013; ACTFL, 2014), candidates in foreign language teacher preparation programs possess a high level of proficiency in the target languages they will teach. They are able to communicate effectively in interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational contexts. Candidates speak in the interpersonal mode at a minimum level of Advanced Low (French,

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German, Hebrew, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish) or Intermediate High (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI).

According to ACTFL's Proficiency Guidelines, speakers of a foreign language at the AL level of oral proficiency are expected to

- ... participate actively in most informal and a limited number of formal conversations on activities related to school, home, and leisure activities.
- ... demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in all major time frames (past, present, and future) in paragraph length.
- ... possess a vocabulary primarily generic in nature.
- ... contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion, and it can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives. (Swender, Conrad, & Vicars, 2012)

This study proposes a self-assessment tool that will benefit foreign language teacher candidates by facilitating awareness of their own proficiency level, particularly in regard to the AL level required for licensure. Providing foreign language learners with self-assessment opportunities benefits both cognitive and affective aspects of the learners because it encourages them to take increased responsibility toward their own learning (Saint-Léger, 2009). In addition, self-evaluation practices appear to increase motivation and student achievement. Moeller, Theiler, and Wu (2012) ran a correlation between the learning goals established by high school students using *Linguafolio*¹ and teacher-independent scores produced through the Standardized Measure of Proficiency (STAMP²) assessment. They found a statistically significant relationship between the goal-setting process and the language achievement scores.

On the other hand, being unaware of one's proficiency level might have negative consequences. Teacher candidates who do not have an accurate self-perception of their own speaking abilities are less likely to seek opportunities to learn and improve. (Sullivan, 2011). This decreases the likelihood of pre-service teachers setting goals toward improvement such as seeking opportunities to communicate with native speakers or taking advantage of study-abroad opportunities, the need for which as a requirement for all prospective FL teachers has been repeatedly stated (Sullivan, 2011).

Teacher candidates who do not have an accurate self-perception of their own speaking abilities are less likely to seek opportunities to learn and improve.

Several studies have included quantitative comparisons between self-assessment and more objective measures of proficiency. Blanche and Merino (1989) reviewed and compared a total of 16 studies in which students' self-assessment was compared to ratings based on a variety of external criteria and concluded that there was an overall agreement between the two types of assessments. They also observed that the most accurate self-assessment items were those containing concrete linguistic situations rather than grammatical knowledge, particularly when these situations were expressed in behavioral terms. Blanche and Merino

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(1989) also noted that proficient students underrated their linguistic abilities, whereas weaker students overestimated theirs. They speculate that this might be due to learners' more or less frequent use of Krashen's Monitor, that is, learners who are over-users of the Monitor present uneven performances and thus will not be consistent on their self-assessment, whereas Monitor under-users will be more consistent. This could also be a case of the Dunning-Kruger effect, according to which low proficient learners mistakenly assess their ability to be much higher than it is, whereas higher proficient individuals tend to underestimate theirs (Dunning, 2011).

Strong-Krause (2000) reports on studies looking at the relationship of self-assessment ratings and objective exams of teacher rating and found conflicting results. Some studies found positive correlations between the two types of assessments (Oskarsson, 1978; LeBlanc & Painchaud, 1985, and Janssen-van Dieten, 1989, as cited in Strong-Krause, 2000), but others did not (Pierce, Swain, & Hart, 1993; Wesche, 1993, as cited in Strong-Krause, 2000). The reason most of these studies showed somehow contradictory results might be due to several factors, one being the nature of the construct of the self-assessment tool—in particular whether the task presented to students in the instrument asks for global assessment of proficiency or more specific contexts (e.g., “I can handle a familiar situation with an unexpected complication” versus “I can participate in situations with unanticipated complications (e.g., losing one's luggage, reporting a car accident, and the like).” Instruments that present global assessment of proficiency tend to show less correlation with more objective measurements than instruments that present more specific contexts. Strong-Krause (2000) went on to create an instrument that included three types of self-assessment tasks: global tasks, descriptions of specific tasks, and actual tasks to be performed at the time of the implementation of the instrument. The results showed that the actual tasks and descriptions of specific tasks were the ones that correlated best with a traditional exam. More recently, Brown, Dewey, and Cox (2014) conducted a study to validate a self-assessment tool based on ACTFL Can-Do Statements by comparing it with the OPI, finding that the Can-Do Statements can be highly reliable, but that the correlation between the two measures was only moderate. They also suggest, as did Strong-Krause (2000), that better results should be expected if more specific and descriptive tasks are used in the self-assessment instrument.

In view of the results of these studies, self-assessment can be considered a reliable and valid measure of communicative language abilities when using the appropriate instrument (Bachman & Palmer, 1989). By using a valid self-assessment instrument, teacher candidates could determine whether they have achieved the required AL level, not only to pass the speaking section of the Praxis II test, but to make sure that they are ready to offer their future students the necessary input-rich classroom experience necessary to best learn the target language.

The SARAL presented here could be seen as an expanded version of the Can-Do Statements, with the advantage that it focuses exclusively on the AL oral proficiency level and uses a total of 25 descriptors, whereas the Can-Do Statements

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use only four descriptors per proficiency level with three or four examples of the function described in the descriptor (NCSSFL-ACTFL, 2014). It also uses items that are more descriptive of tasks. The main goal of this study is to validate the SARAL against the most widely-recognized assessment tool to determine the oral proficiency level of a learner, the OPI. The goal of this study is, thus, to determine the validity of the proposed SARAL when compared to the OPI by calculating the relationship between the two sets of values.

Research Question: Is there a relationship between the SARAL and OPI test results?

N_0 hypothesis: There is no relationship between the SARAL and OPI test results.

N_a hypothesis: There is some relationship between the SARAL and OPI test results.

Method

Participants

Thirty-two pre-service teachers of Spanish enrolled in teacher preparation programs in either one of two Mid-Western institutions of higher education in the USA were recruited as participants. They formed a heterogeneous group. Out of the 32 subjects, seven were post-baccalaureate students who had degrees in other areas but who were seeking teaching licensure in foreign language. From those seven, four were native English speakers, one was a native speaker of Spanish, and two were Spanish heritage language learners. The other 25 were undergraduate students majoring in Spanish education. These students were in their junior year and preparing to student-teach. Twenty-three were native English speakers and two were heritage language learners. Five had participated in study abroad programs: three were abroad for one semester, two for a summer, and one for four weeks. The participants had a mean number of credit/hours in Spanish of 31 credit/hours at the 300 and 400 levels.

Procedures

To create the SARAL, descriptors taken directly from the AL level narrative in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines were expanded to add specificity. According to Blanche and Merino (1989), self-test items that contain descriptions of concrete linguistic situations have higher correlations with other examination results. These descriptors were then placed in the first column of a chart with five additional columns to the right containing the following frequency adverbs: *never*, *occasionally*, *sometimes*, *most of the time*, and *always*. These adverbs refer to the frequency with which candidates perform the action described by the descriptor. See Appendix I for the complete SARAL.

According to the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview Familiarization Manual (2012), learners at the AL level must satisfy the functional criteria that form the non-compensatory core requirements for Advanced: Be able to narrate and describe in past, present, and future time-frames; and get into, through, and out of a routine

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situation with a complication. The description of the sublevel Low, according to this Manual, can be read in Appendix II. Here is an excerpt:

Speakers at the Advanced Low sublevel are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks. They are able to participate in most informal and some formal conversations on topics related to school, home, and leisure activities. They can also speak about some topics related to employment, current events, and matters of public and community interest. Advanced Low level speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future in paragraph-length discourse with some control of aspect. In these narrations and descriptions, Advanced Low level speakers combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length, although these narrations and descriptions tend to be handled separately rather than interwoven. They can handle appropriately the essential linguistic challenges presented by a complication or an unexpected turn of events. (p. 11)

Given the flexibility in this description referring to the relative frequency with which Advanced Low level speakers demonstrates the criteria for this level (“some formal conversation,” “some topics,” “some control,” “tend to be”), it was thought that this “fuzziness” might result in some rubric takers being hesitant as to whether to choose the category *Most of the time* and *Always* to represent their own oral proficiency. Thus the researchers decided that performing *most of the time* at the AL level would demonstrate the criteria for that level in the rubric, that way catching those participants who possibly underrated themselves, while at the same time considered qualitative differences among them. On the other hand, possible overrating was mitigated by the OPI. Therefore, consistent selection (100% of the time) by the SARAL user of only the last two boxes (*Most of the Time* and *Always*) was considered an indication that the candidate could perform at the AL level. If one of the other boxes (*Never*, *Occasionally*, or *Sometimes*) was selected, the candidate would not be considered to be at the required Advanced level.

To pilot test the SARAL, a convenience group of six pre-service teachers of Spanish was selected from two institutions of higher education in the Midwest. They were administered an OPI and the SARAL afterward, so the rating of the OPI was not influenced by the results of the SARAL. Four out of six rubric ratings coincided with those of the OPI, that is, students rated themselves as being at the same proficiency level as the OPI indicated in four out of six cases. The pilot study seemed to indicate a certain level of validity of the SARAL. However, to further increase the validity of the SARAL's final version, an item analysis was performed to identify and correct problematic criteria. For example, criterion #9 (“I can be understood by native speakers, but not without repetition and restatement”) was revised to “When I speak to native speakers, it seems that I am understood, although at times I need to repeat or restate what I said.”

After the item analysis, the authors, both ACTFL-certified OPI testers, proceeded to the administration and rating of the OPI and evaluation of the SARAL to a new group of 32 foreign language teacher candidates—conveniently selected from the same two institutions. The authors themselves administered the OPIs, which were institutionalized OPIs rather than ACTFL official ones, that is,

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they were not confirmed through Language Testing International (LTI). When there was discrepancy between two OPI ratings, the sample was discussed until there was inter-rater agreement. Only after participants had been administered the OPI were they given and asked to fill out the SARAL

Results

The results of both the SARAL and the OPI were coded as 1= Below AL, and 2= AL or higher. Further coding consisted of assigning a 1 when there was OPI and SARAL coincidence (i.e., 1-1 or 2-2), and a 0 when there was discrepancy (i.e., 1-2 or 2-1), regardless of the proficiency level of the participant (see Table 1).

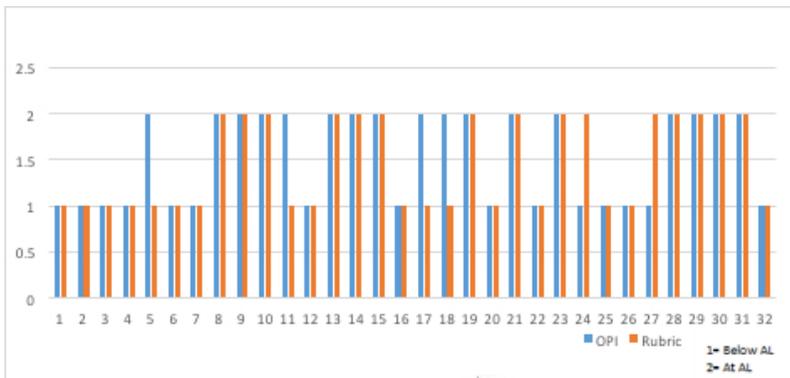
Table 1. Codification Results

	+ OPI	- OPI	
+ SARAL	12	2	14
- SARAL	4	14	18
	16	16	32

○ OPI-SARAL Agreement ○ OPI-SARAL Disagreement

Disagreement between the SARAL and the OPI was found only in six cases. Participants numbers 6, 12, 18, and 19 self-rated lower than AL level, whereas the OPI rated them at or higher than the AL level. On the other hand, participants 25 and 28 self-rated higher than AL, whereas the OPI rated them lower than the AL level. As mentioned earlier, this could be due to participants' relative use of the Monitor, or simply a case of Dunning–Kruger effect. This represents an 84.4 % of coincidence between the two assessments. See Figure 1 for a visual representation of these results.

Figure 1. OPI/Rubric Results Comparison



Of the 32 participants in this study, 17 had achieved the proficiency level of AL at the time of the OPI administration. This means that the other 15 could

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benefit from becoming aware of their proficiency level by setting the goal and implementing strategies to achieve the required AL level.

Statistical Analysis

A two-way Chi square coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the two variables—the ratings obtained by the OPI and those obtained by the SARAL. The chi-square test provides a method for testing the relationship between the two sets of values. The null hypothesis H_0 assumes that there is no relationship between the variables, while the alternative hypothesis H_a claims that some relationship does exist.

H_0 hypothesis: There is no relationship between the SARAL and OPI test results.

H_a hypothesis: There is some relationship between the SARAL and OPI test results

The analysis resulted in a Chi square coefficient $\chi (1, N = 32) = .631, p < .01$. Regarding symmetric measures, the Chi square value was .631, indicating a moderate-to-high relationship between the two variables. Regarding effect size, significance level was set at $P < .01$. The Approx. Sig. was .000. In other words, there was a significant relationship between variables, therefore the null hypothesis had to be rejected. See Table 2.

Table 2. Chi Square Test

Non-parametric cross tabulation

	Value	df	Significance
Nominal by Phi	1183		.000
Likelihood Ratio	46155a	4	.000

Number=32

P was set at = < .01

Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,631	,000
	Cramer's V	,631	,000
N of Valid Cases		32	

With a moderate-to-high relationship between the OPI and the SARAL, these results suggest that the rubric presented here might be a valid instrument to indicate whether the participants in this study had or had not achieved the required oral proficiency level of AL. Adding to the validity of the SARAL is the fact that it was created by taking the language verbatim from the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012), participants were representative of the intended population, that is, they were

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pre-service foreign language teachers, and the percentages of coincidence between the two variables, the OPI and the SARAL, coincided in an 84.4% of the cases.

The main limitation to the generalization of these results to a wider population is the low number of participants. Continuing collecting data in the form of OPI and the SARAL proposed here might be a way to increase the generalizability of these results. In addition, future study could be strengthened by using official OPI results (or institutional upgrades with second raters provided by LTI.)

Pedagogical Implications

Given the positive results of the study, the rubric presented here could be considered to have a moderate-to-high validity index. With this tool, teacher candidates might become more aware of their current oral proficiency level and be informed about their needs for seeking additional opportunities to improve their language skills, such as studying abroad or being involved in some kind of community service that might increase target language exposure. Instructors can also use this rubric to be aware of the language proficiency skills and needs of candidates, and therefore tailor and individualize their instruction to fit the individual student's needs, since teacher preparation programs should make sure that their candidates are well prepared to face the increased demands of highly proficiency teachers (Fraga-Cañadas, 2010). Accordingly, and in tandem with the SARAL, teacher preparation programs could also provide candidates with additional opportunities to improve their proficiency level. Weyers (2010) proposed a course designed specifically to increase students' oral proficiency. The course consisted of strategies that pushed students toward the next proficiency level. His results showed an increase of at least one sublevel in 71% of the cases. This is significant because many FL teacher candidates tend to be at the Intermediate-Mid/High level by the end of their preparation program, when they have finished taking foreign language classes (Swender, Surface, and Hamlyn, 2007; Glisan, Swender, and Surface, 2013). A course like Weyers (2010) proposes might be the thrust necessary to achieve the next sublevel of AL.

With this tool, teacher candidates might become more aware of their current oral proficiency level and be informed about their needs for seeking additional opportunities to improve their language skills....

candidates might become more aware of their current oral proficiency level and be informed about their needs for seeking additional opportunities to improve their language skills, such as studying abroad or being involved in some kind of community service that might increase target language exposure. Instructors can also use this rubric to be aware of the language proficiency skills and needs of candidates, and therefore tailor and individualize their instruction to fit the individual student's needs, since teacher preparation programs should make sure that their candidates are well prepared to face the increased demands of highly proficiency

Recommendations

Foreign language teacher preparation programs may want to consider adopting the SARAL proposed here so that their teacher candidates know where they stand in their path toward higher levels of proficiency. Ideally, teacher preparation programs will also facilitate and guide candidates in taking steps toward the required proficiency level of AL by implementing a similar course to that suggested by Weyers (2010).

Additionally, and given the limited number of participants in this validation study, further validation studies should be conducted, and in languages other than

Foreign language teacher preparation programs may want to consider adopting the SARAL proposed here so that their teacher candidates know where they stand in their path toward higher levels of proficiency.

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Spanish, in order to increase the validity of the SARAL. Teachers of LCTLs are invited to create similar rubrics by adapting the one presented here to the linguistic characteristics of particular languages (e.g., lack of syntactic inflexions or non-alphabetic writing systems). Researchers are thus encouraged to continue collecting data from both the SARAL and the OPI and compare the former against the latter to strengthen the validation.

Conclusions

In conclusion, and following the suggestions of Sullivan (2011), Brown et al. (2014), and Pearson, Fonseca-Greber, and Foell (2006), FL teacher preparation programs might want to consider providing their candidates with a tool like the SARAL. When candidates are not aware of their proficiency shortcomings, they cannot take remedial action. The SARAL can be a practical and inexpensive supplement to existing objective assessments that will guide candidates in their path to success, perhaps reducing the level of frustration and surprise that some foreign language teacher candidates experience when taking the speaking section of the Praxis II test (Moser, 2012) or the OPI. In addition, candidates' success is a reflection of the quality of the program that prepares them, so a teacher preparation program's high quality level ensures ACTFL/CAEP accreditation.

Students who are taught by foreign language teachers with high levels of oral proficiency tend to have higher proficiency levels themselves, thus enabling them to go beyond the "glass ceiling" of Intermediate-Mid/High that seems to exist in American schools (Fall, Adair-Hauck, Glisan, 2007). Being able to go beyond the Intermediate level of proficiency will help language education students assess their readiness for high-stakes professional assessments.

Endnotes

1. A portfolio that focuses on student self-assessment, goal setting, and collection of evidence of language achievement (Cummins, 2007).
2. A statistically validated and computer adaptive assessment that produces a comprehensive score for proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking (Avant Assessment, 2010).

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APPENDIX I

Self-Assessment Rubric for Advanced Low Level (SARAL)

Your name: _____ Date: _____

SARAL					
Can I do this in _____? (Target language)	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
1. I can narrate in detail in the Future (e.g., plans after graduation, future vacations, preparation for a study abroad program...)					
2. I can participate in conversations about current and public interests (e.g., local, national and international events.)					

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Can I do this in _____? (Target language)	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
3. I can produce paragraph length discourse using appropriate vocabulary and grammar.					
4. I can participate in conversations about personal interests (e.g., hobbies, academic major, music, art, pets...)					
5. When I describe something, I can combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length.					
6. I can fully participate in formal conversations about school activities.					
7. I can participate in conversations about leisure activities (e.g., sports, parties...)					
8. When narrating in the past, I can express verbal aspects (i.e., Preterit vs. Imperfect.)					
9. When I speak to native speakers, it seems that I am understood, although at times I need to repeat or restate what I said.					
10. I can use connectors such as subordinating conjunctions and adverbial expressions (e.g., therefore, although as soon as, in spite of, when, meanwhile ...)					
11. I can express desire, hope, advice and other emotions using the appropriate verb form (i.e., Subjunctive)					
12. I can handle a variety of communicative tasks using the appropriate vocabulary.					
13. I can participate in most informal conversations.					

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Can I do this in _____? (Target language)	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
14. I can talk in detail about my work (e.g., how I got the job, job duties, typical work day...)					
15. I can speak fluently without unnatural pauses or hesitations.					
16. I can participate in situations with unanticipated complications (e.g., losing one's luggage, reporting a car accident, and the like.)					
17. When I narrate an event, I can combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length.					
18. I can describe in detail in the Present (e.g., description of a city, a pet's tricks, a friend's personality...)					
19. I can describe in detail in the Past (e.g., describe the host family while living abroad, a visit to a museum...)					
20. I can narrate in detail in the Past (e.g., a trip, an adventure, an anecdote, my daily routine while living abroad...)					
21. I can narrate in detail in the Present (e.g., relate a story from a movie or book.)					
22. When I am in the middle of a conversation and I can't remember or don't know a word, I make myself understood by rephrasing the idea with more familiar words.					
23. I can use connectors such as ordinal numbers (e.g., first, second ... etc.)					

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Can I do this in _____? (Target language)	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
24. I use rephrasing and circumlocutions when I am presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events within a familiar context (e.g., computer problems, accidents, injuries, landlord situations...)					
25. I can participate in conversations about home activities (e.g., explaining a recipe, how to play a game...)					

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APPENDIX II

Advanced Low level Description

Speakers at the Advanced Low level sublevel are able to handle a variety of communicative tasks. They are able to participate in most informal and some formal conversations on topics related to school, home, and leisure activities. They can also speak about some topics related to employment, current events, and matters of public and community interest. Advanced Low level speakers demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future in paragraph-length discourse with some control of aspect. In these narrations and descriptions, Advanced Low level speakers combine and link sentences into connected discourse of paragraph length, although these narrations and descriptions tend to be handled separately rather than interwoven. They can handle appropriately the essential linguistic challenges presented by a complication or an unexpected turn of events. Responses produced by Advanced Low level speakers are typically not longer than a single paragraph. The speaker's dominant language may be evident in the use of false cognates, literal translations, or the oral paragraph structure of that language. At times their discourse may be minimal for the level, marked by an irregular flow, and containing noticeable self-correction. More generally, the performance of Advanced Low level speakers tends to be uneven. Advanced Low level speech is typically marked by a certain grammatical roughness (e.g., inconsistent control of verb endings), but the overall performance of the Advanced-level tasks is sustained, albeit minimally. The vocabulary of Advanced Low level speakers often lacks specificity. Nevertheless, Advanced Low level speakers are able to use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution. Advanced Low level speakers contribute to the conversation with sufficient accuracy, clarity, and precision to convey their intended message without misrepresentation or confusion. Their speech can be understood by native speakers unaccustomed to dealing with non-natives, even though this may require some repetition or restatement. When attempting to perform functions or handle topics associated with the Superior level, the linguistic quality and quantity of their speech will deteriorate significantly. (p.11)

From ACTFL (2012) *OPI Familiarization Manual*.

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

Alhawary, Mohammad. *Arabic Grammar in Context*. New York: Routledge, 2016. ISBN: 9780415715966. Pp. 276. \$46.95 (paperback).

The large number of Arabic grammar reference books published in the last five years has been a welcome development for teachers and students of the language, as each is aimed at a slightly different audience and has a slightly different emphasis. The key challenge for teachers today is finding the right reference tool for the right audience. In this light, Mohammad Alhawary's *Arabic Grammar in Context* arrives well-suited to address the needs of Intermediate-High to Advanced level students of Arabic, while its format is very well designed for use in advanced Arabic language courses.

As the title suggests, Arabic Grammar in Context bases its approach to grammar concepts as used in authentic Arabic texts. Dr. Alhawary's choices reflect a wide range of texts from Classical literature to the contemporary period. Some of the best-known and most respected works of Arabic literature are represented, for example *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, *Kalila wa Dimna*, and *Season of Migration to the North*, *Return of the Spirit*. Thus, the chapters in this book easily could be incorporated into a course in Arabic literature and culture. Given the dearth of suitable Arabic literature textbooks available, this feature alone makes Arabic Grammar in Context stand out.

As the author states, this book does not attempt to provide a comprehensive grammar of Arabic. Its emphasis is on the more frequently troublesome points of grammar. In this regard, the author has chosen well: a chapter comparing noun-adjective and *idaafa* phrases; the passive voice, the conditional, imperative and negative imperative are among the 23 major grammar concepts examined in detail. For each concept, in addition to authentic texts, the author introduces the form and then the use of the concept. Perhaps most useful is the section "other points to note," which includes a large number of the

grammar rules that typically trip up students, such as the dropping of the letter *nuun* in dual and plural *idaafas*. Each section then concludes with a number of exercises, moving from “fill-in-the blanks” to translation and very helpful “find the mistakes” exercises, concluding with another literary excerpt for practice. The text’s website also offers audio files of the readings to help students with pronunciation.

Due to its use of literary texts, the book is most appropriate for students at the intermediate-high level. Those at a lower level would have a difficult time with the readings and might even find the grammar explanations more technical than necessary. As a supplement to advanced level courses, however, the book is very well suited, offering authentic literary material, an appropriate level of attention to finer points of grammar and ready-made exercises. Because students today, particularly in proficiency-oriented programs, often reach the intermediate-high to advanced levels of speaking without an accompanying knowledge of grammar, this text could serve well to help work on weaker points in a student’s grammar base.

Teachers of Arabic today are fortunate to have a wide range of grammar references that were not available a decade ago—from introductory level workbooks to comparisons of English and Arabic grammar. Arabic Grammar in Context aims at a very specific gap in this coverage, i.e., serving the intermediate-high to advanced student and those beginning to work with authentic Arabic literature. For these learners, Arabic Grammar in Context is a most welcome resource. Students at a higher level will likely find themselves referring back to it as well. For teachers of Arabic courses above the intermediate level, Arabic Grammar in Context is a godsend.

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Publisher’s Response

The Publishers would like to thank Dr. DiMeo for his review and offer the following comments. We are very pleased with *Arabic Grammar in Context* and its unique take on traditional grammar. The inclusion of authentic texts to present the language front and centre frames grammar not as an end in itself but rather as an essential tool for understanding authentic language in use.

There is much research in Second Language Acquisition that shows the benefits of authentic input and the effective pedagogy of this grammar reflects the authors’ extensive background and expertise in the area of Arabic Second Language Acquisition.

Samantha ValeNoya
Routledge

Chinese

Christensen, M, B: *English Grammar for Students of Chinese*. The Olivia and Hill Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-934034-39-5.

English Grammar for Students of Chinese is a short primer in Chinese grammar full of golden nuggets. It will be most useful for beginning Chinese students whose native

language is English because it “explains basic terminology and concepts of English grammar, focusing on those aspects of grammar that are most applicable to learning Chinese” (1).

The book begins with a section containing tips for learning Chinese. As the author says, “Chinese is not linguistically related to English and it is culturally distant from the Western world. As such, when learning Chinese words you will not have roots similar to English to help you memorize. Moreover, Chinese words are represented by visual symbols rather than by an alphabetic writing system representing sounds” (1).

Following these learning tips, the author provides 34 chapters to explain and showcase some fundamental points of grammar. Each of the 34 chapters focuses on one specific point. For example, the first chapter talks about “what’s in a word.” The author answers this question from two perspectives: English and Chinese. In addition, three aspects are discussed: meaning, parts of speech, and function and form. The comparisons made between English and Chinese in each aspect no doubt will help native English speakers to better understand the challenges of Chinese grammar. Throughout the book many important grammar points are explained in an easy-to-understand way and followed by numerous examples. For instance, structures such as the causative construction and the relative and conditional clauses are covered in one and half to two and half pages each.

This book clearly does not want to overwhelm readers since it provides Chinese language examples in Pinyin (Romanized script) instead of using Chinese characters, which are listed in an appendix at the end of the book. Some beginning Chinese students might be happy with this choice. However, as a Chinese language professor, I strongly believe that providing the Chinese characters side by side with the Pinyin would be more beneficial because Pinyin is only a pronunciation aid. In order to be able to read Chinese (i.e., words or sentences) students need to know Chinese characters. Therefore, students learning Chinese should be exposed to the Chinese characters as much as possible and as early as possible.

In short, *English Grammar for Students of Chinese* is a great learning aid for students who do not have any prior knowledge of Chinese grammar or who are just starting to learn Chinese. For those who have studied Chinese for a while, this handbook can still serve as a good review. After absorbing the contents of this book, students will have acquired a basic knowledge of Chinese grammar but will still need to work on mastering Chinese characters.

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Publisher’s Response

Thank you to Professor Zhu for her review, which clearly outlines the aim of *English Grammar for Students of Chinese* (EGSC). Unlike the other books in the O&H Study Guide series, EGSC was a particularly challenging handbook to write because of the lack of similarity between English and Chinese. While we covered grammatical concepts and terminology common to the two languages, we repeatedly warned students to avoid

looking at Chinese from the perspective of English. The decision to print the examples in Pinyin (with the equivalent in Chinese characters in the Appendix) was also guided by our purpose to limit our supplementary handbook to the teaching of English and to leave the teaching of Chinese to the main textbook.

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French

Alexander, William. *Flirting with French. How a Language Charmed Me, Seduced Me & Nearly Broke my Heart*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-61620-020-6.

In Biblical times, following the Great Flood, humanity was still united and spoke a common tongue. Not content, they decided to build a tower “tall enough to reach heaven,” rivaling the power of God, who quickly put a stop to the construction of this Tower of Babel and confounded languages so that people could no longer understand each other. The usefulness of learning another language has existed ever since.

Imagine trying to learn French. Well, that is exactly what William Alexander, the author of a book on bread and a frequent contributor to *The New York Times*, attempted to do. But why does a middle-aged+ man want to learn French in the first place you might ask. Because he loves France, of course, a certain romantic and more or less outdated image of the country, admittedly, but all the same the narrator clearly is passionate about France and all things French: “Last night I dreamt I was French. As before, this mainly involved sipping absinthe at the window of a dark, chilly café, wrapped in a long scarf that reached the floor, legs crossed, Camus in one hand and a hand-rolled cigarette in the other” (258).

Learning French, however, as Alexander is about to discover the hard way, is a tall order and a challenge that lands him in the E.R. for an irregular heartbeat, which turns out to be a serious heart condition for which he will have to undergo major surgery. To what extent learning French caused his heartache remains a matter of conjecture. While he is at it he even has his brain scanned to see if it is still fit to absorb another language and discovers to his dismay that his brain power is sorely lacking or rather that his adult brain is not wired properly.

To begin with, adults face inordinate difficulties to learn a foreign language. It appears that language acquisition declines rapidly with age. And few, if any, L2 learners will get rid of their accent, no matter how well they have mastered the four language skills. Experience suggests that there is no substitute for natural immersion, which explains why “the dimmest child will become far more proficient in his first language than the smartest adult in his second” (6) and why “pillow talk,” in combination with rigorous study, is the adult learner’s best chance to become fluent.

How does this “magical” acquisition of language occur? As Noam Chomsky has shown, language is a complete system which children learn naturally. Therefore, we

humans must have an innate ability to learn language. Moreover, language learning is imitational or behavioral, which confirms the importance of immersion learning and the so-called natural method. Children growing up in a monolingual environment will learn their native language effortlessly, whereas adults by and large are condemned to be slow learners. These generalizations hold true even though there are a growing number of bi- and tri- and even quadri-cultural and linguistic folks out there, like myself, who have never felt perfectly “at home” in any language or culture and learned their languages in a helter-skelter fashion, here and there.

Now, our author lives in New York City, which despite being home to one hundred thousand or so speakers of French and French Creole, is not fertile immersion ground. He took French in school, like so many people in his generation, but evidently few if any of the ministrations of his teacher, the “sadistic” Madame X, made much of a mark on him, even though research shows that studying language in one’s youth does give you a small head-start if you ever have second thoughts about studying another language. So, Alexander does what any one in his situation would do. He already has in his possession “a certain yellow box” (13). It was tempting to buy on the spur of the moment, but not unlike buying an exercise bike as a New Year’s resolution or, God forbid, a home gym. How often do they ever get used after the excitement of the first week or so wears off? He soon is frustrated with the “creepy” (16) slides (which apparently are the same in all the languages offered by Rosetta Stone, making a mockery of culture). You don’t learn anything about French cheese studying Rosetta Stone, do you? In point of fact, he tries a wide variety of online products (listed on p. 246) but must concede “the paucity of self-instruction materials” (76) early on.

Desperate, Alexander now enrolls in a language school and strikes up a friendship with a French woman on Skype, Sylvie. That summer, together with his wife, he travels to Normandy where, he discovers, alas, that he cannot make himself understood by the natives and that everyone in the tourist business at least speaks very good English.

Finally, Alexander decides to take the plunge and enrolls in the Millefeuille language school, a very serious language academy in Provence, where every situation is viewed as a teaching moment and where “Guy,” by which he now fancies calling himself, using a French nickname, makes rapid progress. As a graduation test, he sets up a meeting with Sylvie and her boyfriend in Orléans but cannot make himself understood very well at all. Evidently, there is battle French and colloquial, idiomatic French, and they are not the same thing. But the author still feels that his language odyssey was worth it; he has struggled, to be sure, and still cannot communicate very effectively. However, he has learned a lot of language (the equivalent of two years of college French, he reckons) and has a solid grasp, albeit primarily passive, of basic language and culture. Besides, he has enjoyed himself and is a better human being as a result of his experience. Who is to say that he is wrong? Certainly not the reader.

Alexander’s is a delightful little book and an easy read. Along the way Alexander offers up a plethora of insights on the vagaries of language in general and the idiosyncrasies of French in particular. There is a little bit of something for every teacher of French. Readers will be impressed by his cultural insights and enjoy the author’s tongue-in-cheek humor. French teachers in particular will absorb a ton of interesting trivia they can use in the classroom along with more than one corny joke or witticism. How is

this for a one-liner: “there is a fine line between immersion and drowning” (227). Or: “the phonemes of French, with its rolled r’s and nasal intonations, sound so silly to us that when we pronounce them properly we feel like we’re doing an Inspector Clouseau parody” (121).

Alexander clearly is enthusiastic about learning the language of Molière but some readers may find him just more than just a tad neurotic, not to say obsessive compulsive. For example, the idea of creating a “memory palace of the mind” (130), in which to store all the items of a scene, is not practical and is not likely to gain much traction in today’s classroom no matter how many prisoners of war, for example, desperate to hold on to reality, learn to remember exactly what their childhood bedroom looked like. Presumably, you still need to learn the French word for “bed.” Remembering foreign words by associating them with images no doubt is a more fruitful pedagogy but again presumes that you are familiar with the word in the first place.

There is much to learn, however. William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings and French became the official language of England for the next three centuries (34). France would not be ruled by a king whose native tongue was English until 1399, leaving an indelible mark on the English language: an incredible one quarter to one third of all English words come from French. In other words, the way a language evolves almost invariably has to do with war and migration.

The world-renowned Molière is a favorite of the author and is the occasion of some witty comments on doctors, illness, hypocrisy and, of course, the French language. French legislation to protect French goes back to the creation of the Académie Française, whose dictionary, last published in 1935, advances at “a pace slower than the slowest Godard move you never saw” (109) but also extends to the *exception culturelle*, which keeps a limit on Anglo-Saxon (read American) cultural products.

The French language is quirky, like any language, but at the same time is characterized by a certain rigidity. Then there are all those perverse verb conjugations. Gender is an awkward concept for students to wrap their heads around and inspires some more but also some less helpful: “Because a Frenchman must refer to a fork as “her” and “she,” and must think, *C’est ma fourchette*, when musing about his fork, does he think of it, subconsciously or otherwise, as a feminine object with womanly properties? When he thinks of his beloved cheese, *son fromage*, is there anything homoerotic going on, or is his use of the pronoun just habit—a second-nature kind of thing that means nothing, a verbal one-night stand?” (89) Another oddity about French is the distinction between *vous* and *tu*. Other languages, including English, used to have both gender (three of them in old English) and two subject pronouns for “you”: *thou*, akin to the informal “*tu*,” and the more formal *ye*, a close equivalent of “*vous*.” What happened? English cut the umbilical cord is what happened.

Cultural commentary abounds in these pages. In America, evidently, French today is widely perceived as “the language that dares not speak its name” (48), witness presidential candidates John Kerry and Mitt Romney, who never let on that they were fluent in French, lest they be called wimpy and cowardly. The DSK affaire prompts some intercultural commentary and is worth spending a class on, I think, given that there are still some distinctly French women’s issues. In fact the word for “woman,” *femme* can

mean both “woman and “wife,” suggesting women’s ambiguous status throughout the course of French history.

Finally, there is an intriguing passage on the future of language study, which might become unnecessary thanks to the great advances in computer translation. Computerized translation, which began in the late 1940s, has moved from teaching the computer syntax, lexicon, and rules to using previously humanly translated passages in a data base for recognizing and then translating new sentences or clusters in novel contexts. Exact matches between existing translations and new contexts are very rare (5%), though, which means that access to authoritative translations is a *sine qua non*. In the 1980s, a Canadian experiment using the bilingual records of parliamentary records seemed promising, but Google went even further by relying exclusively on the internet. Google Translate covers 80 languages today and is clearly a success even if it rarely captures the finer nuances of language.

However, an attentive proofreader might have caught a variety of errors: Finnish is not related to Swedish in any way, shape, or form (9), as this reviewer, who is a native-born Swede can attest. It is la Seine and the present subjunctive of the verb commencer is *nous commençons* (114). *Voler* (to fly) is pronounced the same as *voler* (to steal, 217). Richelieu was a cardinal—at least formally—but a theologian (104)?

A new brain scan show conclusively that Alexander’s brain has risen to the challenge of learning French and shows that his “neurorecognition score has gone from the 55th percentile to the 84th (255). Studying French has been like drinking from a mental memory fountain of youth.”

Alexander is might happy over his accomplishment and rightly so: “I revitalized my brain simply studying French. And, as a bonus, I can order dinner in Paris” (256). This is quite an accomplishment and once again shows that patience and dedication can help make any dream possible, including learning French.

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Blood, Elizabeth and J. Vincent H. Morrisette. *Je me souviens. Histoire, culture, et littérature du Québec francophone*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown UP, 2014. ISBN: 9781626160897. Pp. 218. \$69.95.

This college textbook is a culture and literature reader for English learners who want to master the French language at the advanced level. It focuses entirely on Quebec, which makes it unique. In the introduction to instructors, the authors explain that they chose a multidisciplinary approach to help students develop critical thinking from various cultural documents. While improving their proficiency level in French, students will become familiar with the political trends in the history of Quebec, from the period of the first French explorers to the present day. Following a chronological and thematic approach, the book is organized around six chapters which include an introduction to the theme covered; short texts or summaries with activities providing a context to the theme; the actual text; a section on French language in Quebec (influences, archaisms, Anglicisms, “*sacres*” or Quebec French

profanities related to Catholicism, the feminization of professions, neologisms); a virtual trip; and synthesis activities. The six major themes present a comprehensive overview of Québec in all its facets: “Origins” (Aboriginal and early explorers), “Beliefs” (missionaries, Jesuits, New France), “Freedom” (the Conquest, the Patriots), “Nostalgia” (traditions of French Canada), “Equality” (the Quiet Revolution) and “Multiculturalism” (immigration and the new face of Quebec).

The documents include various types of texts—literature, arts, cinema, music, public and private institutions, traditions, popular culture, media—illustrated by color photographs or song lyrics. These texts are sometimes linked to other documents available online. Some texts have been written by the authors, who have roots in Quebec and call on their experience and their memories or those of relatives. These stories are actual testimonies which allow the reader to meet authentic Quebecers and make this textbook particularly lively. Thus we find comments on history, Quebec colloquialisms, and culinary traditions. The use of documents is facilitated by numerous activities designed to develop the learners’ understanding, analysis, discussion, and writing skills. The abundance and variety of communicative activities that punctuate the book encourage its users to practice the four language skills to gradually move from the intermediate to the advanced level of the ACTFL scale. A conclusion encourages students to take stock of the knowledge acquired while several appendices offer color maps and an answer key to exercises and activities.

The textbook is supplemented by a twenty-five-page teacher’s guide (*Instructor’s Resource Manual*), available on the publisher’s web site (without ISBN), which offers a description of the chapter structure, lesson plans, suggestions for teaching, sample tests and assignments, as well as resources for each chapter. This excellent book provides a concise overview of Quebec and enables learners to appreciate the complex history and culture of the Francophone population in North America. It should prove useful and appealing to instructors interested in teaching an advanced French course using Quebec as the cultural focus.

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Schultz, Jean-Marie and Marie-Paule Tranvouez. *Réseau: communication, intégration, intersections*. 2nd edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc., Prentice Hall, 2015. ISBN-10: 0-205-93340-8. Includes My FrenchLab. ISBN: 0-205-95035-3 Pp. 506.

Réseau’s twelve chapters follow the same basic format. First, the *orientation culturelle* introduces the cultural theme, including basic vocabulary organized in a pleasing way with superb, brief, targeted exercises followed by more advanced vocabulary that expands the chapter’s concepts. Second, an invitation à la conversation precedes the three grammar sections, which follow with authentic cultural texts, literary texts and other readings spliced in between. The chapter concludes with a writing component. The *orientation culturelle* opening each chapter is approachable and helps place the vocabulary in context. The brief targeted vocabulary exercises are superb and concise, focusing only on the most useful words.

Instructors will appreciate the online materials. MyFrenchLab’s Student Activities Manual makes it possible for students to practice concepts that prove challenging to them,

repeating the exercises until they produce the correct answers. There are great listening exercises for students wishing to hear more authentic French, as well as vocabulary exercises and a crossword puzzle or similar game for each chapter. The student can consult the book online, transporting it anywhere on their tablet, phone or laptop. For the professor, those exercises, the exercise keys, pedagogical suggestions and suggested exams in the Instructor's Resource Manual can help with class preparation.

Despite these strengths, the grammatical presentations involve little detail and fewer examples than one might expect. This requires the instructor to present and further explain each grammatical concept in class. Thus, this text does not serve well those who prefer flipped classrooms. In addition, the online exercises are uneven. The instructor can block those with unclear instructions and sometimes sexist aspects, however.

My colleagues at universities who teach the first four semesters of language five days per week will appreciate the advanced cultural concepts as this base supports their upper-level French curriculum. In that case, the rapid progression from family relations (Chapter 1) to politics, independence and national identity (Chapter 4), to "*La France bigarrée—un pays métissé et multiculturel*" (Chapter 7), may work at a slower pace, with frequent instructor reinforcement and integration of materials. For a small program that meets less frequently, it is impossible to cover all of the material, and the mix of basic materials with complex materials may prove challenging to more average students. In addition, the grammar explanations are minimal, and the organization of the *précisions* can be quite confusing to the average college student. For instance, the temporal expressions (21) and the introduction of adjectives (76-77) are not explained fully enough. For the latter, the student learns that masculine adjectives ending with a consonant double that consonant and add an *-e* for the feminine form. The number of exceptions for words ending with *-t* dazzle the students, however, but are not addressed in the text. For instance, *élégant, discret, bruyant, petit, haut*, etc., do not follow the declared grammatical rule. The adjectives that go before and after or simply before the nouns they describe (80) are insufficiently explained and reinforced (only one exercise in the text). Many professors will find it necessary to supplement the text with clearer explanations, examples and visual presentation of the grammatical concepts and idiomatic expressions. In addition, where one semester ends and another begins must be addressed very carefully. Our first semester ends with Chapter 5, while the second begins with Chapter 6. For the latter, my male students find the focus on designer fashion and perfumes less appealing; however, all of the students find the first grammatical concepts of *qui, que, dont, où, ce qui, ce que*, and *ce dont* quite challenging for the first weeks of what may be their very first university semester. An additional instructor-designed transitional unit to review questions formation and other concepts that shore up the grammar of the following chapters served my students well and would address some of these issues. Another recommendation would be to add links to contemporary cultural realia (e.g., real estate ads, hotel listings, etc.). While there are a lot of riches in the text, the integration of the concepts is juxtaposed quite rapidly. Thus, the book works best for Intermediate French courses that meet five hours per week since the chapters are crammed full with multiple and often diverse grammar points, as well as social and literary texts, but scarce grammatical scaffolding. In short, the rich nature of the book can prove to be its weakness as well—the book does not provide the solid foundation

of grammatical knowledge that permits students to articulate its complex notions of identity, poverty, racism, inequality, social injustice, cultural icons, etc., with the limited French they command.

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Wong, Wynne, Stacey Weber-Fève, and Bill VanPatten. *Liaisons* (Second Edition). Boston: Cengage Learning, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-205-78277-2). Pp. 308. (Includes: iLrn™). \$141.50

The second edition of this successful introductory French program has been revised and updated based on the input received from numerous college professors, advisory board members, focus group members and students whose names are listed and acknowledged in the opening pages. *Liaisons* is the title of both the textbook and the authentic movie, shot on location in France and Québec, which follows an intriguing mystery-suspense thriller with twists and turns that will keep students engaged and interested from beginning to end. The main character, Claire Gagner, a psychology student and a receptionist at a hotel, receives an envelope with an anonymous prepaid trip to Québec. As she embarks on her journey, a number of people cross her path. She eventually travels to France, where unexpected events and adventures unravel. The film is fully integrated with the program and supplemented by a wide array of pre- and post-viewing activities, “*Avant de visionner*,” and “*Après le visionnage*,” ranging from sentence completion, true or false, fill-in-the-blanks, or multiple choice exercises. The “*Liaisons avec la culture*,” included in every other chapter, provides cultural and geographical information about the cities highlighted in the film, their history, cuisine, and traditions. The “*Dans les coulisses*” section containing additional hints and questions, will help students better understand what the story presented in the film is about and what motivates the characters’ actions and behavior.

The program is based on the general idea of “*liaisons*,” that is connections, or links between all language skills and culture. Speaking, writing, listening comprehension and reading are not taught and practiced in isolation, but fully and seamlessly integrated. Vocabulary and grammar lessons are based on an input-to-output approach, allowing learners to first and foremost connect with the new information before embarking on form-focused, open-ended and task-based activities. Students will have frequent opportunities to synthesize and analyze the material they have learned, and, more importantly, learn how to use it in a context necessary for effective communication when traveling to a French-speaking country.

The textbook is divided into fourteen chapters, including the preliminary and the final chapters. Each unit is thematically organized and divided into three sections featuring vocabulary, grammar and culture. The underlying pedagogical framework encourages students to discover new vocabulary and grammar through different mediums, then connect form and meaning, and finally, actively create language. In the vocabulary section, students are presented with lexical items and are taught how to deduct meaning from context in a variety of exercises and activities. Grammar explanations are kept to a minimum and much more attention is devoted to practicing grammatical concepts in a communicative context, often as pairwork or groupwork activities. Students can regularly assess their progress in grammar by checking one of the answers in the “*Oui, je peux*” box. The “*Liaisons culturelles*” section,

thematically linked with the topic of each chapter, features a selection of shorter and longer texts, images and notes about various aspects of the Francophone world from art, music, politics, sports, literature, to architecture, science and technology, among others. Reading and writing comprehension are practiced and tested in the “*Liaisons avec la lecture*” and “*Liaisons avec la lecture et l’écriture*” sections included in every other chapter. Students are presented with reading passages about family structures in Togo, medical tourism in Tunisia, holidays in French-speaking Canada, Ivory Coast or the city of Abidjan. After reading the texts, they are then invited to write a description of a restaurant or a supermarket, a description of a memorable holiday, a description of a personal relationship with a friend or a short reaction paper to a reading passage. The “*Avant d’écrire*” activities help students formulate sentences and organize their written responses in a logical and coherent manner.

One of the most valuable components of the program is the iLrn™ Language Learning Center masterfully developed by Cengage. This online course management system integrates assignments, assessments, grammar tutorials, audio and video materials using the latest software and technology. For instructors, it offers additional tools such as on-line grading, monitoring student progress, customizing homework activities, etc. The interactive iLrn™ tool includes an audio- and video-enhanced eBook, integrated textbook activities, a student calendar with assignment due dates, Liaisons segments with pre- and post-viewing activities, partnered voice-recording activities, online Student Activities Manual, additional interactive self-tests, personalized study plans, access to personal tutor online and media sharing capability with Share it.

The textbook is ideal for a two- or three-semester sequence and meets the needs of diverse teaching styles, institutions, and instructional goals. It features a flexible lesson organization, which expands students’ communicative skills by presenting and rehearsing situations similar to the ones they will encounter in real life. Grammatical and lexical concepts presented and practiced are embedded in the Francophone cultural context while vocabulary and grammar are treated as tools for effective and successful communication.

Overall, *Liaisons* is an innovative and flexible program, which clearly meets the authors’ goal to create “connections or liaisons with their classmates, their instructor, their community, the French-speaking world and the global world at large” (5). What sets it apart from the other introductory textbooks is its exceptional presentation of grammatical and lexical material, a richness of oral and written activities and a vast array of instructional resources from which the instructors can pick and choose. Based on the principles of communicative language teaching and research in second language acquisition, the second edition of this textbook will no doubt continue to motivate and inspire beginning French students by providing a unique, compelling and stimulating language learning experience.

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Publisher’s Response

Thank you very much to Professor Dzedzic for his thorough review of *Liaisons*. His input provides valuable perspective that will be essential to the revision process.

As he mentioned in his review, *Liaisons* takes a particularly communicative approach, providing scaffolding for learning terms and concepts before giving students ample opportunity to produce and communicate through guided communication with classmates. This strategy allows students to build confidence since they are gaining proficiency skills that are practical and applicable.

To further this focus on proficiency, the *Liaisons* program features “*Oui, je peux*” self-evaluation statements appearing at the end of each grammar lesson. Inspired by the *Can-Do Statements* outlined in the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines, the “*Oui, je peux*” give students the chance to assess their own progress. In addition, it gives instructors the opportunity to gauge learner development with oral proficiency

We are thrilled that the reviewer enjoyed working with iLrn, the online platform that accompanies *Liaisons*, and encourage all users to take advantage of the new assignment filter which allows instructors to select from the 200+ online activities specifically written to render the second edition ready for tech-blended, flipped, and hybrid course configurations.

As part of a connected curriculum, *Encore*, the intermediate follow-up to *Liaisons*, continues to take a communicative and proficiency-oriented approach. The sequel to the engaging film is paired with topics and activities designed to engage students in higher level thinking while at the same time encouraging student self-assessment through “*Oui, je peux*” statements and activities. Finally, iLrn provides the opportunity for abundant online practice and review.

If instructors would like to review a chapter of *Liaisons* or sign up for a 30-day trial, they can visit Cengage.com/iLrn to get started or inquire with their local Cengage Learning Consultant. The intermediate follow-up to this program, *Encore*, is available now with iLrn.

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German

Anton, Christine, Tobias Barske, Jane Grabowski, and Megan McKinstry. *Sag Mal. An Introduction to German Language and Culture.* 2nd Edition. Boston: Vista Higher Learning, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-68004-336-5.

Now in its second edition, *Sag Mal* endeavors to address both the increased demand for online novice-level German materials and customized, lower-cost text options. When adopting the paper-based *Sag Mal* textbook and ancillary package, instructors can choose between a hard cover or a loose-leaf student textbook. Should language programs have the institutional infrastructure to go paperless, students can access the entire program through the *Sag Mal* Supersite. The virtual, interactive textbook contains links to all exercises, reading, audio and audio-visual material, as well as digital versions of the ancillary materials. Students gain access once they have purchased the new edition. However, it is not clear how long they will have access to the Supersite beyond the conclusion of their class.

Sag Mal, like most U.S. textbooks currently on the market, is divided into twelve chapters. The commonly taught introductory textbook topics of family and friends, food, holidays, vacation, travel, health and professions provide vocabulary building and communicative

practice opportunities. Each chapter is sub-divided into *Lektion A* and *B*, the subsections, *Kontext*, *Fotoroman*, *Kultur*, *Strukturen*, and ends with a final *Weiter geht's* segment. The individual chapter parts are color-coded and information appears on one page or two facing pages. Icons guide students to different types of activities. Culture is integrated through web quests, authentic texts, TV commercials, and short films.

In each chapter, the *Kontext*-section contains guided and more open-ended group and partner exercises. The more structured activities make use of discourse prompts and the recycling icons help students recall previously learned structures and transfer them to new contexts. Students apply the rules of German spelling and pronunciation through oral practice, ranging from word-level exercises to culturally relevant sayings or proverbs. The video program, entitled *Fotoroman*, presents episodes about student life in Berlin topically linked to each unit or chapter, so that—at the conclusion of the program—students have received a fairly thorough introduction to the city. *Kultur* activities are scaffolded through in-depth reading texts, images, statistics, maps and charts, which allow students to explore culture and history of German-speaking Europe in greater depth. The activities expressly aim to address the 5Cs (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, Communities), which should help language faculty formulate the learning outcomes and instructional goals for their elementary language programs. Students are also occasionally asked to reflect on their own learning and comprehension strategies through the *Ein kleiner Tipp*-inserts, interspersed throughout the book.

The *Strukturen*-section contains short grammar explanations in the following way: *Startblock* defines new grammatical terms and reminds students of those they have already encountered. Stills from the *Fotoroman* integrate the given episode with the grammar explanations. The episodes are intended for use either in-class or as homework, but the somewhat stilted conversations inherent to instructional videos makes them more suited for out-of-class assignments. In a flipped or hybrid course setting, they can therefore function effectively to introduce, solidify or review vocabulary and grammatical structures and provide listening comprehension practice, freeing up class time for more authentic communicative practice. *Querverweis* references previously learned grammar or foreshadows future topics and *Achtung!* highlight potential sources of confusion and provide additional explanations. The exercises following grammar introduction range from guided practice to more open-ended, creative activities, while the *Wiederholung*-section recycles previously covered material and integrates it with new structures and vocabulary. The penultimate section in each chapter is entitled *Zapping* or *Kurzfilm*. Here, TV commercials, public service announcements or short films are designed to provide cultural depth to a given chapter's overarching topic, appropriately scaffolded through pre- and post-viewing activities. Since authentic materials outdate quickly, the *Zapping* section contains three new authentic video clips and also a new short film. Each chapter contains thematically grouped vocabulary lists as well as page references to pertinent grammar items. The final *Weiter geht's*-sections in each chapter deepen culturally focused facts about other German-speaking regions through related reading, listening, and writing activities. *Die Deutschsprachige Welt* introduces students to German-speaking Europe in the first chapter, others focus on *Österreich*, *die Schweiz und Liechtenstein*, and various regions in Germany as well as North American traditions with cultural roots in German-speaking countries.

The *Sag Mal* Supersite student portal allows learners to practice various language functions and obtain feedback through auto-grading; the same is true of all mechanical language exercises. Synchronous virtual chat activities and instant messaging with classmates provide oral practice opportunities, while the record-compare feature helps improve pronunciation. While all students will benefit from recorded texts and authentic videos, auditory learners will find audio vocabulary flashcards helpful as they acquire new words. The new edition also allows students to customize vocabulary lists. Other activities include interactive maps with statistics and cultural notes and updated web quests. Students can also submit written work online and access cumulative assessments of their online work.

The *Sag Mal* Supersite is structured as follows: *Kontext* provides oral skill-building activities as well as the aforementioned record-and-compare exercises. Written summaries, key vocabulary, grammar structures and true/false statements accompany all streamed episodes of the *Fotoroman*. The *Strukturen*-section provides spoken versions of grammar explanations and exercises and offers additional online-only practice and chat activities. The chat option simulates synchronous communication activities with a virtual conversation partner, recording their answers as soon as the virtual partner has concluded her or his part of the conversation. Students can also video chat with classmates. Finally, *Kultur* features additional web searches and cultural readings.

Instructors have a separate set of teaching resources on the *Sag Mal* Supersite. The communications center enables them to send out notes on due dates or make other course-relevant comments. They can track their students' progress and use an online testing program, complete with vocabulary and grammar quizzes for each lesson, unit tests, and two cumulative exams online (one gauging students' mastery of units 1 through 6, the second chapters 7 to the end). In this new edition, instructors can also use the virtual chat format to conduct oral testing as well as use additional task-based activities both in-class or as homework. Last but not least, the instructor portal contains an illustration bank for creating or personalizing additional activities.

In conclusion, *Sag Mal's* layout is clear and easy to follow—both in the textbook and online. The *Sag mal* Supersite provides multiple additional opportunities for practice, which are generally more interactive versions of the existing mechanical paper-based assignments. Instructors who are already using *Sag Mal* will welcome the enhanced course management tools and tablet-friendly options as well as the improved virtual chat activities. Future adopters who are moving beyond more conventional face-to-face introductory German courses to more hybrid or flipped instructional models might find that the out-of-class learning options of the program support their goals. The new edition also provides increased scaffolding and adjustments to the grammar sequencing which better support students' path from recognition toward production and integration of newly acquired material. For the final chapter, unit 12, adopters will also appreciate the fully scaffolded inclusions of the short film *Bienenstich ist aus* and Rilke's iconic poem, *Der Panther*.

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Publisher's Response

I am pleased to respond to Professor Gisela Hoecherl-Alden's review of Vista Higher Learning's *Sag Mal: An Introduction to German Language and Culture, Second Edition*. I am grateful to Professor Hoecherl-Alden for highlighting so many of the program's bedrock features. Professor Hoecherl-Alden correctly acknowledges that the second edition of *Sag Mal* addresses the increased demand for online Introductory German materials and that students gain access to the entire program through its Supersite. This online component includes the interactive vText with links to activities, readings, audio, and much more. I thank Professor Hoecherl-Alden for pointing out the user-friendly layout and navigational elements in *Sag Mal 2e*, in both its print and online versions, such as color-coded strands and icons which guide students to a variety of activity types and recycle previously learned concepts. I agree with Professor Hoecherl-Alden that instructors currently using *Sag Mal* will welcome the enhanced course management tools of the Second Edition and that future adopters moving toward flipped instructional models will find that new distance learning options support these goals.

Professor Hoecherl-Alden also remarks on how well culture is integrated into the second edition of *Sag Mal* via authentic texts, TV clips, and short films. Indeed, I was thrilled to read her observation that by the end of the *Fotoroman*, students will have acquired a thorough introduction to Berlin, where the main characters live, work, and study. Professor Hoecherl-Alden accurately notes how *Kultur* strand activities are scaffolded and supported by images and graphics, such as maps and charts. She notes that the authentic *Zapping* (TV clip) and *Kurzfilm* (short film) content provides cultural depth to every unit's overarching theme. Vista Higher Learning works hard to find contemporary and relevant authentic materials, and Professor Hoecherl-Alden acknowledges that *Sag Mal 2e* includes three new TV clips and one new short film which keep the content fresh and interesting for students.

I would also like to express my thanks to Professor Hoecherl-Alden for pointing out that *Sag Mal 2e* activities address the Five Cs, which is most useful to instructors as they set about determining their course's learning outcomes and instructional goals. Professor Hoecherl-Alden also recognizes that the Second Edition makes adjustments to the grammar sequence to better support language acquisition. She notes that the Audio Record Compare online engine greatly helps to improve students' pronunciation and adds that they will also find audio flashcards helpful in acquiring new vocabulary. The Second Edition makes it possible for students to customize lists in order to focus on areas where they need the most help. Professor Hoecherl-Alden also credits the online Virtual Chats with effectively simulating synchronous oral communication via an avatar, thereby allowing instructors using the Second Edition to conduct oral testing and task-based activities.

I have only two points on which I differ with Professor Hoecherl-Alden. She claims that the *Fotoroman* conversations are stilted, although she also concedes that this is generally true of instructional videos and that the *Fotoroman* effectively introduces and solidifies vocabulary and grammar. However, I would only point out that language that seems stilted to instructors is quite often a dream come true for students, who appreciate the fact that they can understand the characters and storyline much more easily and therefore enjoy the experience and reap greater benefits from it. Finally,

Professor Hoecherl-Alden claims that it is not clear how long students have access to the Supersite beyond the end of their coursework, but this is not typically information found within the components of a textbook itself but rather the result of an instructor's adoption decision, as different packages available for sale include different features and durations of access to online materials. Instead, this information is best elucidated by a sales representative during the adoption process.

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Schueller, Jeanne, Reinhard Zachau and Carrie Collenberg-Gonzalez. *Cineplex. Intermediate German Language and Culture Through Film.* Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-58510-409-3.

I began teaching college full time in 1984 and have used film in all of my classrooms, not only in intermediate language classrooms but also in General Studies courses taught in English. I remember teaching the “End of the Cold War” back in the early 2000s and how I had to develop my own materials for that extraordinary film *Good Bye Lenin*. I developed appropriate teaching materials on my own to help students to better understand and learn from the film we were watching in class and to engage with the cultural themes reflected in it. I duly assembled my own course packets, including introductory texts on the medium itself as well as presentations of actors and directors, along with study questions, vocabulary exercises, writing assignments, group projects, cultural modules, etc. I remember thinking: I should not have to do this. But, at that time, foreign language publishers did not show much interest in film or, for that matter, culture and civilization. In many quarters it was assumed that instructors would just show some slides at the end of the semester of their language class and somehow take care of the cultural proficiency angle. This struck me as particularly odd in light of the fact that there are so many foreign films that lend themselves particularly well to the classroom, e.g., *Good Bye Lenin* mentioned above. Thankfully, publishers had an “aha-moment” and are now making up for lost time, outdoing each other with well-conceived and pedagogically well-designed texts, though Focus still is ahead of the pack and to date has produced the best and most user-friendly texts in all the commonly taught languages. As the authors of the book under review here emphatically state in their credo: “using film as input exposes learners to language in authentic cultural contexts and prepares students to real-life situations, enabling them to “see themselves as part of a larger historical and cultural context” (xv). As I recall, Focus Publishing in Newburyport, Massachusetts, helped start the focus on film (no pun intended) and other publishers soon followed suit so that instructors at the high school and college levels in all the commonly taught languages finally have somewhere to turn if they want to implement film into the curriculum in a more structured and educational fashion. McGraw-Hill, for example, now offers a broad array of film packets. *Cineplex* continues this fine tradition by presenting ten German-language films, “contemporary and attractive” (xv), all of them eminently valuable from a pan-Germanic cultural point of view, covering “highly motivational topics ranging from family, school, relationships, and traveling to

the Holocaust, the German Democratic Republic, Turkish-German migrant workers, multiculturalism, and the West-German student movement” (xv). The authors deserve recognition for covering so much ground in one relatively short volume with such critical acumen, cultural sensitivity, and attention to student needs.

Like all volumes published by Focus Publishing, *Cineplex* accomplishes a wide range of learning objectives, ranging from cultural to linguistic. Most activities are interactive and provide authentic material and follow ACTFL guidelines. Reading and writing activities provide students with multiple opportunities to engage with film, making learning “fun and interesting” (xv). The ancillaries include a self-correcting, online workbook; links to purchase films available, and an Instructor’s manual with an answer key to exercises (xv).

Each chapter is divided into six parts that are uniquely designed to contextualize the vocabulary, characters, and themes from the films in meaningful and effective pedagogical exercises and activities: *Vorbereitung und Hintergrund*, *Zum Film*, *Synthese*, *Strukturen*, *Lektüre*, and *Wortschatz*.

Vorbereitung und Hintergrund introduces the film, providing useful background information about the characters and plot, as well as the cultural and historical context. *Zum Film* offers a section by section study of each film, including pre and post viewing activities. *Synthese* pulls together what students have learned in class and challenges them to engage in constructive discussion, presentations, compositions, and skits. *Strukturen* presents important grammar (more or less relevant to the film under study) and includes a variety of review exercises. In all likelihood, students have already been exposed to these topics but surely could do with the additional review. *Lektüre* contains various texts directly related to the film, everything from newspaper reviews and magazine articles to poems and interviews. *Wortschatz* presents relevant vocabulary and is accompanied by some very creative exercises that will help students build their vocabulary.

Of the ten films presented, nine of them are German, one Swiss and one joint German/Austrian. The films are presented in this order: *Die Drei Rauber*, *Jenseits der Stille*, *Das Wunder von Bern*, *Die Welle*, *Almanya-Willkommen in Deutschland*, *Lola Rennt*, *Im Juli*, *Sophie Scholl-Die Letzen Tagen*, *Good Bye Lenin*, *Die Fetten Jahre sind Vorbei*.

This is a very generous helping of German film indeed, too much to cover in a single semester or even an academic year, for that matter. Most likely, instructors will choose to use this book as a supplement in an intermediate or advanced-level language course and maybe only cover a handful of films unless they have the luxury of teaching in a department that offers a cinema course (cuts in personnel and curriculum everywhere have made this an increasingly rare option, sadly). In the event that only one, or two or maybe three films can be included, Focus Publishing offers copyright for individuals, so that instructors can prepare student modules on the films of their choice.

Most, if not all, of the films presented in *Cineplex* are bound to startle our so-called millennial students, as much because of their content as because of their artistic style. How many of our students have ever seen a foreign film, much less what people in my generation euphemistically used to call “fine films”? A couple of these films actually made it to mainstream U.S. cinemas (e.g., *Lola Rennt*, *Good Bye Lenin*) but did not enjoy much success at the box office, in large measure because the subject matter and style are so non-conventional for a general American audience. Therefore I am wondering if it

would not be useful to include a chapter on the appreciation of film or at least a section in each chapter outlining cultural challenges to study German cinema, since the films studied in this text—most of them “fine films” to the nth degree—are bound to have an alienating effect on a contemporary American audience, accustomed to graphic violence and spectacular special effects that distract from character development and the “plot.” Thus, studying German film will be an eye-opener to many students who, sad to say, might not otherwise have had the chance to view a foreign film; it might also bring down the wrath of the local school board if the film can be perceived to violate so-called community standards, so, sad to say, in 2016, instructors need to be aware of the dangers of showing “unsanitized,” non-Hollywood film in an American classroom. Instructors need to address cultural differences between American and foreign film at some point but can do so in context, I believe.

The presentation of each film follows the same basic order and is evenly divided between sections providing information and sections soliciting student input. The authors’ approach is practical and pedagogical almost to a fault. Each chapter contains the same subsections, each with clearly defined parameters, which isn’t to say that teachers cannot pick and choose among subsections as indeed they do with any text. Very rarely can teachers cover all the material contained in any text, and *Cineplex* is no exception. There is simply too much good “stuff” here to cover in the time allotted, so most teachers will have to pick and choose. The text is billed as appropriate for an intermediate or advanced course, but presumably undergraduates should also be exposed to literature in their second and third years of study. Film is important, but so too are literature and civilization. No doubt the text may be used in combination with a literary or historical text. For example, *Good Bye Lenin* could be assigned in a section on the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. *Almanya—Willkommen in Deutschland* is ideal as a teaching tool on the migrant crisis in Europe today and is bound to stir up controversy. The curriculum these days is becoming ever more interdisciplinary. The authors have struck “gold” with this book, which can be used in a variety of classroom settings.

For the purposes of this review, just to give readers a sense of what to expect, I decided to look at *Good Bye Lenin*. As previously mentioned, each chapter follows the same basic outline and provides impressive in-depth coverage. Instructors will have to select topics carefully and tailor make their own unit based on their own interests, the course, and student ability. I am particularly impressed with the way the authors covered the events leading up to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the *Mauerfall*. Students acquire a basic understanding not only through short and overall balanced and objective synopsis such as mini-presentations but also through intelligent short “click-and-drag” type exercises on paper that ask students to arrange events chronologically or thematically. Granted, there could be more substance but this is not a history course. Besides, each chapter comes with a bibliography for further work. Comprehension questions and paper topics are challenging but overall manageable even at the intermediate level. Finally, the visual presentation of material is superb and I was very favorably impressed with the way in which the authors are able to use pictures and other visuals in so many activities. Each and every page is attractive and engaging and sure to stimulate student interest. The only place where I had difficulty doing an activity was on pp. 332-333, where students are asked to identify DDR products on a photo: the writing was too small, I thought.

The accompanying workbook contains an abundance of easy-to-grade short exercises that drill language, grammar and culture. Most are fill-in-the-blank type exercises, challenging without being too difficult or time-consuming. They rather look like games than traditional language exercises and for that reason are bound to engage students, who will do them because they are fun to do and will help them better learn the material.

Cineplex is an overall excellent introduction to German film. The content-based approach to teaching language through film will enable students to improve their language skills and at the same time learn about German-language culture. This is by far one of the best cinema texts I have seen in a long time thanks to its comprehensive scope and intelligent and eminently pedagogical approach. *Cineplex* sets a new standard of excellence and is bound to attract many enthusiastic followers in the near future.

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Publisher's Response

On behalf of its authors, Reinhard Zachau, Jeanne Schueller, and Carrie Collenberg-Gonzalez—as well as the original publisher of this innovative volume, Ron Pullins, its editor Allen Cooper, and the amazing staff at Focus—my colleagues and I at Hackett express our gratitude to Tom Conner for his thoughtful review of *Cineplex: Intermediate German Language and Culture Through Film*. Hackett welcomes instructors of German at the intermediate level to examine *Cineplex* for themselves; we're confident that they, like others, will find that its approach to teaching language through film offers an ingenious solution to the challenges of teaching German at this level. Not least of these is the problem of introducing authentic cultural materials in a form both well suited to the learning styles of millennials and capable of broadening the cultural horizons of American students (in this case, ones formed largely by Hollywood). Instructors wishing to assign only a small portion of either the main text or workbook are encouraged to apply for permission to Hackett Publishing, permissions@hackettpublishing.com, to reproduce any materials controlled by the publisher.

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Japanese

Kirsten Refsing and Lita Lundquist, *Translating Japanese Texts*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-87-635-0777-6. Pp. 195. Paperback.

Translating Japanese Texts is a practical textbook and a precise introduction to problems of and strategies for translating Japanese texts. In their introduction the authors state that the primary target group of this book is “university students of Japanese.” An earlier version of this book targeted students of translation classes or professional

translators; in this new edition technical jargon, theoretical arguments and scholarly references have been considerably reduced so that each concept is clearly defined and illustrated by authentic Japanese examples and their English translations in order to make them understandable to students without a background in linguistics or translation studies. According to the authors, the old “translation-grammar” method asked for painstaking grammatical analysis and mechanical translation practice and did not make learners develop communicative proficiency, nor make them learn how to translate. This textbook offers instruction on how to properly approach translation and how to develop communicative competence useful for translation.

The organization of *Translating Japanese Texts* is straightforward enough and readers can learn each concept step-by-step. The book has three Parts. Part I (*The Source Text and Global Strategies for its Translation*) consists of three chapters. Chapter 1 (*The Source Text as Text*) defines a text and provides eight criteria that make a text coherent: topic, contextual anchoring, sender’s attitude, argumentative direction, sender’s intention, function, text genre, and explicit coherence between sentences. Chapter 2 (*Analysis and Understanding of the Source Text*) illustrates each of the eight criteria introduced in Chapter 1, using an authentic Japanese newspaper column and its English translation. Chapter 3 (*Strategies for Transferring the Source Text*) presents global strategies and local strategies for translation. Global strategies for translation can be either source text-oriented or target reader-oriented, and the choice between the two may depend on the text type. After the global strategy is settled, translators select local strategies, which are specific choices of words and structures in the target text.

Part II (*Units of Translation and Local Strategies for Their Transfer*) consists of three chapters (Chapter 4, 5, and 6). Chapter 4 (*Micro-Units I: The Word and Beneath*) looks at semantic features in words and grammar. However, it presents a frequent lack of one-to-one correspondence between English and Japanese, giving examples such as the Japanese adjective *aoi*, which corresponds to “blue,” “green,” or “pale” in English, depending on the context; the Japanese polite suffix *mas(u)*, which does not have an English equivalent; Japanese *null* pronouns, which need to be recovered in English; and culture-specific Japanese words like *o-bon* (a festival to celebrate the return of the ancestors’ spirits in August), which need to be explained in a footnote or in the text, or paraphrased so that readers understand what they are. Chapter 5 (*Micro-Units II: Phrases*) is about relatively large micro units for translation, namely, phrases. This chapter discusses procedures to identify phrases within a sentence and the strategies for translating them. The authors show useful markers that delineate phrases. For example, post positions such as *wo* (direct object marker) and *wa* (topic marker), time and space markers like *kara* (“since,” and “from”), and deictic words like *kore* (“this one”) and *sore* (“that one”), serve as mental space builders for translators according to the authors. They also list a number of fixed phrases as units of translation, including collocations, idioms, proverbs, conventionalized metaphors, and proverbs. Chapter 6 (*Macro-Units of Translation: The Sentence and Beyond*) shows how linearly concatenated sentences progress to form a text. It presents notions such as foregrounded/backgrounded information, new/given information, topic/comment, backward-looking/forward-looking centers, referential expressions, inferences, and mental space builders.

Part III (*The Target Text and its Revision*) consists of only one chapter (Chapter 7: *Mega-Units and Revision of the Target Text*). It emphasizes the importance of comparing translated texts with non-translated texts in the target language to see if they fit into some genre (e.g., travel guide, fairy tale, obituary, and recipe) or text “voice” (e.g., narrative, descriptive, expository, argumentative, directive, expressive, commissive, declarative) in the target language.

Translating Japanese texts can be extremely helpful for advanced students of Japanese and significantly improve their writing skills. The problems that advanced students of Japanese encounter when writing in Japanese are mostly related to contextual factors and usually they are a matter of appropriateness rather than correct grammar. Thus, students’ problems are often left uncorrected, unnoticed, or unresolved. However, studying and comparing Japanese source texts with their English translations can make students notice such problems and recognize their nature. By studying this book, advanced students of Japanese can understand why some words and grammatical elements result in inappropriateness in some contexts, but not in others. In addition, they also will develop translation skills, which are a desirable outcome for advanced students of Japanese. The text certainly covers three of ACTFL’s (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) 5Cs: *Communication*, *Comparison*, and *Culture*. Furthermore, *Translating Japanese Texts* also introduces basic concepts in text linguistics and translation studies, which benefit students considering graduate studies in linguistics or translation studies.

Translating Japanese Texts is comparable to *The Routledge Course in Japanese Translation* published by Yoko Hasegawa in 2011. The former has minimal authentic examples and is useful for quickly understanding general concepts of translation through self-study, whereas the latter has many exercises that utilize authentic examples and is suitable for a course textbook. However, both of them advocate the use of translation for teaching advanced students of Japanese, which is different from the grammar-translation method. Both texts are thought-provoking and intellectually stimulating and both successfully show the benefit of using translation for teaching and learning languages.

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Language Learning

Ewald, Jennifer D. *The Inbox: Understanding and Maximizing Student-Instructor E-mail*. Bristol, CT: Equinox Publishing, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-1-78179-114-1.

The author of *The Inbox* analyzed e-mails between students and a foreign language professor. This topic is significant to explore because higher education continues to evolve technologically, leading to the proliferation of mediated “out-of-the-classroom communication” (OCC). Even though college students are reputed to be digital natives, their understanding of e-mail etiquette is sometimes rather lacking in terms of form, content, and tone. Frequently, e-mail exchanges between professors and students can be frustrating to both sides; these frustrations can be attributed to the uniqueness of the medium. E-mail is a lean medium with minimal nonverbal cues, which produces a higher rate of misunderstandings than other media.

Ewald's objective is to explore the communication acts occurring via e-mail by identifying and explaining linguistic patterns used by Spanish students e-mailing a foreign language professor. The predominant communication acts included student requests, student repair work in the form of apologies and excuses, gratitude, and complaints. Using existing frameworks, such as politeness theory and the apology speech act formulas, Ewald described typical characteristics of student e-mails.

Methodological Explanation and Critique

Using a social scientific approach the author employed content analysis of 1,403 student e-mails (N = 338). The majority of e-mails were sent using the student's native tongue (i.e., English) which is indicative of the participants' language preference when writing e-mails. Only 26 of the 338 participants used their second language, Spanish, to fully construct an e-mail to their professor. This fact suggests that foreign language professors need to explicitly state expectations of language used for mediated OCC in the syllabus.

The e-mails studied were real life examples, i.e., not simulated or elicited e-mails. Upon IRB approval, Ewald began tracking and storing e-mails in a database received from her Spanish and Linguistic students. The raw data captures how students genuinely use e-mail with a professor strengthening the practical, theoretical and pedagogical implications.

Although this naturalistic approach is commendable, certain methodological limitations do exist. One limitation is that the author is both the professor who received the e-mails and the study's primary investigator. This opens the door for biases or certain characteristics of the researcher to possibly influence the coding and data analytic procedure—whether code creation or executing the analysis. This leads to a second limitation: inter-coder reliability was not reported. Inter-coder reliability functions to enhance validity and accuracy of the results. It appears that Ewald was the sole coder. To strengthen the findings the author should have enlisted a second coder in order to ensure code reliability. If this necessary step was taken, the author should have provided more elaborate explanation about the procedure.

Strengths, Weaknesses and Intended Use

Regardless of the methodological limitations the author of *The Inbox* used appropriate frameworks--Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) apology speech acts--to explain many of her findings. Ewald's implications, however, could have been more robust with the inclusion of Goffman's (1959) face theory, which inspired Brown and Levinson's theory. Ewald studied a specific communication context, student e-mails to a professor. Goffman's theory would have been appropriate to use as humans are either consciously or subconsciously thinking about face, or personal identity or other identity needs. With the previous proposition one can assume that maintaining social face represents a primary conversational concern, especially when high power distance is an inherent part of the relationship.

Returning to politeness theory, Brown and Levinson (1987) argued that the level of the loss-of-face threat used in conversation is somewhat determined by the relationship of the interlocutors. A loss-of-face situation occurs when a person's "positive" or "negative

face” is questioned or threatened. “Positive face” represents the want to be needed by others; whereas negative face implies personal autonomy and individuality (Goffman, 1959). Ewald could have offered additional implications framed with face theory, particularly when discussing student requests, repair work in the form of apologies or excuses, and complaints. For example, the data demonstrate that students used utterances such as “just” or “is there any way” when making requests. Ewald explained these utterances or lexical items were used to “soften the blow” (63). Goffman’s face theory also explains the linguistic strategy. Specifically, the students knew they were violating a relationship expectation. When engaging in the face threatening act students would use certain vocabulary symbolic of face work strategies.

Ewald indirectly writes of the phenomenon known as attribution theory (Kelley & Michela, 1980) in many of the implication sections. As professors, we construct reality through attributing perceived meaning to everyday occurrences and interactions with our students. Considering OCC, specifically e-mail, the author asks professors to be aware of perceived causations or the causal attributions professors make about their students. Ultimately, professors generate specific attributions or inferences pertinent to the student e-mailer, which guide how we perceive a student request, excuse, or apology.

In Chapter five Ewald discusses repair work in the form of excuses. The data indicate students frequently closed e-mails pertinent to missing class with phrases such as “Hope this is okay” or “Thanks for understanding.” Ewald argued that a professor would usually interpret these communication acts as a student being “presumptuous” (101) about attendance policy, rather than a social nicety. Deeming a student as presumptuous constitutes a negative internal attribution (i.e., negative intent), whereas the latter is a positive internal attribution (i.e., positive intent). How a professor characterizes any e-mail lexical choice will guide a professor’s e-mail response, if a response is sent at all.

Ewald’s implications should not be taken lightly. Research (see Dobransky & Frymier, 2004) demonstrates that effective OCC leads to student motivation, confidence, and even establishes a more trusting rapport between a professor and student. For instance, Bolkan and Holmgren (2012) explored student requests through e-mail and discovered significant implications of polite student e-mails. Polite student e-mails led to a professor’s increased affinity for students, as well as other benefits, such as a more positive perception of student competence and an elevated motivation to work with polite students. Ewald recommends that professors consider what students understand about e-mail etiquette. More importantly, professors should recognize students have been exposed to multiple instructors who have different e-mailing correspondence styles; thus informing a student’s e-mail approach.

The outcomes of the study could have been strengthened if additional measures had been taken by Ewald. First, a further breakdown of the data based on gender and year in school would have been informative. I am left with questions, such as: “did gender differences exist in how students engaged in e-mail correspondence with the professor?” or “did junior and senior college students demonstrate improved e-mail etiquette compared to freshmen and sophomores?” These questions also have surfaced in previous research. For example, research shows that female students (who tend to be less likely to argue) have different online communicating styles compared to male students (who tend to be more authoritative [Savicki, Kelley, & Oesterreich, 1999]). Because Savicki et al.’s research

is dated *The Inbox* has the potential to highlight whether disparate communication styles persist between male and female students. Second, the data's "generalizability" is limited as results are based on just one professor at one university. Ewald does explicitly address this data limitation in the final chapter of *The Inbox*, however. This structural weakness, hopefully, will initiate future professor-student e-mail studies at a variety of institutions involving multiple professors.

In conclusion, *The Inbox* revisits a contemporary communication occurrence-- student e-mail use in the academy. The study should assist professors to better understand e-mail functionality. A main implication is that professors need to be cognizant of the assumptions they make about a student's linguistic approach to e-mail. Students, most likely, have been exposed to a variety of professor response patterns and various approaches to e-mail etiquette. The historical context is significant and a context that professors should be mindful of.

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Jernigan, Christine. *Family Language Learning: Learn Another Language, Raise Bilingual Children*. Tonawanda, NY: **Multilingual Matters**, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-78309-279-6. Pp. 214. \$24.95. www.multilingual-matters.com.

For parents who are keen on creating a home environment in which they speak and interact in a foreign language, of which neither parent is a native speaker, with their children, Christine Jernigan's *Family Language Learning: Learn Another Language, Raise Bilingual Children* is an excellent resource. Practical but humorous in its approach, this guide provides the necessary tools to develop an accepting and welcoming atmosphere where both parents and children are able to enjoy learning another language. When explaining in the preface how from a professional standpoint she is able to write this

guide (she has taught two different foreign languages as well as trained foreign language teachers and given lectures on language acquisition for more than fifteen years), Jernigan clarifies her personal perspective by describing the period when she was “pregnant as a whale” and decided to speak Portuguese to her baby despite the dubious looks from others that clearly indicated that she obviously had no idea how exhausting it was to raise a child:

... I’m living the part. Our household is bilingual by choice, but neither my husband nor I grew up bilingual. Learning Portuguese started during a six-month stay in Brazil, teaching English to teenagers. When people ask if I am “fluent,” I tell them fluency is a project I don’t expect to finish in my lifetime. I speak what I can to my children and learn more each day.

All this to say that yes, professionally, I’m well qualified to write this book. Personally, though, I’m not much different from you (viii).

The impetus for Jernigan to write this guide stemmed from her desire to “get to the bottom of this non-native thing” and despite her exhaustive efforts, very little was written or said of parents who were still learning a foreign language and who wanted to teach it to their children (vii). Thus, she began her own research by conducting interviews with a wide variety of parents, such as mothers who had some experience with a foreign language, fathers who wished they had learned a foreign language and were now willing to learn one, and parents whose fears, developed out of past negative foreign language learning experiences, prevented them from trying anew to learn a foreign language, let alone teach it to their children. As Jernigan began to publish some of her findings in contemporary parenting magazines, the reader requests for more information encouraged her to write a full-fledged guide and hence, *Family Language Learning* was born. Comprised of twelve motivating chapters, *Family Language Learning* outlines a complete game plan so that a parent is able to meet the challenges of raising a child bilingually with as much fun and as little stress as possible. Jernigan’s writing style is highly entertaining and as a mother who raised her own daughter with as much French language input as possible, I found her tips to be spot on. For example, in Chapter Two: “Forget the Unicorn: Why ‘Non-Native’ is Just Fine,” she offers perfect solutions to the naysayers, such as:

During a parent-teacher conference, you mention your language plan. The teachers says “I’ve read research that says you should only speak your first language to your child. It’s better for the child. And I think using two languages might confuse her.”

Your response. Explain that you think you know the research she’s referring to. “It was probably for immigrants who’ve come to this country. For example, a woman from Spain who moves to the UK is encouraged to keep speaking Spanish to her children so they’ll be bilingual.” Smile politely and close with “It seems like a weird experiment, but it’s actually well supported by recent studies. Children don’t get confused, because their brains have ways of separating the languages. And learning another language actually helps with reading in the first language. I’m glad you’re interested and I can tell you about our progress at our next conference if you like” (31).

In conclusion, by dismantling language learning myths and combining them with solid second language research and a fun sprinkling of family stories gleaned from

interviews, Jernigan offers straightforward advice to all those who want to raise their children bilingually as well as to those individuals who are interested in improving their own proficiency in a new foreign language.

Eileen M. Angelini
Fulbright Specialist (NY)

Publisher's Response

Multilingual Matters would like to thank Professor Eileen Angelini for such a positive review of *Family Language Learning*. As she argues, one of the strengths of the book is the combination of personal stories, research and practical advice. Parents and teachers interested in raising and teaching multilingual children may like to have a look at the other books in our *Parents' and Teachers' Guides series*, which includes general introductions to bilingualism and multilingualism, as well as more in-depth explorations of topics including multilingual literacy, the role of siblings in language development, and linguistic diversity in the classroom.

Elinor Roberson
Marketing Manager / Commissioning Editor
Channel View Publications Ltd / Multilingual Matters
Bristol, UK

Mares, Chris. *50 Ways to Be a Better Teacher. Professional Development Techniques.* Charleston, SC: Wayzgoose Press, 2016. Pp. 89. ISBN: 13-978-1-938757-21-1.

Good (language) teaching is all about conveying passion, motivating students, listening, questioning and being wise, responsive and responsible. In his book, Chris Mares provides insightful suggestions for creating effective learning communities to novice and veteran teachers alike. Part of a practical *Fifty Ways to Teach Them* series intended primarily for English as a Second or Foreign Language teachers, advice in this little book rings equally true for teachers of languages other than English.

The book is divided into five jargon-free, accessible sections: *Teaching Techniques, Personal Development, Attitude, Physical Self and Yourself*. The little vignettes are peppered with personal anecdotes and insights from the author's far-reaching experiences as a teacher and teacher trainer in the U.S., Europe, Middle East, and Japan. This is not so much a book about teaching methods as a meditation on the craft of inspirational language teaching, which creates trust between the teacher and learner.

Chris Mares' teaching techniques range from using gestures to support spoken language to remaining flexible, responsive and customizing instruction for each student group. He counsels teachers to be prepared, but not overly so, to delegate tasks to students and teaching assistants, to develop effective correction techniques, and to recycle content and activities in different contexts. He also points out that schema raising—while requiring experience and thoughtfulness—is a highly effective student-centered approach that keeps learners engaged, by allowing them to build on what they already know while guiding them toward acquiring, practicing and incorporating new material.

The author highlights the importance of personal development and modeling good practice and argues convincingly that being a reader or writer oneself inspires language students to read and write as well. He suggests seeking mentors—regardless of experience level—to discuss

teaching approaches with peers, move beyond inauthentic textbook language and ask real-life questions that stimulate linguistically and culturally relevant class discussions. He recommends meditation for maintaining focus and battling burnout, and stresses more than once that good language teachers observe and invite observation to learn from others. In short, he views “being comfortable with being uncomfortable” (33) both in the classroom and as a conference presenter as essential for teaching excellence.

Effective teacher attitudes therefore include regular peer observations, which facilitate critical reflection and the development of solutions for problems. Empathy, fairness and consistency, as well as unpredictability keep students engaged and help create a safe space for learners to feel comfortable making errors. At the same time, being true to oneself not only builds connections with students but also enables teachers to develop their own, unique and personal teaching style. Teachers who remain open, who experiment and change ineffective approaches, fully understand that teaching is a “dynamic art” and that “change keeps it alive” (67).

Finally, being a dynamic language teacher also entails staying in shape. Chris Mares therefore advocates for physical exercise, but also for protecting the voice through non-verbal communication techniques. He stresses the importance of resting and regrouping, of mindfully slowing down and finding ways to move in the classroom that captivate and create presence. The book concludes with several personal, almost Zen-like thoughts on the teaching self, which highlight the importance of self-reflection and an honest reckoning with weaknesses, strengths and motivations for planning instruction. In the end, effective language teachers are confident critiquing themselves, discussing weaknesses with peers, come to accept imperfection and embrace fluidity and change.

Chris Mares’ contribution to the ever-growing body of language teaching literature reminds even those who are nearing the end of their careers why they entered the language teaching profession in the first place. The effective language instructor makes a real difference in students’ lives, regards teaching as “both a skill and an art” and knowingly embarks on “a path of growth” (86). Although these observations are hardly new or surprising, having them all compiled in one place is very helpful. I can see this book stimulating in-depth conversations between colleagues, mentors and mentees, or methods instructors and students on what constitutes effective language teaching and classroom management as they provide concrete examples from real life situations.

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Spanish

Blanco, José A. *Descubre 1: Lengua y cultura del mundo hispánico*. Boston, MA: Vista Higher Learning, 2017. *Descubre 1 Teacher’s Edition*. ISBN-13: 978-1-68994-324-2. Pp. 383 + 47 pp. of Teacher Support and 31 pp. of Introduction for the Student. *Descubre 1A Teacher’s Edition* ISBN-13: 978-1-68004-325-9. Pp. 202 + 47 pp. of Teacher Support and 29 pp. of Introduction for the Student. *Descubre 1B Teacher’s Edition*. ISBN-13: 978-1-68004-326-6. Pp. 383 + 47 of Teacher Support and 29 pp. of Introduction for the Student. For pricing options, visit www.vistahigherlearning.com.

José A Blanco’s *Descubre 1: Lengua y cultura del mundo hispánico* is a clearly-presented and well-organized beginning-level Spanish textbook for the middle and/or secondary levels. Each of the nine chapters is divided into *Contextos* (“Setting the Stage
January 2017

for Communication”: theme-related vocabulary and exercises with color illustrations and reference lists); *Fotonovela* (“Bridges Language and Culture”: a Vista Higher Learning signature block photo depiction of the video storyline, this time of a group of students living in Mexico City, Mexico, with transcription of each character’s dialogue that fosters student learning as students are able to listen and read simultaneously in Spanish and from which, class reenactments of the video segments can be based, and support for pronunciation practice); *Cultura* (“Presented in Context”: short readings in English for the early chapters in Level 1 and later in Spanish for the higher levels that includes *Así se dice*, which highlights vocabulary related to the chapter’s theme, and *Perfil*, which centers on Spanish-speaking celebrities and points of interest in the Spanish-speaking world); *Estructura* (“As a Tool not a Topic”: four distinct grammatical presentations per section in a format that offers concise explanations and examples to support fully the appropriate range in difficulty of both the written and speaking exercises); and *Adelante* (*Lectura*, readings anchored in chapter themes with *Antes de leer*, pre-reading strategies, and *Después de leer*, comprehension activities; *Escritura*, writing strategies and activities based on chapter themes; *Escuchar*, techniques for improving listening skills; *En pantalla*, television clips from the Spanish-speaking world that are related to chapter themes; *Flash cultura*, video segments featuring youth from the Spanish-speaking world; and, *Panorama*, “Perspective through Geography,” focuses on a Spanish-speaking country’s culture, history, fine arts, literature, and everyday life).

The forty-seven pages of teacher support in the Teacher’s Edition of all three formats of *Descubre* are: Level 1A and Level 1B Scope and Sequence; Level 1 Scope and Sequence; Level 2 Scope and Sequence; Level 3 Scope and Sequence; Articulation; Components; Technology; Walkthrough; VHL Story; ACTFL Standards; Teaching with *Descubre*; Assessment; Pacing Guide, and Cultural Resources. The *Descubre* Student Edition Front Matter is comprised of: Table of Contents of the Student Edition; Map of the Spanish-Speaking World; Map of Mexico; Map of Central America and the Caribbean; Map of South America; Map of Spain; Video Programs; Supersite; Icons; Studying Spanish; Getting Started; Acknowledgments; and Bios. *Descubre* also contains two appendices (*Apéndice A*: Glossary of Grammatical Terms and *Apéndice B*: Verb Conjugation Tables), *Vocabulario* (Spanish-English and English-Spanish); References; Índice, and Credits.

The *Descubre* Supersite, whose features vary by access level selected by the instructor, is the user-friendly online source for combining textbook, technology, and media resources (e.g., online virtual and partner chats, a downloadable digital image bank, oral testing suggestions, and streaming video of *Fotonovela* episodes, with instructor-managed options for subtitles and transcripts in Spanish and English). The synchronization between the textbook and the *Descubre* Supersite increases student exposure to a wide range of currently relevant authentic materials.

Descubre is part of VHL’s carefully articulated sequence of instruction that centers on interpretive, interpersonal and presentational communication skills. For the first three years, there are *Descubre* 1 (with the option of having one textbook that includes all nine chapters or 1A with the first four chapters and 1B with a *Lección preliminar* and chapters five through nine), *Descubre* 2, and *Descubre* 3. For the fourth year, VHL offers *Imagina: Español sin barreras*. For AP Spanish, VHL offers both *Temas: AP Spanish Language and Culture* and *AP Spanish: Language and Culture Exam Preparation*. For

the advanced levels, there is a choice between *Revista: Conversación sin barreras* and *Intrigas: Advanced Spanish between Literature and Film*.

Eileen M. Angelini
Fulbright Specialist (NY)

Publisher's Response

I am pleased to respond to Eileen M. Angelini's complimentary review of *Descubre 1: Lengua y cultura del mundo hispánico*. It is clear from her observations that the reviewer examined the textbook program in depth and easily recognized the goals that our editorial development team strived to reach.

As Professor Angelini aptly notes, *Descubre 1* is a beginning-level Spanish textbook for the middle and/or secondary levels which provides extensive resources both in print and online. As the reviewer points out, each chapter of the program is divided into clearly defined sections focusing on the different aspects of language and providing opportunities for students to practice language skills. And as she also observes, the program presents the material in context, highlighting cultural aspects from the Spanish-speaking world.

I am grateful to Professor Angelini for pointing out the complete support offered to teachers in the Teacher's Edition of *Descubre*. Aware of the challenges educators face on a daily basis, we strive to provide teachers with a wide range of materials to support them in guiding students to successful learning. She also highlights the user-friendly *Descubre* Supersite as a resource that increases students' exposure to language in a digital environment. As a specialized foreign language publisher, we pride ourselves on developing digital tools that enhance the language learning process and contribute to the communicative competency of today's students.

Finally, Professor Angelini rightly identifies *Descubre* as part of a carefully articulated sequence of instruction that centers on interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication skills. Offering a sequence of materials for the different levels of instruction is a key goal of our company, and *Descubre 1* is intended to be the first component in this sequence.

Sharla Zwirek
Editorial Director, Secondary
Vista Higher Learning

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

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Change in Dates of Publication

Beginning in 2018, the *NECTFL Review* will be published in March and September.

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