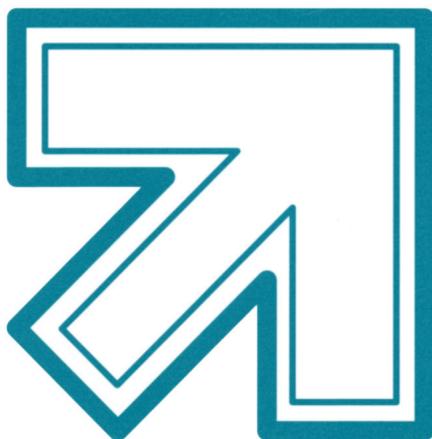


NECTFL ***REVIEW***

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



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

Number 73

January 2014

NECTFL IN
BOSTON, MA
SPRING 2014

NORTHEAST
CONFERENCE
on the Teaching of Foreign Languages



SUSTAINING COMMUNITIES THROUGH WORLD LANGUAGES

*The 61st Annual Northeast Conference
March 27-30, 2014 at the Marriott Copley Place*

Janel Lafond-Paquin, Rogers HS (RI), Chair



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From the 2014 Chair

Northeast 2014 in Boston at the Marriott Copley Place



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

I am extremely excited to have this opportunity to address you as part of the contents of the *NECTFL Review*! I'm sure that those of you reading this letter have a professional history with this journal as a source of scholarly articles and pedagogical submissions of superior quality. If you are also looking for a face to face opportunity of receiving excellent professional development, am hoping that you will consider coming to the Northeast Conference, March 27-30 in Boston, Massachusetts at the Marriott Copley Place, for the opportunity! The conference theme, "Sustaining Communities Through World Languages," will surely offer

much to sustain you as you through workshops, sessions, teaching labs, and the opportunity to network with other professionals in an extremely congenial setting!

Are you a member of NECTFL? Visit our website at www.nectfl.org/conference for the opportunity to become a member, register for the conference at a reduced rate, and sign up for a room at the Marriott Copley Place. This offer of reduced registration is available only through March 5 so please consider registering now to avoid any increases in price.

This year, we will once again offer you a myriad of professional possibilities for enhancing and strengthening yourself as a new teacher, veteran teacher, administrator or a full-fledged conference groupie!

On Thursday, we will have our customary pre-conference workshops with exceptional presenters from across the country. In the evening, you will be free to join with friends and colleagues to explore the city of Boston and sample its restaurants, shops, entertainment and enjoyable nightlife!

On Friday, an entire day of sessions will be at your disposal as well as the opening of our exhibit hall filled with new texts to consider for adoption, itineraries for trips with students around the world, materials to enhance your teaching experience ... and perhaps a few that offer shopping items for yourself! As we have done for the past several years, you will be able to bid on a variety of beautiful items in our Third Annual Silent Auction and reflect on the testimonies of your colleagues who have remembered the kindness and mentorship of those who were instrumental in their own careers at our Wall of Recognition. End your day by attending our Awards Ceremony where we will recognize those who have made significant contributions to world languages in some way.

On Saturday, you will have the opportunity to attend sessions that will help you develop even more fully as a professional. You will be given one more chance to connect with

exhibitors as well as to bid on another group of items during our second day of Silent Auction.

On Sunday, FREE teaching labs on a myriad of topics will be available to you! This is the perfect opportunity to gather hands-on materials that you can use immediately when you return to your classes! Make sure you make your selection when you sign up for the conference.

If you are still undecided, look back at this year's theme and consider its ramifications for your own personal situation. What communities do you need to sustain? How can you be a community member who truly exemplifies professionalism to your students, to your department, to your district, to your community outside of school? We at NECTFL hope to help you find answers to these questions by providing you with the best professional development face to face opportunity at a reasonable cost in a city that will charm you with its historical and cultural ambience.

Welcome to networking!

Welcome to collegiality!

Welcome to the Northeast!

Welcome to Boston!

Sincerely,

Janel Lafond-Paquin
Rogers High School
2014 Conference Chair



From the Managing Editor

NECTFL Review Readers,

We welcome in the new year with our eighth online edition of the *NECTFL Review* and to three very informative and thought-provoking articles, in addition to materials and textbooks reviews. As in the past, you can read the articles and reviews online or download either individual articles or the entire journal in PDF format at <http://www.nectfl.org/review.html>.

On the inside front cover and in the letter from Janel Lafond-Paquin, the 2014 Conference Chair, you will find information about the upcoming 2014 Annual Meeting in Boston, MA, March 27–30, at the Marriott Copley Place Hotel. The theme of the 2014 meeting is “Sustaining Communities through World Languages.” As in the past, NECTFL will offer you a wide range of outstanding professional development opportunities and an opportunity to mingle with colleagues in our dynamic profession. You will discover new ways of sustaining your language program, your students, and the newest teachers in our field. The topics of interest to you will be present before and after the conference through the use of social media, webinars, and face-to-face encounters.

In this January 2014 issue, we offer you three outstanding articles that topics and issues of interest to all of us, especially on the basis of assessment: intercultural growth, student participation ... or the lack thereof ... in our L2 classrooms, and beliefs about assessment and language learning, from the perspective of Arabic instructors and students.

The first article, “Assessing intercultural competence grown using direct and indirect measures,” by Daniel Uribe, Jean W. LeLoup, and Terrence W. Haverluk, all of the U.S. Air Force Academy, investigates and evaluates the improvement in intercultural competence of USAF Academy cadets, but is applicable to all students. The authors study uses both indirect measures (questions in end-of-course critiques and institutional surveys) and a direct measure (the Intercultural Development Inventory). Initial finds show students that who study another language and who spend time abroad in countries where their language is spoken show a gain in intercultural competence.

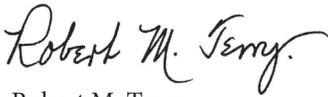
In the second article, Jennifer D. Ewald writes about a situation that all language teachers experience: the lack of student participation in the L2 classroom. In this article, “My students won’t participate!”: Promoting communication in language classrooms,” uses student input to investigate their reasons for not participating: language learning anxiety, lack of L2 understanding, feelings of inferiority as language learners, and prohibition of the use of the first language. Student suggestions offer teachers helpful guidance to encourage their students to participate more in class. Bottom line—teachers need to explicitly address issues of class participation with their students.

Victoria C. Nier, Francesca Di Silvio, and Margaret E. Malone, in their article “Beliefs about assessment and language learning: Findings from Arabic instructors and students,” write about the positive effects that both instructor and student understanding of the principles and practices of sound assessment can have on learning outcomes

and measurement of those outcomes. Their study describes research that they carried out in focus groups composed of both students and instructors of Arabic that would help them develop and oral proficiency assessment training resource for that specific audience. They found that if language students understand assessment, their language learning goals would be supported and clarified and, as a result, their overall assessment and learning experiences would improve.

We invite you to visit the NECTFL website [www.nectfl.org] and see what the organization is about and what it is doing, as well as current information on the upcoming 2014 conference in Boston. Also, please send me an e-mail and let me know what you think of the journal — the articles, the reviews...whatever you would like for me to know and whatever you might want to see changed.

Cordially,



Robert M. Terry
Managing Editor & Articles Editor

Call for Articles

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

Guidelines for Preparation of Manuscripts

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

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

1. We use the most recent **APA [American Psychological Association] Guidelines**, and not those of the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Please use the latest edition (6th ed., 2010) of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* or the *Concise Rules of APA Style* as your guide. For models of articles and references, examine *The NECTFL Review*, recent issues of the *Modern Language Journal* or *Foreign Language Annals*. These journals follow the APA style with minor deviations (and those being primarily changes in level headings within articles). Citations within articles, bibliographical entries, punctuation, and style follow the APA format very closely. You can visit the following web sites, which give you abbreviated versions of the APA guidelines:
 - a. APA Formatting and Style Guide: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> — this excellent site offers guidelines for using the 6th edition of the APA guidelines.
 - b. APA 6th Edition, Wake Forest University: <http://zsr.wfu.edu/research/guides/apa.html>
 - c. APA — <http://www.apastyle.org/>. This is the very source...the APA, with all sorts of help and assistance.
 - d. Writer Resources: APA: <http://www.cws.illinois.edu/workshop/writers/citation/apa/> — this is yet another great site from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to guide you through the APA style.
 - e. APA Style Essentials: <http://psychology.vanguard.edu/faculty/douglas-degelman/apa-style/> — this handy reference guide based on the APA sixth edition comes from the Vanguard University of Southern California.
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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.**
 - a. On the first page of the submitted article, authors should provide the following information:
 - i. The title of the article
 - ii. Names and titles of the author(s)
 - iii. Preferred mailing addresses
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 - v. E-mail addresses
 - vi. For joint authorship, an indication as to which author will be the primary contact person (not necessarily the first author listed on the manuscript itself).
 - b. The first page of the manuscript itself should have the title only, followed by the abstract, then the text.
 - c. It is essential that there be no direct references to the author(s) in the manuscript to be read by the reviewers. Any “giveaways,” such as references to a particular institution, when it is obvious that the institution is that of the author, should be avoided as well.
 - d. If your article is accepted for publication, you will be able to make the necessary changes in the final manuscript. For the present, however, authors should refer to themselves in the third person as “the author(s)” and refer to studies or projects at “X Middle School” or “X University.”
 - e. The APA guidelines suggest ways that authors can achieve this necessary degree of anonymity. We do understand, however, that references to certain websites may necessarily reveal the identity of the authors of certain articles.
7. Include a short biographical paragraph (this will appear at the bottom of the first page of the article, should it be published). Please include this paragraph on a separate page at the *end* of the article. This paragraph should include the following information (*no longer than 4-5 lines*):
 - a. Your name
 - b. Your highest degree and what school it is from
 - c. Your title
 - d. If you are a teacher, indicate what level(s) you have taught in your teaching career: K-12, elementary school, middle school, high school, community college, college/ university, other.

- e. Your credentials.

Example:

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

8. Please note that the typical length of manuscripts averages approximately 20-25 double-spaced pages, including notes, charts, and references. This does not mean that a slightly longer article is out of the question.
9. Authors should read the manuscript very carefully before submitting it, verifying the accuracy of the citations (including the spelling of names, page numbers, and publication dates); the accuracy of the format of the references; punctuation, according to the APA Guidelines; spelling throughout the article.
10. Please consult the **Checklist for Manuscript Publication**. Promising articles have been rejected because authors did not spend enough time proofreading the manuscript. Proofreading includes not only reading for accuracy but for readability, flow, clarity. Using the Checklist will help ensure accuracy. Authors are encouraged to have several colleagues read the article before it is submitted. Whether you are a native speaker of English or not, please ask a colleague whose native language is English to proofread your article to be sure that the text sounds idiomatic and that punctuation and spelling are standard.
11. In order for an article to be processed and sent to outside reviewers, authors must complete the online **Author/Article Information form**. This form is used to match the author's description of the article with the appropriate reviewers according to (1) instructional level; (2) areas of interest; (3) the type of content; (4) relevant language(s); (5) keywords that best describe the article content [no more than four should be indicated].

Checklist for Manuscript Preparation

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

- Please remember to use the spell check and grammar check on your computer before you submit your manuscript. Whether you are a native speaker of English or not, please ask a colleague whose native language is English to proofread your article to be sure that the text sounds idiomatic and that punctuation and spelling are standard. Otherwise good articles have been rejected because the writing style has very obvious non-native features and elements that detract from the message.
- Any portions of text in a foreign language must be followed immediately by an English translation in square brackets.
- Do not submit an article that includes tracking. If tracking has been used in the writing of the article, verify that every change indicated in tracking has been accepted or rejected and that the tracking box and any marks in the margin have been deleted.

- ❑ Remember that in the APA guidelines, notes (footnotes or endnotes) are discouraged — such information is considered to be either important enough to be included in the article itself or not significant enough to be placed anywhere. If notes are necessary, however, they should be endnotes.
 - ❑ Do not use automatic footnoting or endnoting available with your word processor. Use raised superscripts in the body of the text and regular Arabic numerals in the notes at the end. Automatic endnotes/footnotes present major problems as an article is prepared for publication.
 - ❑ Do not use automatic page numbering, since such numbering is often difficult to remove from a manuscript and has to be removed before the article is prepared for eventual publication.
- ❑ Please double-space everything in your manuscript.
- ❑ Use left justification only; do not use full justification anywhere in the article.
- ❑ The required font throughout is either Times New Roman 12 pt. or Minion Pro 12 pt.
- ❑ There should be only one space after each period.
- ❑ Punctuation marks appear inside quotation marks. Quotation marks, question marks, and exclamation points appear inside the quotation marks only when they are part of the actual quoted material. Otherwise, they should appear outside of the quoted material (as, for instance, when the author of the article is asking a question or reacting strongly to something).
- ❑ In listing items or in a series of words connected by *and*, *but*, *or*, use a comma before these conjunctions.
- ❑ When providing a list of items, use double parentheses surrounding the numbers or letters: (1), (2), or (3) or (a), (b), and (c).
- ❑ All numbers above nine must appear as Arabic numerals [“nine school districts” vs. “10 textbooks”]; numbers below 10 must be written out.
- ❑ Please remember that page number references in parentheses are not part of the actual quotation and must be placed outside of the quotation marks following quoted material.
- ❑ Use standard postal abbreviations for states in all reference items [e.g., NC, IL, NY, MS], but not in the text itself.
- ❑ Please do not set up automatic tabs at the beginning of the article (i.e., as part of a style); rather you should use the tab key (and not the space bar) on your computer each time you begin a new paragraph. The standard indent is only ¼ [0.25”] inch.
- ❑ Please note the differences between the use and appearance of hyphens and dashes. Dashes (which should be used sparingly) should appear as the correct typographic symbol (—) or as two hyphens (--). If your computer automatically converts two hyphens to a dash, that is fine. APA guidelines, as well as those for other style manuals, suggest that commas, parentheses, and other marks of punctuation are generally more effective than dashes.
- ❑ Please observe APA guidelines with respect to the use of initials instead of the first and middle names of authors cited in your list of references. Also note the use of the ampersand (&) instead of “and” to cover joint ownership in both parenthetical

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

- ❑ Please reflect on the title of the article. Quite often titles do not give readers the most precise idea of what they will be reading.
- ❑ Please remember that according to APA guidelines, the References section does not consist of a list of works consulted, but rather of the list of works you actually use in your article. Before you submit your manuscript, verify that each reference in the article has a matching citation in the References section. Then be sure that all items in the References section have been cited within the article itself. In unusual circumstances, authors may include as an appendix a separate selected bibliography of items useful to readers, but not among the sources cited in an article. Please double check all Internet addresses before you submit the manuscript.
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- ❑ Please make certain that the components you submit are in the following order:
 - ❑ First page — with the article title, names and titles of authors, their preferred mailing addresses, home and office phone numbers, FAX numbers, E-mail addresses, and an indication as to which of the joint authors will serve as the primary contact person [also, times in the summer when regular and E-mail addresses may be inactive];
 - ❑ First page of the manuscript — containing the title of the article and the abstract
 - ❑ The text of the article
 - ❑ Notes; References, Appendices — in this order
 - ❑ The short, biographical paragraph (no more than 4-5 lines).
- ❑ Authors must complete the online **Author/Article Information form**. This form is used to match the author’s description of the article with the appropriate reviewers according to (1) instructional level; (2) areas of interest; (3) the type of content; (4) relevant language(s); (5) keywords that best describe the article content [no more than four should be indicated].

Call for Articles

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

The NECTFL Editorial Review Board

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

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Assessing intercultural competence growth using direct and indirect measures

Daniel Uribe, *U.S. Air Force Academy*

Jean W. LeLoup, *U.S. Air Force Academy*

Terrence W. Haverluk, *U.S. Air Force Academy*

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore and assess the improvement in intercultural competence of USAF Academy cadets using indirect measures (e.g., questions in end-of-course critiques and institutional surveys) and a direct measure—specifically the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI). Data gathered from several groups of subjects at different academic levels were evaluated to see if certain variables were facilitating intercultural competence growth. Initial findings suggest that language study and time spent abroad in target language countries assist students in gaining intercultural competence.

Daniel Uribe (PhD, Arizona State University) is Professor and Head of the Department of Foreign Languages at the US Air Force Academy, leading 60 faculty and staff teaching over 5000 students annually in eight different languages. He also oversees all international programs to include language and cultural immersions, study abroad and semester exchange opportunities. Dr. Uribe has published in national and international journals such as *ETRE&D* and the *Canadian Modern Language Review* on the use of technology in educational settings and on innovative assessment techniques for foreign language students.

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

Terrence W. Haverluk (PhD, University of Minnesota) has taught at the college level for 20 years. He teaches a wide variety of course including geopolitics, human geography, the geography of Asia, the geography of Europe, the geography of Latin America, Global Cultural Awareness, and research methods. Dr. Haverluk is the co-director of the geopolitics core class, which is required of all 1,000 senior level cadets. He is also the co-coordinator of the USAFA intercultural competence outcome team. Dr. Haverluk has published several articles on the cultural geography of Hispanics in the US, as well as written 3 books on geopolitics.

Introduction

The notion of multicultural or intercultural competence is clearly not the sole purview of the foreign language (FL) education field.

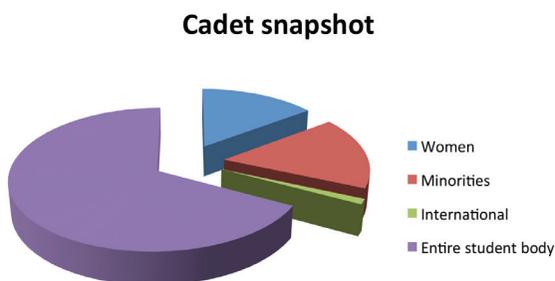
The notion of multicultural or intercultural competence is clearly not the sole purview of the foreign language (FL) education field. Indeed, it has been an issue of high interest for several decades in a variety of realms such as government milieus, general educational settings, and business environments. As the world became increasingly more global, a need was perceived both to define and then assess one's intercultural competence and potential for success while functioning in a particular venue. One solution proffered to address this need was the creation of a model to describe intercultural competence and then the development of an instrument to measure that competence. Several such models (e.g., Bennett, 1986; Byram, 1997; van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000; Ward & Kennedy, 1999) have been developed in an attempt to describe and then measure intercultural competence, and they have been employed in a wide array of situations where intercultural competence is desired. A discussion of these models and instruments as well as a more detailed explanation of the model selected for use in the present study are presented later in this paper. The particular model selected and the empirical measure of its theoretical concepts were the basis for a study conducted at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) in order to measure the intercultural competence of three groups of students (cadets) at different stages in their educational careers and with diverse international experiences. It is important to understand the institutional context of USAFA, as it is distinctly different from most other tertiary institutions on a number of levels.

Institutional Context and Outcomes

According to the United States Air Force Academy Strategic Plan of 2010, its mission is to "...educate, train and inspire men and women to become officers of character..." (p. 2). The Air Force Academy curriculum is designed to provide cadets a broad undergraduate liberal education within the framework of a military institution. In an effort to provide a general picture of the student body at USAFA, a number of characteristics and statistics were compiled representing the cohorts entering USAFA in the years 2012 through 2015. This overall composite yields a comprehensive portrait of the students at USAFA and, by extension, the subjects in the study. The USAFA is a highly competitive institution, fielding between 9,000 and 13,000 applicants each year. From this large pool approximately 1100 to 1300 are accepted for admission. Of these admissions, women comprise between 20 and 23% of the student population. The percentage of minorities at USAFA varies between 21 and 27% and includes Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, African American, and Native American students. In terms of geography, every state is represented. In addition, USAFA has over 70 full-time international students matriculating for the entire four-year curriculum or for only one semester (see Figure 1).

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Figure 1. Cadet Characteristics Snapshot



In keeping with the highly selective classification of USAFA, the mean score on the Critical Reading portion of the SAT Reasoning Test is 640 points; the mean for the Mathematics portion is 666 points. Each year approximately 10% of the freshman class is composed of either valedictorians or salutatorians from the students' high school graduating class. Between 63% and 65% of incoming students were members of the National Honor Society and participated in several other honorary organizations. In addition, over 80% of students lettered in at least one sport during their high school career; they also were members of myriad clubs and activities of all categories, from the debate team to musical clubs to Scouts.

Due to the unique character of its mission, in 2007 the Air Force Academy adopted a set of institutional outcomes, which provide a better framework and integrate efforts across the academic, military and athletic domains to meet the Academy's mission to develop leaders of character. A team of professionals from across the mission partners (academics, military, and athletic) formulated Institutional Outcomes that capture the characteristics cadets need to possess as Air Force officers. In order to simplify the socialization and adoption of the outcomes throughout the institution, they are summarized in three words: Responsibilities, Skills, and Knowledge. Specifically, USAFA wants to "commission leaders of character who embody the Air Force core values committed to Societal, Professional, and Individual **Responsibilities**, empowered by Integrated Intellectual and Warrior **Skills**, and grounded in essential **Knowledge** of the Profession of Arms and Human and Physical Worlds" (USAFA Self-Study Report, 2009, p. ii). The Outcomes are further organized into a tier system, which provides additional levels of measurable detail.

Intercultural competence was adopted as an institutional outcome under the responsibilities "umbrella" and an interdisciplinary team set out to more fully define the outcome and to develop an assessment strategy. The team's initial work confirmed the importance of intercultural competence for the officer of the 21st century. The nature of today's post-cold war conflicts clearly shows that the men and women being prepared at USAFA as future leaders will face increasingly complex multicultural environments. They will have to lead a more diverse force, work with coalition partners and allies, and interact with members of local populations around the world. President Obama, speaking to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Phoenix, Arizona, stated that: "... in the 21st century, military

strength will be measured not only by the weapons our troops carry, but by the languages they speak and the cultures they understand” (Obama, 2009).

There are many definitions of intercultural competence, also known as cross-cultural competence, in published works. The Air Force Academy adopted the official Air Force definition of intercultural (or cross-cultural) competence:

***Intercultural
Competence***

“The ability to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately and effectively act, to achieve the desired effect in a culturally complex environment”

“The ability to quickly and accurately comprehend, then appropriately and effectively act, to achieve the desired effect in a culturally complex environment” (United States Air Force Culture & Language Center, 2012).

Developing Intercultural Competence

Delving deeper into the core curriculum revealed that all Air Force Academy cadets begin their formal journey toward intercultural competence in a foreign language and history class during their freshman year. In their initial foreign language courses, cadets learn the mechanics of a foreign language and are also exposed—for the first time in many cases—to a foreign culture, where people may have products, practices, and perspectives (3Ps) much different than their own. Students confront these cultural differences through a variety of activities in class (e.g., role plays, scenarios, group discussion, films, readings). They explore the new products and practices and are then asked to grapple with the perspectives that underpin these cultural artifacts and behaviors and that also may contrast with those viewpoints held by their own culture. During this first year, all cadets also take History 101, which addresses a wide range of cultural constructs such as ethnic issues, religion, and race, and additionally includes a survey of the origins of the world’s civilizations with an emphasis on world religions and philosophies.

The journey to higher levels of intercultural competence continues in the sophomore year in courses such as English 211 and Political Science 211. In the English course, cadets focus on understanding different perspectives on major issues and engage in discussions dealing with cultural awareness, diversity, and sensitivity to the value systems of others. In the political science class “American Government, Politics, and National Security,” cadets strengthen their knowledge of our own culture and way of life, which is a key element in the development of intercultural competence. In their junior year, all cadets take an ethics course (Philosophy 310), which highlights an officer’s responsibilities to reason and act ethically and to know civic, cultural, and international contexts in which the US military operates. During their senior year, cadets take Social Sciences 412, “Geopolitics,” in which they describe, interpret, and evaluate global political relations and formulate strategies for interacting in Western and non-Western cultures.

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In addition to the classroom experience, approximately 600 cadets per year, roughly 15% of the student population, participate in language or cultural immersion programs or in summer operational experiences in a foreign country. A review of students' reflections after these experiences abroad suggests that they provide a significant boost to the students' intercultural competence. A student meditating about an experience in a mountain village in Morocco wrote the following:

I loved our night in the mountain because I got to be witness to a culture extremely different to my own. It's so easy to get caught up in the American way of life, focused on wealth and materials, we sometimes forget to appreciate the small things.

Once it was determined how the development of intercultural competence was being addressed in the curriculum, the next challenge was to determine how to measure success in this outcome. "Success" for future Air Force officers will be characterized by their ability to work in a multinational, multicultural environment to complete an assigned task or mission. Successful individuals are usually those who have the ability to look at a situation outside of their own cultural perspective. For the purposes of this study, the key goal of the assessment plan was to determine how an integrated, intentional curriculum and study abroad program had improved the intercultural competence of the students.

A multi-faceted assessment strategy was adopted that incorporated feedback from the students, indirect data from external and internal sources, and one assessment tool that measured this outcome directly. The internal indirect assessment data consisted of results from voluntary end-of-course surveys of cadets and an institutional survey focused on the outcomes. External indirect assessment data came from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2013), which is described more at length later in this paper. Finally, discussions with language and culture stakeholders across the Air Force and the Department of Defense led to the choice of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) as the best available tool to measure cross-cultural competence directly based on reliability and validity data available. The IDI theoretical construct is discussed in more detail in the Direct Assessment Data section below.

The specific research questions addressed by this study are:

1. Is there evidence of intercultural competence growth from freshman to senior year?
2. Is there evidence that students who major in Foreign Area Studies and study abroad become more intercultural competent than cadets from other majors?
3. Is there evidence that a foreign language minor leads to increased intercultural competence?

Indirect Assessment Data

Every course at the Air Force Academy is required to have the opportunity for cadets to provide voluntary and anonymous feedback on a somewhat standardized

questionnaire about the course at the mid-point and at the end of the semester. The questionnaire generally focuses on the students' attitudes toward such matters as the content of the course, activities, and the instructor. The questionnaire also provides the opportunity to receive feedback on questions of particular interest to that course or department. The courses that contribute to the aforementioned intercultural competence outcome during the freshman year (entry-level foreign languages and History 100) specifically included the following question in their questionnaire:

How did this course develop your intercultural competence?

1. Not at all
2. Slightly
3. Substantially

Student responses to this question indicate that the courses intended to develop intercultural competence during the freshman year are having a perceived success. The vast majority of cadets who have responded over four semesters feel these courses are having some impact on their intercultural competence, with 98.3% of students indicating that the course “slightly” or “substantially” developed their intercultural competence (N=4006).

The institutional outcome survey was specifically designed to determine the extent to which cadets felt their overall experience at USAFA had helped them develop in each of the outcomes. The survey was conducted with senior cadets graduating in the classes of 2008 and 2011. For the Intercultural Competence Outcome, the cadets answered the following question:

Were USAFA experiences beneficial in developing intercultural competence?

- a. They were beneficial
- b. There was no effect
- c. No opinion

As can be seen in Table 1 on the next page, the majority of respondents found their USAFA experiences in this outcome beneficial. When asked what experiences have been beneficial or detrimental, approximately 46% of the respondents felt academic courses (both major and core) were beneficial. Other highly-rated beneficial activities included unscheduled time (40.8%), international programs (30.5%), and extracurricular activities (25.6%). There were no significant numbers in any activity listed as detrimental to this outcome, but 11% cited the lack of diversity at USAFA as detrimental to the development of this outcome, highlighting an interesting connection that will require further research.

A total of 140 cadets offered suggestions on how to improve the development of this outcome. Approximately 47% stated a need to be exposed to diversity and 12% suggested more real-life examples, speakers, and making international travel more accessible to cadets. The suggestions confirm the need for additional research on the link between a diverse environment and the development of intercultural competence.

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Table 1. Institutional Outcome Survey Results (N=299)

Beneficial	75.4 % (n=225)
No effect	18.6 % (n=56)
No opinion	6.0 % (n= 18)

Whereas internal measures indicated there was positive growth in this outcome, at least from a cadet perspective, the NSSE provided additional external validation of this perspective. Using the instrument called The College Student Report, NSSE gathers data from over 600 four-year colleges and universities about student participation in programs and activities to provide an estimate of how students are spending their time (NSSE, 2013). The NSSE is administered at USAFA every 3 years, most recently in 2011.

According to the National Survey of Student Engagement (2013), “student engagement represents two critical features of collegiate quality. The first is the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. The second is how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities that decades of research studies show are linked to student learning.” The results at USAFA are compared to the results of a Military Academy consortium composed of the US Military Academy, the US Naval Academy, and in 2011 the US Merchant Marine Academy. The results are also compared to a group of selected peers, which are colleges and universities in the same Carnegie classification as USAFA. Examples include Brigham Young University, Bucknell, Georgia Tech, James Madison, and Northeastern.

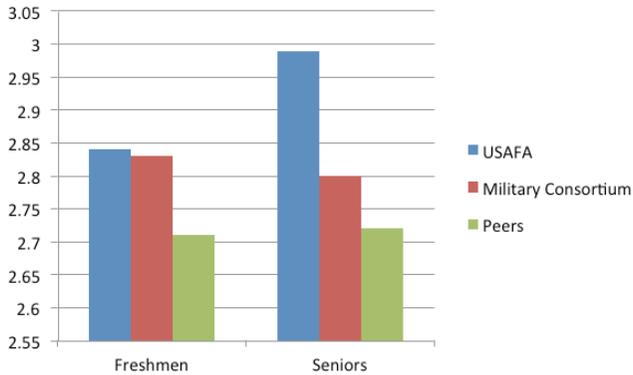
Four questions (indicated below as 1.a., 1.b., 1.c., 2.a) in the NSSE were identified that furnished insights into (1) the cadets’ ability to engage in class discussions providing a diverse perspective and (2) the level of exposure cadets had to alternative perspectives in their classrooms. More specifically the survey asked:

1. In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? (Never, Sometimes, Often, Very often)
 - a. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments.
 - b. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own.
 - c. Had serious conversation with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.
2. To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas: (Very little, Some, Quite a bit, Very much)
 - a. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Responses to these queries are considered to be indirect data as the level of intercultural competence gained is not directly measured. However, we can reasonably

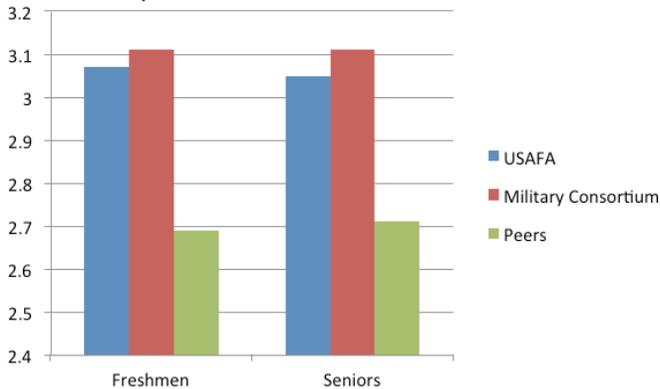
infer that higher levels of discussion and exposure to alternative perspectives in the classroom will yield higher levels of intercultural competence. The results of the survey administered in 2011 for each question are shown in Figures 2 – 5 below for each of the questions. The statistical significances and effect sizes reported here come directly from the NSSE report and represent mean differences larger than would be expected by chance alone.

Figure 2. NSSE Results — Included Diverse Perspectives



Note: Significant difference between freshmen at USAFA and peers ($p < .001$, effect size = 0.14)
 Significant difference between seniors at USAFA and military consortium ($p < .001$ level, effect size = 0.21)
 Significant difference between seniors at USAFA and peers ($p < .001$, effect size = 0.29)

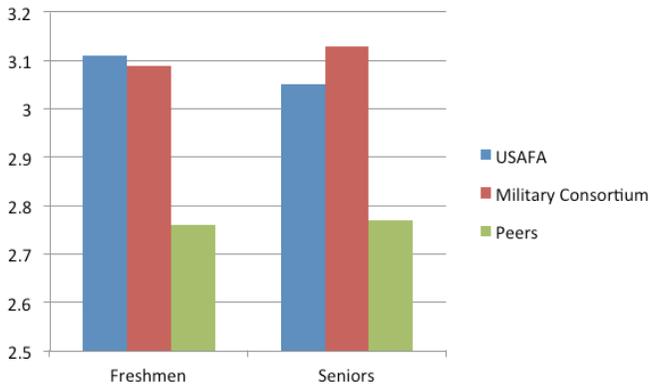
Figure 3. NSSE Results — Had serious conversations with students of different race or ethnicity



Note: Significant difference between freshmen at USAFA and peers ($p < .001$, effect size = 0.38)
 Significant difference between seniors at USAFA and peers ($p < .001$, effect size = 0.35)

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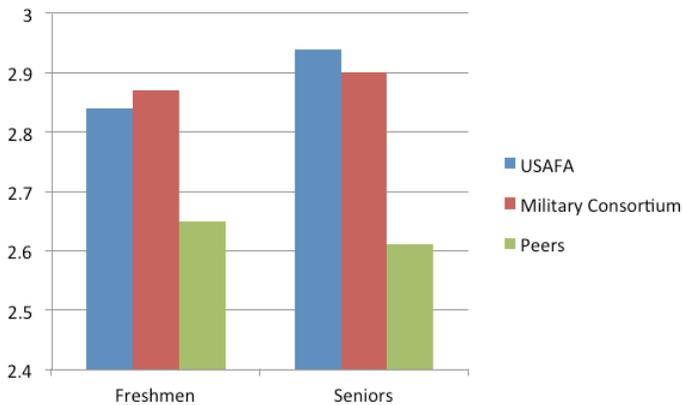
Figure 4. NSSE Results – Had serious conversations with students of different religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values



Note: Significant difference between freshmen at USAFA and peers ($p < .001$, effect size = 0.36)

Significant difference between seniors at USAFA and peers ($p < .001$, effect size = 0.30)

Figure 5. NSSE Results –Institution contributes to understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds



Note: Significant difference between freshmen at USAFA and peers ($p < .001$, effect size = 0.2)

Significant difference between seniors at USAFA and peers ($p < .001$, effect size = 0.34)

These results indicate that Air Force Academy freshmen and senior cadets scored higher when compared to students at peer institutions on each of the questions selected. Additionally, the data show that USAFA seniors scored higher

than students from other service academies and peer institutions on how often diverse perspectives are included in classroom discussions or writing assignments.

The final source of indirect data came from cadet observations in after-action reports and photo-journals completed after returning from high-impact learning experiences such as language or cultural immersion programs. Not all cultural immersion programs include a language learning component. Qualitative analyses of student comments confirm an increased awareness and appreciation of different perspectives. Due to space constraints only a few samples of their insights are provided below:

“This was priceless . . . It’s important to understand different perceptions of Americans, other races, and every other characteristic which makes us humans different.”

“I tried to see the difference in this way of life. However, it was difficult for me . . . as I’ve lived my entire life one way.”

“From this amazing trip, I was able to broaden my scope of thinking. I realized how different some cultures are, and how naive I have been about my own.”

The indirect data collected and discussed above were strong indicators that the curriculum is having a positive impact on the intercultural competence of our students. Nevertheless, data derived from direct assessment of this growth were still lacking. The first step was to settle on an acceptable model of intercultural competence that aligned with the Air Force’s perspective of this construct. Then, the natural progression was to determine which instrument best followed that model and could provide an empirical measure of the construct. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) was the tool chosen to provide direct assessment about the level of intercultural development of the subjects.

Direct Assessment Data: Models and Measures of Intercultural Competence

Byram’s Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (1997) suggests that the acquisition of intercultural competence involves five components or *savoirs*. These components are (1) *savoir être*: attitudes, or curiosity toward other cultures; (2) *savoir*: knowledge, as in cultural knowledge; (3) *savoir comprendre*: skills of relating and interpreting, dealing with comprehension of texts; (4) *savoir apprendre/faire*: skills of discovery and interaction, acquiring new cultural knowledge through real-time interaction; and (5) *savoir s’engager*: critical cultural awareness, the ability to analyze and balance products, practices, and perspectives of one’s own culture and the target culture. A more detailed explanation of the *saviors* pays specific attention to an intercultural speaker’s behavior, knowledge, and skills (Byram, 1997; Sercu, 2004). The model focuses on purposeful planning and assessment that deliberately includes intercultural competence as a pedagogical aim (Byram, 2009).

The Process Model of Intercultural Competence (Deardorff, 2006) involves movement from the personal level to the interpersonal level, denoted

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by intercultural interaction. This model recognizes the ongoing process of intercultural competence development, and states that while individuals continually strive for improvement in intercultural competence, they may never achieve ultimate competence (Deardorff, 2006).

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) was proposed by Bennett (1986) and further elaborated (1993) to assist people on their own personal intercultural journey. Because this journey was seen as a continuing process, Bennett outlined a roadmap to identify the stages each person would necessarily travel through while becoming interculturally competent. The DMIS is a six-stage model divided into two parts. The first portion, denoted the ethnocentric phase, is comprised of three stages. The second portion, named the ethno-relative phase, is made up of another three stages. In the ethnocentric phase, a person journeys through various levels of recognition of cultural differences, and the terminology reflects the concomitant reaction. The first stage, *Denial of difference*, is characterized by stereotyping and superficial statements of tolerance. At this point, a person really is not able to recognize, interpret, or accept cultural difference. In the second stage, *Defense against difference*, the person recognizes cultural difference but reacts with a negative assessment of anything that differs from the native culture. The greater the cultural difference, the more negative the reaction. In the third stage, *Minimization of difference*, recognition of cultural difference is accompanied by acceptance on a superficial level. The person places an emphasis on the similarities between cultures and suggests a commonality of values (Anderson, Lawton, Rexeisen, & Hubbard, 2006; Bennett, 1986, 1993; Durocher, 2007; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003).

Once a person moves into the ethno-relative realm, he or she passes through three further stages. The first, *Acceptance of difference*, is farther along the continuum as the person recognizes and truly accepts cultural differences, be they in behaviors or values. In stage five, *Adaptation to difference*, communication skills emerge that enable the person to engage in intercultural communication. That is, a person acknowledges the necessity for empathy and makes an effort to be understood and act appropriately across cultural boundaries, without ceding his or her own cultural values. The final stage, *Integration of difference*, entails a person operating within a completely bicultural or multicultural frame of reference while simultaneously maintaining a sense of self or identity (Anderson et al., 2006; Bennett, 1986, 1993; Durocher, 2007; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Paige et al., 2003). While these stages can easily be conceptualized and expressed in a linear fashion, the path a person takes through each stage does not necessarily follow suit. In other words, one can make little, adequate, or great progress within stages and certainly between stages. However, one can also relapse or retreat into a previous stage or position within the same stage (Anderson et al., 2006; Engle & Engle, 2004). Movement along this intercultural continuum is difficult to predict and to measure, but at the very least the DMIS provides a framework for evaluation and operational definitions of various points throughout the process of developing intercultural competence.

Many external assessment tools exist that claim to assess intercultural competence or minimally certain aspects of this construct (Fantini, 2009). The utility of a particular tool depends on the match between the construct definition and the components measured, along with the methodological approach to measurement in general. A few assessment tools are described below as a sample; for a listing of over 40 different tests, please see Fantini (2009). The Sociocultural Adaptation Scale (SCAS) (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1999) is a 29-item scale with a five point Likert-type response range that measures cognitive and behavioral dimensions of sociocultural adaptation. Subjects taking the SCAS are asked to rate the level of difficulty they perceive or experience in adapting to situations that require some amount of intercultural interaction (Ward & Kennedy, 1999). The Multicultural Personality Questionnaire (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000) is an instrument designed to measure and describe the behavior of someone who is interacting with a person from another culture. Five personality factors are assessed by this instrument: (1) cultural empathy, the ability to identify with those from different cultural backgrounds; (2) open-mindedness, the capacity to accept people from another cultural group with different values and norms; (3) social initiative, the degree to which one takes the initiative in intercultural social situations; (4) emotional stability, or how calm one remains in a stressful situation; and (5) flexibility, or how easily one can adjust behavior to new situations (van der Zee & van Oudenhoven, 2000).

The IDI (Hammer, 1999; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) was created precisely to operationalize the DMIS model and provide a method of assessing at what stage individuals are. It consists of a 50-item questionnaire that assesses the major stages of intercultural competence, as conceptualized in the DMIS model. Subjects take the questionnaire and respond to statements on a 5-point Likert scale to express agreement or disagreement (Hammer et al., 2003). This instrument was chosen for the present study based on validity studies involving the IDI (Hammer et al., 2003; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003). The IDI has been vetted using factor analyses, construct and content validity rating, and reliability. The IDI is based on 20 years of inductive research from sociologists at the University of Minnesota who have surveyed over 8,000 people from over 30 countries testing (Hammer et al., 2003). Using Confirmatory Factor Analysis on 591 respondents from diverse backgrounds, it was established that the six stages of the mono-cultural/intercultural continuum met or exceeded standard reliability criteria for individual and group psychometric diagnosis. Confirmatory factor analysis is a branch of statistics that measures whether data fit a hypothesized measurement model: in this case, does the IDI effectively measure the DMIS? Furthermore, there were no significant differences among ages, education, ethnicity, or gender. According to Hammer et al. (2003), the IDI is a robust measure of the cognitive states described in the DMIS, and the instrument is generalizable across cultures.

The IDI was not developed specifically for the FL educational public, but its use clearly serves a purpose when one considers one of the goal areas of the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning (National Standards,

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2006). With the delineation of these national standards, a renewed emphasis on culture—its teaching and learning—came to the forefront of FL education. The Cultures goal area addresses the products and practices of other cultures as well as requiring an exploration of the “why” underpinning these artifacts and behaviors. It is this “why”—denoted as *perspectives*—that is at the heart of culture and, as such, is essential to understand or, at the very least, acknowledge. Several leaders in the FL field have underscored the importance of developing this intercultural competence as a given to be included by educators (Schulz, Lalande, Dykstra-Pruim, Zimmer-Loew, & James, 2005):

If, indeed, intercultural awareness and cultural competence are to be an outcome of FL learning, the FL teaching profession needs to engage in a systematic, meaningful effort to include such competence in its curricular goals and assessments. (p. 174)

Thus, intercultural competence has become a key issue in many areas. In the business arena, companies with overseas branches and clients have a real stake in assuring that their personnel are able to make connections with their clients on both professional and personal levels. To do this, intercultural competence must be fostered. In general educational environments, teachers in multicultural school locales can profit by cultivating their intercultural competence in order to work with very diverse student populations. And, of course, in foreign language-specific settings, the pressure is on to justify the time and expense of additional FL coursework and study abroad programs that are offered to students.

In general educational environments, teachers in multicultural school locales can profit by cultivating their intercultural competence in order to work with very diverse student populations.

Justification for and usage of the IDI

As this study is concerned with the development of intercultural competence in a FL educational setting, the following discussion deals primarily with background studies that employed the IDI to measure this competence in FL learning situations. Nevertheless, many other studies supporting the successful use of the IDI in business contexts as well as in general educational environments have been published (e.g., Anderson et al., 2006; Lundgren, 2007; McAllister & Irvine, 2000; Nero, 2009). In addition, an extensive bibliography of studies spanning several disciplines and professional practice venues has been compiled for reference (Hammer, 2012).

Due to the increasing insistence of stakeholders to justify the cost of FL programs and in particular study abroad opportunities in both time and money, several studies have been conducted in an attempt to corroborate the claims made in defense of these programs. Two broad categories of studies emerge: those investigating the impact of duration of study abroad programs in general and those scrutinizing component parts of such programs in order to pinpoint more precise reasons for gains in intercultural competence such as language proficiency, prior intercultural awareness instruction, and on-sight pedagogical

interventions (Engle & Engle, 2004; Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004). In the first category of studies, the preponderance of data shows that, in essence, the longer the better in terms of in-country immersion (Engle & Engle, 2004; Jackson, 2008; Medina-López-Portillo, 2004; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). The studies included a pretest and posttest design using the IDI, and the duration of study in-country ranged from four weeks up to a year. Though on the whole these studies did not yield statistically significant differences in terms of movement along the intercultural competence scale, as measured by the IDI—a quantitative instrument—the data did show mostly positive movement along the intercultural competence continuum when gauged by qualitative instruments such as journals, surveys, and interviews.

In the second category of studies—those delving into more specifics of the study abroad programs and curricula—the data showed more positive results. Investigations here involved explicit efforts to promote intercultural competence awareness on a variety of levels and through numerous means. The studies included a pretest/posttest design using the IDI and incorporated varied methods of highlighting intercultural awareness throughout. Explicit efforts were made to engage the subjects with the target culture, to provide them with proactive learning interventions that would cause them to interact with that culture, and have them reflect on their interactions (Durocher, 2007; Engle & Engle, 2004; Nero, 2009; Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004; Vande Berg et al., 2009). These efforts encompassed preparation time before traveling abroad in addition to time spent in-country during the study abroad program per se. Pre-departure activities included reflective journaling (Jackson, 2008), participation in a series of intercultural training tasks that targeted specific stages of the DMIS (Durocher, 2007), and the implementation of course materials whose intent was to enhance study abroad participants' cultural and language experience through a systematic strategy-based approach (Page, Cohen, & Shively, 2004). Some examples of in-country interventions include a commitment to target language (TL) use in the form of a language pledge, weekly language partner exchanges, and required regular community service (Engle & Engle, 2004). The data showed that these explicit and purposeful tasks of cultural mentoring, cultural learning interventions, and developmental cultural reflections all resulted in an increase in intercultural competence and a positive shift along the IDI scale. Nevertheless, this movement along the IDI scale needs to be fostered by a series of external forces, such as pre-departure instruction, an on-site faculty mentor, continual reflection in the form of journals, and post-debriefing with interviews. It would appear that developing intercultural competence requires more than merely dropping students into an immersion environment and hoping intercultural interactions will be noticed, will take place, and will be internalized as part of an ongoing reflective process (Engle & Engle, 2004; Jackson, 2008; López-Medina-Portillo, 2004; Nero, 2009; Page, Cohen & Shively, 2004).

Procedures and Results

Subjects for the study were randomly drawn from four different groups of students: freshmen, seniors, juniors and seniors who had completed a 3-week

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immersion abroad, and finally seniors who were Foreign Area Studies (FAS) majors who had studied abroad for one semester. For the freshmen group, an underlying assumption is that the random sample was representative of the entire class, which, based on historical language placement data, has taken an average of two semesters of foreign languages in high school. Travel abroad experience was not collected for the freshmen but was assumed to be low. The senior group was controlled to ensure that there were no FAS majors or participants in our study abroad programs, although it is possible the participants could have had other personal international travel experience. The third group was composed of junior and senior cadets who had participated in a 3-week language or cultural immersion program abroad. The last group was controlled to ensure that only FAS majors with study abroad experience were included. The FAS major can be viewed as the most global and intercultural of majors at USAFA— it requires in-depth area studies of distinct regions around the globe along with advanced foreign language study. From the randomized groupings, researchers solicited volunteers to participate in the various assessment components of the study. Researchers felt that mandating participation in the survey would have reduced the validity of the responses. The volunteers for each of these groups completed the IDI; score results are noted in Table 2. These scores were then associated to the corresponding stages of the DMIS.

Table 2. IDI Average Results by Group (N=326)

Freshmen	80.1 (n=54)
Seniors	84.2 (n=67)
Juniors and seniors with short term immersion experience	82.1 (n=191)
Foreign Area Studies seniors with study abroad experience	88.6 (n=14)

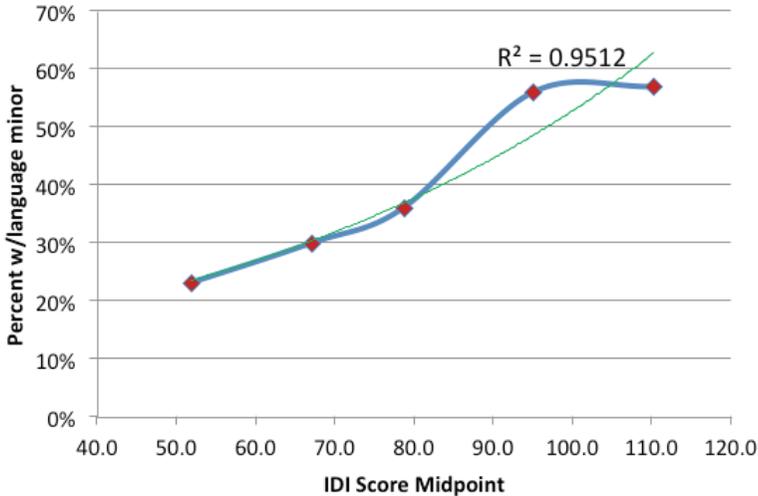
As can be seen in Table 2, the freshmen cohort scored an 80 on the DMIS, which put them in the Defense stage of development. This cohort is characterized by an inability to recognize differences (Denial) with other cultures, or is even hostile to other cultures (Defense). The senior cohort scored an 84, also in the Defense stage of development but closer to minimization than Denial. The third group, with an average score of 82 is still in the Defense stage of development and closer to Denial than Minimization. Finally, the cadets who spent considerable time abroad and were majoring in Foreign Area Studies had an average of 89, which places them in the Minimization stage of development. A Student t-test was conducted to evaluate the mean differences between the groups. The difference between the freshmen and seniors was found to be statistically significant ($t=1.96$, $p<10$). The differences between the juniors and seniors with short term experience and the freshmen and senior groups were not statistically significant. The difference between FAS majors and freshmen and between FAS majors and

seniors with short term immersion was statistically significant ($t=1.96, p<.10$), but the difference between FAS majors and seniors was not.

Minimization is an important step in building intercultural competence. In Minimization there is recognition of cultural differences on a superficial level such as food and dress, but the underlying mindset at this stage of the DMIS continuum is the view that, although there are superficial differences between cultures, people are really more alike than different. In minimization their world view is “protected” by attempting to subsume difference into familiar categories—“deep down we’re all the same.” Minimization is the stage where students are on the “cusp” of acceptance, and with some effort they can be moved to the right of the DMIS continuum to achieve acceptance, because they are at least “open” to the idea of difference.

Additional analyses of results from the IDI explored differences in scores among students with short-term immersion experience who had or had not pursued a language minor. These analyses directly addressed the third research question concerning the impact of advanced language courses on the development of intercultural competence. Scores of students were parsed and placed along a continuum, according to the IDI scales of measurement (e.g., Denial, Defense, Minimization). The percentage of students in each group who were language minors was then plotted. Figure 6 illustrates the findings, showing a correlation of $r=+.9753$ (and a coefficient of determination of $R^2=+.95$).

Figure 6. IDI Scores & Proportion of Foreign Language Minors



This strong correlation suggests that students pursuing more advanced foreign language studies (as indicated by a minor in foreign languages at USAFA) had greater intercultural competence as measured by the IDI.

Future directions

The natural follow-on to this effort is to dig deeper into other factors that might have an impact on a student’s development of intercultural competence. An initial

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review of additional data collected after the summer of 2012 indicates that students who participate in language immersion programs after studying that language in a classroom environment have a richer and more complete international experience than cadets who study abroad without prior foreign language experience. The researchers also intend to follow up with the cadets surveyed as freshmen to determine the extent to which their intercultural competence increased during their four years at USAFA and other factors and experiences that contributed to that growth.

Limitations of the Study

The unique environment of the Air Force Academy may limit the generalizability of the results of this study. However, the approach used to assess intercultural competence (collection and examination of indirect and direct data) is certainly applicable to other institutions trying to evaluate the impact of their programs and curriculum on the intercultural competence of their students. Another limiting factor of this study is the small sample size, particularly of students who have traveled abroad. Future research efforts will aim at increasing the sample size for all four groups and will examine the link between intercultural competence and a diverse learning environment.

Conclusion

In an increasingly interconnected world, intercultural competence is an extremely important skill to develop for a multitude of settings, situations, and goals. It is also clearly a complex concept that is difficult to operationalize, track, and measure. This study used an innovative triangulation strategy to assess intercultural competence through the use of indirect and direct data. This use of qualitative and quantitative data broadens the approach researchers can use to examine and analyze the evidence of intercultural competence garnered through the various measures employed. The results of this study suggest that intercultural competence can be defined, facilitated, and measured effectively. However, the results also underscore the need for further research to identify the best approach and instruments to assess intercultural competence and the factors that contribute to its development.

In an increasingly interconnected world, intercultural competence is an extremely important skill to develop for a multitude of settings, situations, and goals. It is also clearly a complex concept that is difficult to operationalize, track, and measure.

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“My students won’t participate!”: Promoting communication in language classrooms

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Abstract

This investigation was motivated by frustration that language teachers report over some students’ failure to participate in class. Research (Delaney, 2012) suggests that students’ level of involvement often does not reach teachers’ expectations. Grounded in previous work that emphasizes the importance of understanding the student voice, this study reports the views of 439 university language students about class participation. Though many claimed to participate in their various language classes, their questionnaire responses provided numerous reasons to explain moments when they do not: language learning anxiety, lack of second language (L2) understanding, feelings of inferiority as language learners,, and prohibition of the use of the first language (L1). Their responses also offered teachers thoughtful suggestions to encourage students to participate more in class. This investigation points to several pedagogical implications, notably the necessity of teachers explicitly addressing issues of class participation with their own students.

*I find it very **disheartening** when students won’t participate. I don’t give up easily—I try all kinds of different activities hoping to connect with them one way or another—and I keep trying for weeks and weeks. But, it seems like there are some students who are really hesitant to participate, and I feel like somewhat of a **failure** if I can’t engage them at least at a minimal level. The situation really gets challenging when I have a whole group that is shy or for whatever reason, the majority of the students won’t talk. It eventually affects the kinds of activities that I’m willing to try. I’m not going to try really creative, communicative stuff and be stuck standing in front of the room **like an idiot** in total silence [anonymous teacher, personal communication, June 21, 2010, bolded emphasis mine].*

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Most teachers are aware that some students do not actively participate in classes even when speaking their first language (L1).

Most teachers are aware that some students do not actively participate in classes even when speaking their first language (L1). From middle school through university-level contexts, teachers sometimes feel frustrated, annoyed, and even disheartened when their students do not participate in class. In the context of second language (L2) teaching, Delaney (2012) claimed that “teachers find learners’ non-participation extremely upsetting” (p. 468). At the college level, some instructors might be tempted to ask these students questions like “Why are you here?” and especially “Why are you paying \$xxx to be here?”. Answers to these questions would probably vary. Though certainly some students would rather be elsewhere and others attend college to satisfy parents who pay their tuition, many are serious about their educational goals. But, despite wanting to do well in language classes, many still do not engage as active participants.

Regardless of students’ reasons, teachers can feel like failures and/or can react negatively to students’ reticence. Delaney (2012) proposed that students’ actual participation might be viewed by teachers as an indication of their receptivity to learning the target language. Consider the following comment: “I find getting students to talk to be a constant struggle, except when the chemistry (or perhaps the topic) is just right and students are really into what we are talking about. Besides feeling frustrated, I confess to feeling annoyed” (anonymous teacher, personal communication, June 24, 2010). Especially when teachers invest time in planning engaging lessons, they feel bothered when students do not respond accordingly: “It’s frustrating to put a lot of thought and reflection into a class and then not have students want to voice their ideas or thoughts out loud” (anonymous teacher, personal communication, June 22, 2010).

A commonly-held attitude that is, perhaps surprisingly, unsupported in empirical research is the belief that the more a student speaks the target language, the faster the student will learn (Delaney, 2012). As he claimed, most language teachers perceive participation as generally positive and this belief results in their understandable desire to promote students’ oral participation in class. Although most language teachers are aware of many issues negatively affecting students’ actual participation, they still find it difficult to understand those issues in a way that reconciles students’ lack of participation with their often genuine desire to do well as language learners.

Given this complex situation, it is especially valuable to note the findings of several previous studies that recognized the absence of an important perspective in much research on language learning: the student voice. Many researchers have long argued for the need to include students’ perspectives in pedagogical research on the second language learning experience and, specifically in the tradition of action research, for investigators to study a particular setting with the goal of changing that setting as a result of the findings (e.g., Bailey & Nunan, 1996; Crookes, 1993; 1998; Auerbach, 1994). Barkhuizen (1998) challenged teachers and researchers to find out what students actually think rather than assuming that

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we already know their beliefs or that they share teachers’ perspectives. Similarly, Johnston, Juhász, Marken, and Ruiz (1998) emphasized the need to include the student voice in research. Their study specifically highlighted the possibility of both converging and diverging student and teacher perspectives on various issues related to L2 classrooms and learning. Ongoing recognition of the important role of student perspectives has provided a theoretical foundation for subsequent studies aimed at documenting students’ views on issues ranging from the use of dialogue journals (Snow, 1996; Gray, 1998; Ewald, 2006) and small group work (Ewald, 2008) to students’ experiences with error correction (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005) and language learning anxiety (Ewald, 2007).

The present study builds on these previous investigations by exploring students’ perspectives on classroom participation, a complex and troublesome area for students and teachers alike. Some teachers might define “participation” more strictly as students’ voluntary L2 oral engagement required in both whole class and small group settings. For others, students’ L2 oral engagement, even if limited only to small group settings, might “count” as participation, regardless of their whole class behaviors. And some teachers may even allow frequent student use of the L1, defining participation more broadly as any student attempt to engage their peers or their teacher in “communication,” a term conceptualized in the National Standards for Foreign Language Teaching (2006).

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Whether students’ communication is interpersonal or presentational in nature, participation itself is a complex concept. For example, defining participation merely as a moment during class in which students are speaking in small groups or in front of the whole class, voluntarily or not, is quite simplistic. (For a broader discussion of these issues, see Delaney, 2012; Ewald, 2008; Lando, 2004; and Tsou, 2005.) As mentioned above, the current pedagogical emphasis on maximizing (or even requiring) the use of the target language in the classroom further complicates the notion of student participation. For instance, a student might voluntarily speak in her L1 to a classmate about her weekend plans, or another might use the L2 to respond to a question directly addressed to him by his teacher. Many language teachers would not categorize either behavior as legitimate “class participation.” In the first case, her voluntary but off-task L1 comments are unbeneficial to L2 language learning and in the second case, his directly solicited L2 response to his teacher’s question does not satisfy some teachers’ expectation that their students offer voluntary L2 speech. Interestingly, some teachers might allow, and at times (such as when an assigned small group task has been completed) even encourage, students to engage in off-task discussions provided that their discussions take place in their L2. Also interesting is the potential difference between students’ and teachers’ perceptions of L2 responses to teachers’ questions; that is, while some students may think that by answering a teacher’s question in the L2 they are engaging in participation that positively affects their grade, some teachers may only recognize volunteer L2 engagement as participation.

Also problematic to evaluate for some teachers are those students who rarely volunteer to say anything in the L2 during whole class interactions but engage whole-heartedly in their L2 in small groups. Others do not speak much in any classroom context but do pay close attention at all times during class, arrive prepared with their homework completed, and perform well on written assignments. Nevertheless, they remain afraid to speak, even in paired settings. Defining, and certainly measuring, students' actual "participation" is a difficult task for teachers, and for researchers as well. In fact, although recognizing the benefits of students' oral participation in the language learning process, Delaney's (2012) research challenges the commonly-held notion that a higher quantity of student participation (i.e., L2 speaking) results in greater proficiency gains. Thus, not only is the nature of participatory behaviors difficult to define, the benefits of the quantity of participation are debated.

Teachers arrange various kinds of opportunities for oral participation and most incorporate methods to measure students' actual participation. While some teachers keep a written log (e.g., a chart, list, or tally sheet) at hand to record the quantity and types of student participation as it actually occurs in class, others have adopted grading techniques requiring students to keep track of their own class participation and to complete regular self-assessments. These assessments however, do not perfectly reflect the students' actual participation but they might result in self-motivated changes of behavior. For instance, at the middle school level, Cunningham (2008) identified particular on-task behaviors (e.g., hand-raising, use of the L2, on-topic comments, and others) as characteristic of good participation; however, she found that her Spanish students who were often off-task did not assess themselves much differently than those she considered on-task. That is, their positive self-assessments did not match some of their negative behaviors. In a university setting where self-assessment functioned more productively, De Saint Léger (2009) emphasized the introspective and subjective aspects of self-assessment, and many of her participants — university students of French — claimed that it was an effective way to monitor their own learning, specifically in setting goals and remedying problems along the way. Though De

It is generally assumed by most teachers and researchers that student participation is beneficial and that students' active involvement in the learning process will aid their acquisition of the L2 and, in turn, their oral proficiency.

Saint Léger's research focused on what these students claimed to do rather than on their actual behaviors, she found that many students reported making behavioral changes as a result of having reflected on and assessed their own participation.

Like Delaney (2012), other researchers cited below have debated the nature and benefits of participation. It is generally assumed by most teachers and researchers that student participation is beneficial and that students' active involvement in the learning process will aid their acquisition of the L2 and, in turn, their oral proficiency. Ellis (1994) proposed that "one possible definition of an active learner is one who participates frequently in classroom interaction" (p. 511); however, he warned

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that research has not sufficiently established the role of students’ persistence and effort in the language learning process. Previously, Allwright and Bailey (1990) also stressed the existence of various forms of active participation, beyond that of oral involvement. They emphasized that what can appear as passivity in class can, in actuality, represent students’ active attention. More recently, Lando (2004) investigated the possible link between overt learner participation and better L2 acquisition. He concluded by confirming Allwright and Bailey’s (1990) claim that the notion of active participation should be redefined. Specifically, he argued for the need to “exercise some caution in equating student vocal participation in a classroom setting with quality involvement, as it is obvious that some silent students during whole-class instruction are actively and successfully engaged in the learning process” (p. 58-59). Nevertheless, teachers continue to stress the need for students to participate orally in class (Delaney, 2012). Their beliefs find support in other research documenting the positive effects of students’ active participation on their L2 output (Van Patten, 2004; DeKeyser, 2007; Delaney, 2012) as well as in investigations focused on the important role that sociocultural behaviors such as private speech and scaffolding play in L2 learning (Antón, 2011; Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks & Donato, 1994; Brooks, Swain, Lapkin & Knouzi, 2010; Fortune & Thorp, 2001).

Students’ lack of participation is not exclusively a contemporary problem. The 1998 National Capital Language Resource Center report on action research in the foreign language classroom emphasized the need to focus future investigations on problematic pedagogical areas. Interestingly, they highlighted students’ class participation as one area that teachers might like to address through action research. Additionally, at least as far back as the 1980s, researchers were already working on methods to increase student participation in the foreign language classroom. Gahala (1986) insightfully explained, “We plan for classes filled with the sounds of the target language coming from every student and a forest of eager hands in the air signaling answers to our questions. However, we may content ourselves with less than the envisioned articulate, eager performances” (p. 131). Her proposed solutions for students’ lack of participation include (1) the teacher modeling target language use in class (p. 131-132); (2) the development of a low-stress, on-task environment (p. 133); (3) carefully-designed, well-implemented small group work (pp. 133-135); and (4) classroom activities promoting effective student involvement (pp. 135-136).

Nevertheless, although many teachers consistently try to incorporate all four of Gahala’s (1986) recommendations, students still fail to participate at levels and in ways that are satisfactory. Ewald (2008) found that language students and teachers shared a remarkably common understanding of participation. Nevertheless, the students gave more credibility to the effects of students’ individual personalities than did the teachers. Specifically, her student participants recognized that even shy students might not participate in the small group setting, a context that many teachers believed was virtually ideal for their active involvement.

Some recent studies have focused on the role of technology in fostering students’ participation both within and beyond the classroom itself. For instance, Ushida

(2005) emphasized learners' increased levels of participation in online chatrooms, and Mendelson (2010) stressed the potential effectiveness of using computer-mediated activities to prepare learners before class for oral participation during class. Specifically, Mendelson found that 75% of the students surveyed believed that online forums conducted prior to their classes better prepared them to participate in subsequent, related discussions in class.

... the present investigation seeks to answer the following two questions: (1) What do students themselves say about participation?; and, (2) What should teachers do as a result?

If it is true that students' perspectives are essential (Bailey & Nunan, 1996), they offer us, as researchers and teachers, valuable information about our pedagogical practices and insider perspectives on issues we can further explore empirically. Consequently, it is of tremendous value to investigate students' own experiences and beliefs, identify areas of convergence and divergence from teachers' beliefs (Johnston et al., 1998), and, in turn, incorporate students' perspectives into our own pedagogical practices. Therefore, the present investigation seeks to answer the following two questions: (1) What do students themselves say about participation?; and, (2) What should teachers do as a result?

Methods

Context, Participants and Data Collection

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed by the author to elicit students' perspectives on participation. The first section (questions #1-5) included questions regarding foreign language students' academic level, language(s) of instruction, language level, and general interest in language study. Questions #6-9 asked students to assess the quantity of their own participation in their current language classes as well as to evaluate their participation relative to that in their other university classes, high school language classes, and of their classmates. The issues included in question #10 were based on previous research findings on participation, teachers' anecdotal accounts regarding their students' lack of participation, and the researcher's personal experience with students (e.g., classroom discussions, one-on-one conversations, and course evaluation comments). Question #11 asked students to highlight three reasons that best described them personally and, finally, questions #12-13 asked students to identify particular suggestions for teachers who want to promote more participation and to highlight any other related issues that they might have wanted to raise. Though questions #10 and #11 restricted students' possible responses, question #10 offered a variety of issues from which students could choose. Questions #12-13 were more open-ended and invited students to comment on other issues that were perhaps omitted from the list of possibilities in question #10.

Identical versions of the questionnaire were distributed by e-mail and hardcopy in classes to 1334 language students in one midsized university located in the northeastern part of the United States; students were asked to complete either questionnaire (one or the other) voluntarily and anonymously, with approval from the university's Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research. A total of 439 completed questionnaires were returned. These students,

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mostly freshmen and sophomores, studied Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and the majority (62%) studied Spanish (see Table 1). They were enrolled in courses taught at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels in programs oriented toward learning languages for communicative purposes. Almost all the students in these classes were traditionally-aged college students. In large part, given the typical demographic characteristics of the university, they were native speakers of English from middle- to upper-middle class families.

Findings

Student Characteristics

Most of the students were enrolled in these courses as part of their university language requirement, although some (21%) also expressed interest in completing majors/minors in the language they studied (Questionnaire (Q) #4). The majority (76%) indicated that they either liked studying language (34%) or, at the very least, they liked it “sometimes” (42%); only 22% indicated that they did not like studying language (Q#5).

Table 1. Student Information

Survey Questions	Number of Respondents (439 total)					
Year in College	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	N/R*	
	343	73	7	9	7	
Language Studied	French	German	Italian	Spanish	Other	N/R
	17	19	123	274	3	3
Language Course Level	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	N/R		
	241	129	62	7		
Major/Minor Interest?	Yes	No	N/R			
	91	342	5**			
Like to Study Language?	Yes	No	Sometimes	N/R		
	151	98	184	5**		

*N/R = No Response

**Responses do not total 439 because one student circled more than one answer

The majority of these students (68%) claimed that they participate in some or most class sessions (Q#6) and many claimed to participate as much as (43%) or

more than (43%) they did in their other university-level classes (Q#7). Only 5% claimed to participate never or rarely or to participate only when called on by the teacher (Q#6). Most (44%) students believed that they participate in their current university-level language class as much as they did in their high school language classes; many of them (36%) believed they participate more now at the university, but some (20%) believed they participate less now than in high school (Q#8).

Reasons for Not Participating

As previously described, question #10 provided students with 22 possible reasons to explain why they do not participate in class and asked them to check all that applied. This list also included an “other” box and invited students to add their own reason(s). Students’ ten most popular reasons for not participating are listed in Table 2 in decreasing order of frequency.¹ In sum, the students often reported that when they did not participate it was due to their not being sure of having an accurate answer, being afraid of making mistakes or sounding stupid in their L2, not knowing what their teacher was saying, “freezing,” feeling anxious, perceiving that their classmates’ L2 skills were better than theirs, not being “good at language class,” or not being allowed to speak in English, their L1.

Table 2. Students’ Top-10 Reasons for Not Participating

I participate only when I’m sure that my answer is correct.	240 (55%)
I’m afraid I’ll make mistakes.	228 (52%)
I’m afraid I’ll sound stupid in my foreign/second language.	158 (36%)
I don’t know what my teacher is saying.	134 (31%)
I freeze in language class more than in any other classes.	124 (28%)
I feel anxious in my language class.	107 (24%)
My classmates speak better than I do.	88 (20%)
I’m not good at language class.	87 (20%)
We aren’t supposed to speak in English.	72 (16%)
No response	59 (14%)

Students’ Suggestions

One of the last questions (Q#12) on the questionnaire invited students to respond to a language teacher who asks, “How can I get my students to talk in class?” by providing the teacher with three specific suggestions. Although all students did not fully respond to this question, many offered very thoughtful suggestions grouped thematically in the following analysis. Others provided detailed comments in response to Q#13, “Do you have any other thoughts about students’ participation in language classes that you believe might be helpful in this study?” The specific suggestions that students chose to address relate very closely to their “top-10 reasons for not participating” as outlined in Table 2: making mistakes and fear of being incorrect or sounding stupid in the L2 (reasons #1-3); fear of not understanding the teacher and feeling anxious (reasons #4-6); believing that classmates’ L2 skills might be higher or recognizing one’s own limitations as

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a L2 speaker (reasons #7-8); and trying to manage teachers’ L2-only expectations in class (reason #9).

For example, about the intertwined issues of accuracy and content (reasons #1-3), these students wrote:

“Let them [students] know that everyone makes mistakes and it’s okay. Say, ‘I don’t expect you to get every question right.’”

“Be accepting of any answer, right or wrong.”

“Let them know it’s okay if your answer isn’t right or your Spanish isn’t perfect.”

“Every start of class, make sure everyone talks about anything.”

One of many ways to implement these suggestions would be to start off each class session with some kind of interpersonal activity, possibly student-led, requiring all students to speak spontaneously, either to the teacher, to the student, or to their classmates. The objective would not be to achieve a “correct answer” or to converse in “perfect Spanish” but rather to use the L2 orally, genuinely engaging in interpersonal communication. During this activity, teachers would be wise to engage in very little (if any) error correction in order to promote student participation and encourage L2 confidence when speaking. The last student quoted above did not seem to be bothered by the idea of a speaking requirement but rather emphasized that the teacher should ensure the oral participation of all students and perhaps recognized the need for some warm up type activity to break the ice.

... start off each class session with some kind of interpersonal activity, possibly student-led, requiring all students to speak spontaneously, either to the teacher, to the student, or to their classmates.

Other students’ comments were motivated by their awareness of not being able to speak the L2 well or to understand what their teachers say (reason #4). Their comments highlighted the ongoing need for teachers to be patient and understanding as well as to approach the classroom in a positive manner. Their suggestions included the following:

“Ask specific questions. Speak slowly.”

“Talk slower in the language. Repeat a question multiple times.”

“The teacher makes a class work so the teacher needs a positive attitude or the students will not respond.”

“Make the room environment more comfortable. Be encouraging.”

Certainly, many language teachers already do speak slowly, repeat questions, display positive attitudes, and act in encouraging ways. However, these students’ suggestions may imply that they have encountered teachers who do not meet these criteria. Even if not taken as criticisms, their comments affirm these teacher behaviors as important and effective.

Like the last student quoted above, other students’ suggestions were directed toward resolving the anxiety they experience in their language classes (reasons #5-6). They offered several clear directives to language teachers:

“Don’t be intimidating.”

“Don’t constantly yell at us telling us we need to participate or we get a ‘0.’”

“Work in small groups so students get more comfortable with each other and are not as nervous speaking in class.”

“Set up small group oral exercises and ask each group to participate once the exercise is done.”

According to these students, intimidating, threatening teachers only make the situation worse, and their words and behaviors do not bring about the participation teachers desire. Students suggested the incorporation of collaborative assignments and group participation to help them become more comfortable with each other and, in turn, not be as nervous speaking in class.

Students who recognized that some classmates genuinely do speak the L2 better than they do offered these suggestions to teachers who, they believe, do not seem to recognize that students are at different levels, a situation that they claimed relates to their lack of participation (reason #7):

“Teachers need to realize that not all students are on the same level in their speaking of another language.”

“Don’t get angry if we don’t know how to say/write what you think we’re capable of. We learn at different levels.”

“Personally I think second languages are important but students are afraid to participate because they fear what others think.”

Fear of what others (their teachers or fellow classmates) think about them can certainly inhibit a student from participating in class.

Fear of what others (their teachers or fellow classmates) think about them can certainly inhibit a student from participating in class. In addition to fostering a safe, understanding learning environment, teachers should do everything possible to communicate to students that they are indeed aware that everyone is not at the same level and that students learn at different rates. In fact, at least to some extent, assessments should be personalized in that they should focus on the personal improvement of each individual’s L2 use rather than a common standard of achievement set for everyone. This type of individual assessment would require a much more involved, personalized process but could be beneficial to both the students and their teacher.

Related to this concern are those students who feel that they are not good language learners. Like those above, some of their suggestions also communicated their belief that language teachers can have unrealistic expectations for their students, a situation that discourages their participation (reason #8). Consequently, these students made specific recommendations for certain types of classroom activities:

“Please don’t forget we haven’t been studying the language as long as you so we won’t necessarily grasp concepts quickly.”

“My students won’t participate!”

“It is important professors realize most students study language because it is required, and many do not have strong foundations from high school.”

“Make a game out of it/bring up relevant topics or things that students can relate to.”

“Have them talk about a topic interesting to them.”

“Make sure that there’s at least one topic a day that each student feels confident enough to discuss.”

Once again, language teachers, both native- and non-native-speakers of the L2, should communicate clearly to students their awareness that L2 learning is a long, challenging process. Moreover, the existing requirement for students to study a language should not be overlooked or treated as the proverbial “elephant in the room.” Although they might not feel free to express it to their teachers, students know whether or not they are in class because they must satisfy the language requirement. Teachers do not lose ground by acknowledging this situation and

... the existing requirement for students to study a language should not be overlooked or treated as the proverbial “elephant in the room.”

by planning lessons and establishing expectations accordingly, keeping in mind as well that students’ high school preparation varies considerably, another issue worth explicitly addressing with students. Encouraging students to carry out tasks that, though perhaps unusual, are “doable,” might help them build confidence when expressing themselves in their L2. For example, at a more advanced level, having students demonstrate a skill (e.g., a special whistle they know how to do, an origami design, poker chip stacking, a magic or math trick, a drum rhythm, or a key chain craft item), explain it in their L2 and teach their classmates to perform that skill might acknowledge other interests and abilities students have while focusing on their L2 oral proficiency. At the novice level, students could conduct an oral survey in small groups or as a whole class to uncover a shared belief or practice related to their classroom (i.e., their classmates’ most popular favorite color, busiest class day, hardest subject, or most frequently viewed movie).

Finally, those students who claimed not to participate because they “sound stupid” in their L2 or because they are prohibited from speaking English in class (reason #9) recommended the following:

“Teachers put too much emphasis on the ‘submersion’ [sic] methodology... 150 minutes a week of speaking the language is hardly effective for a student that has no idea what you’re saying and the amount of English students speak counters [their L2 use].”

“Include some English here or there.”

“Incorporate some English.”

“Say the directions in English.”

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) published a position statement (2010) recommending that language teachers and their students “use the target language as exclusively as possible (90% plus) at all levels of instruction during instructional time and, when feasible, beyond the classroom”. Though a highly debated topic, judicial use of the L1 in class is supported, and even encouraged, by some research on second language acquisition (e.g., Antón 2011, Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Brooks et al., 2010; Edstrom, 2009), and, importantly, by these students. Teachers should be sensitive to students’ need to demonstrate intelligence in language classes and to their desire to participate in ways that highlight their personal strengths. If incorporating some English “here or there,” appropriately and according to pedagogical research findings, would alleviate this problem, teachers should do so intentionally. One very easy method is for a teacher to begin a class session by providing students with a discussion prompt in English (written previously on the board, on a transparency or in a PowerPoint) along with directions for the discussion. For instance, see the following example:

Example:

¿Qué hiciste el fin de semana pasado? [What did you do last weekend?]

Ask your partner what s/he did over the weekend. Develop this into a conversation. Don’t simply list items. React to each other’s statements, ask questions, seek additional details. Be inquisitive. Speak only in Spanish. To start your conversation, use questions such as the following:

¿Qué...? [What...?]

¿Dónde...? [Where...?]

¿Cuántos...? [How many...?]

¿Quién...? [Who...?]

¿Para qué...? [For what...?]

Etc.

Though the prompt is in English, students’ interactions should be in the L2. Additionally, as a model, teachers might conduct a first, similar activity with students entirely in English and ask them to analyze how they kept the discussion going and how they responded to each other in their L1. An explicitly analytical approach to conversation may help them understand how to participate more in natural, engaged L2 conversations during which they can apply these same strategies throughout the semester or school year.

Overall, when creating lesson plans and activities for students, some of whom do not and will not participate, teachers will do well to keep in mind the reasons for which these students claimed not to participate: being unsure of right answers; use of the L1/L2; the role of the teacher; foreign language learning anxiety; the role of classmates; and students’ own preferences, beliefs, and behaviors. Implementing activities that manage these issues effectively will, in turn, foster improved participation.

“My students won’t participate!”

Finally, a student suggestion provides what is probably the most helpful piece of advice for teachers: “Address the issue in class, talk about concerns students have about participation.” Teachers should not be afraid to discuss participation with students, not threatening them with “zeros” or trying to intimidate them into participating but rather offering them opportunities to express their concerns and inviting their suggestions for activities or classroom changes that would encourage them to take a more active role.

... a student suggestion provides what is probably the most helpful piece of advice for teachers: “Address the issue in class, talk about concerns students have about participation.”

Conclusions, Limitations and Areas for Future Research

It is certainly possible that some teachers might read these students’ suggestions and believe that they already are fully aware of and sensitive to these issues and, as a result, address them adequately in their own language classes. And, of course, for any number of teachers, that self-evaluation may be entirely true. However, even experienced teachers benefit from explicit reminders directly from students that either affirm what the teachers are doing well or identify areas that can be improved. And, when students indicate that it would be beneficial for teachers to make explicit statements such as “everyone makes mistakes” and “I don’t expect you to get every question right” and to do specific things such as “ask each group to participate” and “don’t forget that we haven’t been studying the language as long as you”, teachers should consider the value of incorporating more opportunities to discuss their beliefs and expectations with their own students.

Moreover, the majority of these students’ reasons for not participating likely echo the beliefs of most practicing teachers. Indeed, students’ perspectives mostly converge with teachers’ current pedagogical trends and beliefs. For example, most teachers are aware that students are afraid to speak because of being unsure of a right answer, sounding stupid, or not being sure what their teacher said. Teachers also usually recognize that students generally feel anxious when participating in classes, especially when speaking in their L2. But, as predicted by Johnston et al. (1998) and others, students’ perspectives likely diverge from those of many teachers in the areas of comparing themselves with classmates and the use of the L1/L2. Though teachers’ perspectives on these particular issues were not included in this study, it is possible that teachers are more likely to see their, for example, “Spanish 2” students as more or less at equal levels, none of them being particularly fluent. Teachers are probably less likely than their students to be sensitive to what seem to be vastly different proficiency levels among the actual students who recognize quickly and easily that “Student ‘X’ is much better at Spanish than I am.” The students in this study highlighted this particular issue as one that inhibits their participation. Finally, though many teachers currently discourage or even prohibit L1 use in their classrooms, many of these students identified what they characterized as their teachers’ over-emphasis on L2-only use. Whatever a teacher’s pedagogical beliefs about this issue, the student perspective should not be ignored

or discarded merely because it diverges from current theory and practice. In fact, that very divergence marks an important area for discussion with students and, perhaps, some kind of compromise or moderation on the part of teachers who might, with some understanding, be able to encourage their students to move further in their direction, especially given that the students' views to start with are relatively more moderate (i.e., "Include *some* English"; "Incorporate *some* English"; "Say *the directions* in English").

Like all investigations, this study is rooted in its own setting (i.e., with the particular students enrolled in language courses at one specific university during a given semester). Conducted in other university contexts with students of different socioeconomic or linguistic backgrounds or at other proficiency levels, the same questionnaire could generate different results. Additionally, the present questionnaire was intended to elicit an overview of perspectives from students in various language courses studying at different instructional levels. Given the much higher number of students in beginning level language courses and the greater popularity of Spanish over the other languages represented in these data, no effort was made to categorize the results according to level or language; thus, the resulting findings may better represent those two sometimes overlapping groups (i.e., beginning Spanish students). Additional studies could investigate possible points of divergence in students' perspectives on participation in particular language courses and/or at specific levels of instruction.

Moreover, this study does not benefit from more than one data source. It would have been enlightening to interview these students to ask further or follow-up questions regarding their perspectives on class participation or to observe them in real language classrooms to examine their actual participatory behaviors. It might also have been useful to invite students to offer their own voluntary responses to question #10 to determine if other possible reasons for students' lack of participation are common. These additional data sources would enable the triangulation of results that is not possible from questionnaire data alone. These students' actual class participation behaviors were outside the scope of the present study but future investigations might use this or a similar questionnaire along with measures of the same students' own class participation behaviors to explore the potential for disconnects between their perceptions versus their actual practices. Additionally, students' questionnaire responses depend on their understanding of the questions and of participation in general. It would also be useful to explore students' (and teachers') definition(s) of "class participation" to better understand the corresponding data.

Nevertheless, students' responses did indicate certain trends and highlighted several specific elements of the student perspective on participation. First, their assessments of their own participation were generally positive. Many claimed to participate at high levels that their teachers might find surprising. Their perspectives might be justified by the adoption of a broader view of participation that includes effective behaviors beyond oral interactions. Second, the reasons they offered for not participating fell within relatively predictable areas related to language learning anxiety, lack of L2 understanding, inferiority as language

“My students won’t participate!”

learners, and the prohibition of L1 use. Finally, the insightful suggestions they provided ranged from practical (i.e., use small group work) to more theoretical advice (i.e., understand that students learn at different rates). An analysis of these students’ questionnaire responses confirmed that class participation does indeed represent a challenging issue for teachers and an anxiety-producing situation for students, one that will likely require continued attention in the years to come.

Related issues should be explored in future investigations. For example, additional studies could be developed to compare students’ perspectives on participation with their actual behaviors, or students’ actual participation with that reported in their self-assessments. Alternate forms of participation assessment might be developed and analyzed. Or, future studies could more fully explore the effect of participation, however it is defined, on students’ actual L2 learning. Other investigations could use this or a similar questionnaire to explore students’ perspectives on participation in other academic contexts, at other proficiency levels or in particular language teaching settings. Furthermore, research could explore creative ways in which teachers might address the issue of participation with their own students to determine the benefits of explicitly discussing these topics with the goal of improving their own classroom learning contexts. Much remains to be known about students’ views of participation and how to encourage them most effectively to be more involved in the language learning activities that take place in their classrooms.

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Notes

1. The “No Response” questionnaire result (14%) was selected to mark the low end of this list; thus, students’ reasons (for not participating) that occurred less frequently than 14% were excluded from this analysis.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

1. What is your current academic year?
Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
2. What language(s) do you study/have you studied in college? (Please circle all that apply.)
French German Italian Spanish Other(s)

3. In what language level are you currently enrolled? (Please circle only one course number.)

1011	1051	1211	1311
1021	1061	1221	1321
1031	1071		

4. Did you declare or are you considering declaring a language major/minor?
Yes No

5. In general, do you like to study foreign/second language(s)?
Yes No Sometimes

6. Which statement best describes your oral participation in your current language classroom: (Please check only one.)

- I voluntarily participate during most class sessions.**
- I voluntarily participate in some class sessions.**
- I sometimes participate voluntarily but I often wait to participate until my instructor calls on me.**
- I only participate when my instructor calls on me.**
- I rarely participate because my instructor doesn't call on me very often.**
- I do not participate and my instructor rarely, if ever, calls on me.**

7. In my current language classroom I participate ____ in my other university-level classes. (Please check only one.)

- More than**
- Less than**
- About the same as**

8. In my current language classroom I participate ____ in language classes I took in high school. (Please check only one.)

- More than**
- Less than**
- About the same as**

9. In my current language classroom I participate ____ my classmates. (Please check only one.)

- More than**
- Less than**
- About the same as**

10. Research on foreign/second language learning indicates several possible reasons for students' lack of participation in classes. Please indicate which of the following are reasons why you don't participate in class. (Please check all that apply.)

I don't participate in my language class because...

- I don't participate in any of my classes.**
- I feel anxious in my language class.**

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- I don’t like studying foreign/second language(s).
 - I don’t like my teacher.
 - I’m afraid I’ll sound stupid in my foreign/second language.
 - I’m afraid I’ll make mistakes.
 - My classmates make me nervous.
 - My teacher makes me nervous.
 - My classmates make fun of me.
 - I’m afraid that my classmates might make fun of me.
 - My teacher makes fun of me.
 - I’m afraid that my teacher might make fun of me.
 - I freeze in language class more than in any other classes.
 - I participate only when I’m sure that my answer is correct.
 - I’m afraid to speak the language I’m studying.
 - My classmates speak better than I do.
 - I don’t prepare well for class.
 - I don’t know what my teacher is saying.
 - I’m not good at language class.
 - We aren’t supposed to speak in English.
 - I can feel my heart pounding in class and I’m very nervous.
 - I don’t think that participating helps me learn the language.
 - Other. (Please explain.)
11. Of all the reasons you checked above, circle the (3) **three** reasons in question #10 that **best** describe you.
12. How would you respond to a language teacher who asks, “*How can I get my students to talk in class?*”? List (3) **three** specific suggestions:
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
13. Do you have any other thoughts about students’ participation in language classes that you believe might be helpful in this study?

Beliefs about assessment and language learning: Findings from Arabic instructors and students

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Abstract

Much attention has been devoted to the positive effects that instructor understanding of the principles and practices of sound assessment can have on learning outcomes and measurement of these outcomes. However, less has been written about the potential benefits of increasing students' understanding of assessment. This paper describes exploratory focus group research conducted with students and instructors of Arabic as part of a project to develop an oral proficiency assessment training resource for this audience. Focus group discussions in response to broad questions eliciting needs and desires for such a

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resource showed areas of mismatch and areas of overlap between instructors and students regarding beliefs about assessment and language learning. In the context of research on student motivation and the importance of assessment in the learning process, findings suggest that promoting understanding of assessment among language students could support and clarify language learning goals, and thus improve students' overall assessment and learning experiences.

The United States has an urgent need for proficient speakers of languages other than English to meet evolving social, economic, and security demands (United States Department of Education, 2009). Literature in the field of language education highlights the critical role of motivation in language learning (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001), particularly the ways in which student expectations for learning and assessment can shape the learning experience and ultimate language learning outcomes (Nikolov, 2001; Schulz, 1996). Research also suggests a vital connection between reliable and valid assessment and effective language teaching and learning (Brown, 2004), and further recommends assessment literacy, or an understanding of the principles of sound assessment, as basic knowledge for all instructors (Boyles, 2005; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Stiggins, 1995; Taylor, 2009).

This paper describes findings from exploratory focus groups conducted with students and instructors of Arabic as part of a larger project to develop an oral proficiency assessment training resource....

This paper describes findings from exploratory focus groups conducted with students and instructors of Arabic as part of a larger project to develop an oral proficiency assessment training resource for this audience. Broad focus groups questions were designed to elicit participants' needs and hopes for such a resource. The focus group discussions showed a conspicuous contrast in student and instructor beliefs about Arabic assessment and language learning, and these conflicting beliefs were deemed an important consideration in resource development. This paper presents findings from the focus groups in the context of research on student motivation and the importance of assessment in the learning process. Although results from this qualitative study are specific to the small group of informants, they raise important questions about how greater understanding of assessment can influence student and instructor expectations and communication as well as language learning outcomes.

The paper begins with the background for the study including the importance of effective assessment in building a cadre of citizens proficient in world languages. Next, it reviews current research on the alignment of assessment and instruction and student motivation and language acquisition. While it goes beyond the scope of this paper to conduct a review of the rich literature on Arabic instruction in the United States, interested readers are referred to Wahba, Taha, and England (2006) for such a discussion. The paper then describes the methodology of the exploratory research gathered from diverse groups of Arabic language students and instructors and examines results regarding their perceptions of assessment and language learning. The paper concludes with a discussion of possible

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implications and suggestions for further research on student and instructor beliefs about assessment and language learning.

Background

In recent years, the need for proficient speakers of world languages has been recognized by researchers and policy-makers in the United States including President Obama, who cited the importance of encouraging foreign language skills in a 2011 town hall meeting (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary). O'Connell and Norwood (2007) highlight world language proficiency as increasingly important for national security, international trade, business, government, and legal and medical fields, as well as a requisite for a globally aware population. Jackson and Malone (2009) echo this description of the critical need in the United States for speakers of languages other than English, citing the demands of national security and diplomacy, international commerce and economic development, policies and services for a multilingual domestic population, and global awareness and scholarship at all educational levels. It is clear that the United States requires citizens with high-level language abilities to meet national and international economic, diplomatic, and defense needs. How, then, should the United States address the priority to develop proficient multilinguals?

... world language proficiency [is highlighted] as increasingly important for national security, international trade, business, government, and legal and medical fields, as well as a requisite for a globally aware population.

The use of assessment will be a key factor in building this language capacity. Jackson and Malone (2009) discuss the need for a comprehensive national strategy for language learning and emphasize that successful language programs must include systematic, high-quality assessment. Assessment aligned with instruction empowers instructors and students, allowing students to demonstrate their proficiency and instructors to assess and adjust their teaching methods as well as to measure student progress, and thus ensures positive washback (Hughes, 2003; National Education Association, 1983; Shepard, 2000). Assessment is also important because it provides for accountability in evaluating language programs (Norris, 2009). As Jensen (2007) explains, regular and reliable assessment is essential to measuring the effectiveness of language programs and identifying areas for improvement. For assessments to yield maximum positive impact for stakeholders, however, they must be selected and used effectively. Understanding how to select or develop, administer, and interpret assessments requires knowledge of the principles of effective assessment, or assessment literacy (Popham, 2009; Stoyhoff & Chapelle, 2005).

While studies suggest the positive effects of developing assessment literacy among language instructors, the benefits of promoting knowledge of assessment principles among language learners have been less researched. The study described in this paper reports results from qualitative, open-ended research on student and instructor beliefs about assessment and language learning. Findings from focus

groups suggest a need to reconcile mismatches in beliefs between students and instructors. It is the hope of the authors that increasing student knowledge of assessment through training resources and other means would have a salutary effect on motivation, goal-setting, and language learning experiences.

Assessment and Language Learning

Many researchers have identified connections between assessment and positive outcomes in the classroom. Instructors who lack formal assessment training may be impeded from implementing effective classroom assessment, however. As such, assessment education is highly recommended for teacher training and professional development. These research findings are described below.

Educators are frequently driven by external pressures to emphasize large-scale summative testing over classroom-based assessment (McMillan, 2003). With this narrowed assessment focus, many in the measurement and instruction

... effective assessment is strongly linked to classroom teaching and student learning; in fact, the literature suggests that effective assessment during and at the end of a course may be one of the most important factors leading to student learning and success.

communities perceive assessment as fundamentally large-scale, high-stakes, judgmental, and removed from the day-to-day details of teaching (Harlen, 2007). On the contrary, effective assessment is strongly linked to classroom teaching and student learning; in fact, the literature suggests that effective assessment during and at the end of a course may be one of the most important factors leading to student learning and success (Brown, 2004-2005; Bryan & Clegg, 2006; Havnes, 2004; McMunn, McColskey, & Butler, 2004; Popham, 2009; Taylor, 2009; Yorke, 2001).

To use assessment correctly, instructors must understand the basic principles of assessment design and implementation. Unfortunately, Stiggins (2007) notes that though instructors spend from one-third to one-half of their instructional time on assessment and assessment-related activities, most lack formal training in assessment. A recent study conducted by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Malone, Swender, Gallagher, Montee, & Whitcher, 2009) supports the particular need for language assessment literacy, reporting that many instructors use standardized tests for languages or purposes other than those intended by the test developer. The instructors surveyed also expressed a desire for more information about assessment practices.

When instructors understand fundamental assessment principles, they are better able to use assessment to improve their own teaching and students' learning (Brown, 2004-2005; Popham, 2009; Shepard, 2000). Weigle (2007) and Stiggins (1995) thus recommend that assessment education be a part of the professional development of every instructor. This emphasis on fostering assessment literacy for instructors raises the question: could increased knowledge about assessment be helpful for students? Research on student motivation related to the assessment experience is discussed below.

Beliefs about assessment and language learning

Student Motivation and Language Acquisition

Literature in the field of second language acquisition indicates that motivation is a key factor for success in language learning (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001). Gardner (2001) identifies student attitudes towards the learning situation as a critical piece of integrative motivation that affects the ultimate attainment of language learners. Julkunen (2001) describes students' specific motivations to complete a task and further learn a language as variable and highly affected by the learning situation. In examining language learning outcomes, student perceptions of the instructional context, including assessment practices, are clearly an important consideration.

Research suggests that assessment is often a negative and frustrating experience for students, especially when expectations for learning are unclear. Across subject areas, studies report that students find assessment to be a mysterious process, disconnected from course content and uninformed by instructor explanation of intentions (Hodgman, 1997; Kings, 1994). Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) review studies documenting mismatches between student and instructor perceptions of assessment standards and note that students must understand what a good performance is to be able to incorporate feedback and improve. Examining the effects of different types of feedback on student motivation, Butler (1987) finds that learners attribute success more to effort than to self-worth when receiving task-related comments instead of numerical grades or standard praise; individual comments also led to higher performance and more continued interest. Dweck (1999) notes that students' self-perceptions of learning and ability can lead them to avoid or seek challenges, such that assessment feedback that spurs pride of accomplishment, rather than a focus on fixed standards and comparison to others, can produce greater motivation.

For language learners, frustrating experiences with assessment can have a great impact on motivation and ultimate attainment. As Nikolov (2001) reports, students who perceived themselves to be unsuccessful language learners most frequently cited assessment activities as causes of anxiety and unpleasant classroom experiences. Schulz (1996) suggests that when language learners' instructional expectations are not met, they may begin to doubt the instructor's ability and lose motivation for learning. Still, many studies have documented a mismatch between student and instructor expectations for language learning (Brown, 2009; Chavez, 1997; Kern, 1995; Kuntz, 2000; Polat, 2009).

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To make assessment a positive and motivating experience, Black and Wiliam (1998) recommend that students receive clear, timely, and individualized assessment feedback; such constructive feedback encourages active involvement in learning and has a large effect on student self-esteem which ultimately influences attainment. Additionally, as Butler (1987) has shown, task-involving feedback can be more motivating to students than ego-involving feedback such as grades. Sadler (1989) further insists that for students to benefit from assessment feedback, they must assume responsibility for the assessment process through exposure to and

understanding of standards and goals. In the language classroom, Schulz (1996) recommends that instructors and students share course expectations in order to motivate learning. Brown (2009) also supports discussion of learning expectations, and argues that when language instructors share ideas about effective pedagogy, students are more supportive of the classroom activities they are asked to complete.

Given that student motivation and consequently learning can be highly influenced by beliefs about classroom activities like assessment, it is worthwhile to examine whether increasing student understanding of assessment can be beneficial for language learning.

Given that student motivation and consequently learning can be highly influenced by beliefs about classroom activities like assessment, it is worthwhile to examine whether increasing student understanding of assessment can be beneficial for language learning. Research has shown that developing students' understanding of assessment purposes and practices has a positive impact on learning (Rust, Price, & O'Donovan, 2003; Smith, Fisher, McPhail, & Davies, 2009) and that students are open to increased empowerment in assessment (Francis, 2008); these studies do not focus on the language classroom, however. By providing insight into student and instructor beliefs about assessment and language learning, including mismatches between the groups, the qualitative data gathered from Arabic students and instructors in this study suggest an important area for further research.

Methodology

Data Collection

This paper describes the results of exploratory research conducted in the initial phase of development of an oral proficiency assessment training resource for students and instructors of Arabic. Small, open-ended focus groups were planned with target audience members to help determine resource components and structure that would benefit potential users. The research questions that informed data collection procedures were as follows:

- RQ1. What is the current level of assessment knowledge of the students and instructors sampled?
- RQ2. Do students and instructors express an interest in increased understanding of assessment?
- RQ3. Are there mismatches in beliefs, expectations, and goals regarding assessment and language learning between students and instructors?

The researchers conducted four focus group interviews: two with instructors of Arabic and two with students of Arabic from varied educational settings in the United States. Focus groups rely on a group interview technique in which a small number of people (Dörnyei, 2007, suggests six to twelve) participate in a guided discussion on a topic of interest, typically facilitated by a moderator and recorded by a note-taker. Focus groups allow participants to talk to each other as well as the interviewer, and this interaction helps stimulate participant responses,

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thus generating data that could not be gathered via a written questionnaire or a one-on-one interview (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Focus group methodology was additionally chosen for this study because it allowed researchers to interview multiple participants at once in a limited timeframe for this data collection. Table 1 on the next page shows the composition of the four focus groups conducted for the study. Language background and heritage learner status were self-reported by the focus group participants.

The first instructor focus group included five Arabic language instructors from a large public university (hereafter, State University). One participant was female and four were male, and all were native speakers of Arabic. The second instructor focus group included four Arabic language instructors from three suburban public high schools in a district with a large population of heritage learners (Suburban High School). Two participants were female and two were male, and all were native speakers of Arabic. The third focus group comprised seven students from the Arabic language program at the same State University as the first instructor group. Three participants were female and four were male, and the group included both upper- and lower-level learners and two heritage learners. Although it is likely that these students were taught by some of the participants in the State University instructor group, for purposes of anonymity the exact relationships among participants from these groups were not solicited. The fourth focus group comprised six students from an Arabic language program at an urban public high school (City High School). Five participants were female and one was male, and all were first- or second-year students of Arabic. There were no heritage learners in this group.

Table 1. Composition of Focus Groups

Participants	Program	Language Background	Heritage Learners*
Instructors N=5	Large public university	Native speakers	Some in student population
Instructors N=4	Suburban public high school district	Native speakers	Many in student population
Students N=7	Large public university	Upper- and lower-level learners	N=2
Students, N=6	Urban public high school	Lower-level learners	N=0

*Heritage learner population and individual status as reported by informants

While the researchers had planned to convene a focus group with Suburban High School students in order to gather data from students and instructors in the same program, this was not logistically feasible. There was also no possibility of constructing a City High School instructor group because there is only one Arabic instructor in that setting. Though the particular constellation of focus group settings was not ideal for cross comparisons, the researchers felt it was

broad enough to provide compelling information about student and instructor beliefs. The varied instructional contexts from which focus group participants were drawn incorporate a mix of formative and summative assessments according to individual curricula.

The first three focus groups were led by a facilitator and recorded by a note-taker. The final focus group, conducted with students from City High School, was led by a facilitator who also took notes. Each focus group lasted about one hour, and all were audio-recorded to aid later reconstruction of the data. Participants in the focus groups were compensated for their time.

Each focus group followed a semi-structured format in which participants are given a list of questions to guide discussion but encouraged to elaborate and discuss other topics as they arise (Dörnyei, 2007), with the goal of generating robust data that would not be captured through a strictly scripted procedure. Participants were informed that they would be participating in a focus group about Arabic assessment and language learning, provided with copies of the questions for discussion, and assured that their contributions would remain anonymous. They were told that their responses would guide the discussion, and that it could proceed in a different direction than that of the prepared questions. As such, the focus group moderator allowed conversation to flow unimpeded and did not comment on participant output or survey participants as to their agreement with previous statements.

The focus group questions were designed to elicit broad feedback on student and instructor beliefs about language learning and the assessment process, as well as respond to the research questions. To address Research Questions 1 and 2 regarding assessment knowledge and interest, participants were asked directly about their experiences with language assessment. To address Research Question 3, student and instructor focus group questions were made parallel to allow for direct comparison of responses regarding instructional and assessment experiences and program goals. The following seven questions were used in the instructor focus groups:

1. What are your experiences teaching Arabic? How long have you taught it and in what situations?
2. What are your experiences with testing and assessment in your current Arabic program? What kinds of assessment practices does your program currently use?
3. What are the goals of your current Arabic program? What are your students expected to be able to do by the time they finish the program?
4. What are your experiences assessing the oral proficiency of your students?
5. Have you ever been trained to assess your students' oral proficiency using a large-scale test like the ACTFL OPI, or something like it? If so, what was your experience with that training?
6. What questions do you have about oral proficiency assessment?
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences teaching Arabic, assessing your students' oral proficiency, or a workshop on how to assess oral proficiency, like the ACTFL OPI workshop?

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Students were asked two additional questions to probe their reasons for studying Arabic and background with self-assessment, as these elements were expected to be addressed in the assessment training resource. The following nine questions were used in the student focus groups:

1. What are your experiences learning Arabic? How long have you studied it and in what situations?
2. What made you decide to study Arabic?
3. What are your experiences with testing and assessment in your current Arabic program? What kinds of assessment practices does your program currently use? Does your Arabic program focus on speaking skills and assessments?
4. What are the goals of your current Arabic program? What are you expected to be able to do by the time you finish the program?
5. Do you feel that you understand the way that your Arabic language skills are assessed?
6. Have you heard of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines? If so, what is your experience with them?
7. Have you ever completed a self-assessment of your Arabic skills? What was it like?
8. What questions do you have about assessments of your Arabic language skills?
9. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences learning Arabic and being assessed?

Data Analysis

An emergent coding process was used to analyze the results of these exploratory focus groups, and researchers used the following data-driven procedures to provide for describable and replicable data analysis. First, typewritten notes taken during each focus group were checked against audio- recordings for accuracy in developing full transcripts. Coding of the transcripts followed procedures outlined in Dörnyei (2007) in line with a system of open coding evolving from the data gathered (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Independent review of the focus group transcripts by two researchers yielded a preliminary list of descriptive codes to represent the relevant themes raised. The researchers compared their emergent coding schemes to create a combined list of codes and then re-coded each transcript according to the consolidated list. Following this second phase of analysis, the researchers worked to resolve any discrepancies in coding. Codes were refined, added, and edited, until a final coding scheme that was determined to most closely reflect the data was developed. The final coding scheme was then applied to the transcripts by the researchers during a third and conclusive pass of coding.

The final coding scheme identified two overarching categories: beliefs about assessment and beliefs about language learning. Within each category there were multiple codes, each representing a belief about assessment or language learning expressed by at least one student or instructor during the focus groups. The following section describes the focus group findings using these coding categories.

Results

Beliefs about Assessment

Table 2 summarizes the beliefs about assessment raised in the focus groups. Marked cells denote that the belief was cited by at least one participant in that group. A plus (+) indicates statements in support of the belief, a slash (/) indicates statements opposing that belief, and a swung dash (~) indicates conflicting statements expressed by different participants within a group. Due to the semi-structured format and small sample size of the focus groups, the number of mentions of a particular belief is not quantified.

Table 2. Beliefs about Assessment

Beliefs	State University Instructors	Suburban High School Instructors	State University Students	City High School Students
Assessment is valid.	+	+	/	+
Assessment is focused on the four skills.	+	~	/	+
Textbooks are disconnected from assessment.	+	+	+	
Instructors need to make assessment materials.	+	+		+
Time and resources for assessment are limited.	+	+		
Assessment training is helpful.	+	+		
Dialect should be assessed.		/	+	

Note: Blank cells indicate that the belief was not discussed in that focus group.

As Table 2 shows, the participating students and instructors did not always concur in their beliefs about assessment. In several cases, students from State University held different beliefs than instructors, including those from the same program. There were areas of overlap between the instructor groups in expressing desire for greater time and resources for assessment and additional assessment training, as well as across student and instructor groups in beliefs that the textbooks used are disconnected from assessments and instructors need to make their own assessment materials. The following paragraphs provide illustrative quotes and comparisons across groups for each belief about assessment raised in the focus groups.

One belief about assessment that emerged across all groups concerned assessment validity. In describing experiences with assessment in their programs, instructors from both State University and Suburban High School expressed confidence that their assessment systems accurately gauge student levels and are

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appropriately tied to classroom instruction: “the exams that we give them, the activities that we give them is [*sic*] geared toward strengthening, assessing their level” (State University Instructor Group); “for unit exam tests we still have different tests that we’re using based on what we’re targeting in class” (Suburban High School Instructor Group). City High School students affirmed that their tests are “designed purposefully,” commenting that “the tests help us see what we really know and what we need to work on” and “everything has a reason...it’s not there for nothing.” Students from State University, however, questioned the degree to which their assessment results reflected real-world proficiency. As one student noted, “I don’t really know if what I’m getting in class is really an accurate reflection of what I can and cannot do.” It is interesting to note the conflict in beliefs about assessment validity between students and instructors from the same program at State University. While the students’ lack of confidence in the validity of their assessments may be due to limited understanding of their use or to fundamental problems with the implementation of a test in a given context, in either case, this questioning of assessment practices could be a demotivating factor for their language learning (readers are referred to Bachman (2005), Chapelle (2012), and McNamara (2006) for further discussion of validity in language assessment).

Regarding beliefs about the focus of assessment in their programs, there were areas of consensus and dispute among the four groups. Instructors from both State University and Suburban High School agreed that assessment should be “testing the four skills of the language” (State University Instructor Group) and “include all the components of the language” (Suburban High School Instructor Group); instructors from Suburban High School dissented within their group, however, on whether that balance was actually reached. City High School students thought that their assessments balanced testing of different skills, though they particularly valued speaking tests: “I like the speaking tests better. I think I learn more when I have to speak it.” Suburban High School instructors and State University students expressed a clear desire for more and improved oral assessment: “We ignore to some extent the speaking part, which I want to see more emphasis on” (Suburban High School Instructor Group); “I feel like some of those speaking proficiency... parts of the test aren’t really gauging us in terms of our ability to speak” and “I’d just like to emphasize again how helpful it is to be assessed more on speaking than we are currently” (State University Student Group). Again, a mismatch in beliefs about the focus and purpose of assessments between students and instructors from State University could reflect an obstacle to language learning that needs to be overcome.

A prominent line of discussion for instructors from both State University and Suburban High School as well as for students from State University was the limitations of the textbooks used with respect to instructional goals and assessment. State University instructors explained that the book that they use “doesn’t help people to be productive” and reported student complaints about its design and content. Suburban High School instructors similarly mentioned student complaints and commented that the available books “don’t have anything oral” and “[don’t] cover what we want the book to cover.” Students from State

University commented on the “gap” between the vocabulary used in the book and that needed for oral proficiency assessment and suggested that the situation be considered “as you guys develop your tests” as well as “in terms of the people that are actually going to be doing the grading of the tests...if it’s possible to have a native speaker who understands how college courses are taught in the United States to conduct those assessments.” City High School students do not use a textbook in their program.

Another belief about assessment that arose in the focus groups concerned instructors’ need to make their own assessment materials. Instructors from both State University and Suburban High School and students from City High School discussed instructor development of assessments and teaching materials. One State University instructor stated that he was never provided with assessments, and in discussing the book, others commented that “as instructors...we also have to provide them with other materials” and “we work outside the book a lot.” Suburban High School instructors explained that “lacking the good materials...is one of the serious problems that we are facing” such that “most of the times we make our own or bring in from other resources,” especially in the case of oral assessment due to the paucity of books with oral scenarios. City High School Students expressed satisfaction with their program’s use of various instructor-developed materials as distinct from the “usual traditional learning of reading from a book.”

Two other beliefs about assessment were frequently cited by instructors from both State University and Suburban High School. First, multiple focus group participants brought up the challenge of limited time and resources in developing and administering assessments, noting that “one of the most difficult things is weighing the time and dividing the time between teaching skills and at the same time get enough time to test” (State University Instructor Group) and “we need the money to do [our own] resources, we need rich resources” (Suburban High School Instructor Group). Second, discussion within both groups indicated a clear regard and desire for assessment training among participants: “training really situates the instructor in a position where he or she knows what to expect from the students” (State University Instructor Group); “I’d like to see workshops that Arabic instructors are invited to where they would go over stuff like this we can utilize in the classroom” (Suburban High School Instructor Group).

A final belief about assessment that generated considerable discussion among students from State University was the desire for testing of dialect, which points to a much-discussed issue in Arabic instruction, the details of which are beyond the scope of this paper (see Wahba, Taha, and England (2006) for further, recent discussion of this issue in the field). Participants in this group talked about the lack of testing in dialect and how the availability of such tests would encourage a more serious study of dialect, commenting that “it would be great to be able to know where you stand on dialect because that’s what you really use when you’re talking to people” and “it would make sense to base [assessment] on whatever would be most commonly understood by a person on the street.” The issue of rating dialect use in assessment was raised by an instructor from Suburban High School, a district with many heritage learners, who questioned how she should

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grade students who use dialect and mentioned that dialect was not accepted in assessments used to test out of the language requirement.

Beliefs about Language Learning

Table 3 summarizes the beliefs about language learning raised in the focus groups.

Table 3. Beliefs about Language Learning

Beliefs	State University Instructors	Suburban High School Instructors	State University Students	City High School Students
Proficiency goals are clear.	+	+	/	/
Instruction is focused on the four skills.	~	/	/	+
Students are motivated.	~	~	+	+
Students need to learn with a textbook.	+	+		/
Students believe Arabic is difficult.	+	+	+	+
Students learn more studying abroad.	+	+	+	
Students wish to compare instruction.			+	+

Note: Blank cells indicate that the belief was not discussed in that focus group.

As Table 3 shows, there were incongruities in beliefs about language learning between instructors and students regarding proficiency goals, focus of instruction, student motivations, and the need for a textbook. There were some areas of overlap among the groups, however, particularly in assertions that Arabic is considered a difficult language to learn and that students learn more Arabic when studying in an Arabic-speaking country than in the United States. The following discussion provides illustrative quotes and comparisons across groups for each belief about language learning raised in the focus groups.

A belief about language learning discussed in all four groups concerned the clarity of program proficiency goals. Instructors from both State University and Suburban High School articulated clear proficiency-related goals for their Arabic programs: “I would just summarize the goal of our program here is to be able to teach our students to be independent in the language” (State University Instructor Group); “they’re really using survival Arabic skills at that level” (Suburban High School Instructor Group). A State University Instructor explained, “at the beginning of each semester, we put our objectives before the students...it’s a contract between us and the students.” Participants in the student focus groups were less certain about proficiency goals, however. One student from

State University commented that as a senior he was frustrated with his level of language learning given “inflated” expectations from freshman year, and another noted that “other than lessons as markers of progress, I feel like we’re not given anything else in the classroom in terms of this is what you should be able to achieve by the end of the semester.” While students from City High School readily communicated their understanding of their program’s language learning goals, they did not explain these goals in terms of proficiency. As one City High School student stated, “I think the goal is just to have fun learning Arabic...not as much as having standards to meet.” In another case of student-instructor mismatch, it is noteworthy that State University students questioned the clarity of their program’s proficiency goals while State University instructors felt that these goals had been firmly stated.

There were areas of disagreement within and across the four groups regarding beliefs about the focus of instruction, as with beliefs about the focus of assessment. One State University instructor commented that “there’s more focus on... speak[ing] but there isn’t a lot of emphasis on the other skills as well,” while others in that group asserted that “I personally can’t imagine the oral proficiency just standing by itself...rather than tying in to the other three skills” and “nobody can argue that not teaching the alphabet is something that’s fine.” A Suburban High School instructor, by contrast, noted that while language instruction must involve all four skills, “in our daily teaching I would say we focus on reading and writing.” State University students expressed a desire for more speaking instruction and practice: “I definitely echo the sentiment that...speaking should be a more regular activity in classroom settings.” Finally, students from City High School believed that, as with assessment, their program’s instruction balanced the four skills: the instructor “makes sure that we learn the language from all different angles” and “it’s not just if you can read it, it’s not just if you can write it, it’s not you can just listen to it—no, it’s everything that goes into learning a language and knowing the language.” The different beliefs expressed by students and instructors from State University on the focus of instruction with regard to oral skills highlights a potential frustration to the language learning process for all involved.

Another belief about language learning discussed in all four groups touched on the diversity of motivations animating the study of Arabic. Students from State University mentioned employment incentives; heritage, political, travel, and religious interests; and general interest in the language as reasons for studying Arabic. City High School students enumerated career and academic reasons and desire to learn the language as motivations for language learning, and were particularly attracted to the unfamiliarity of Arabic. Every City High School focus group participant noted how Arabic stood out from the typical languages offered in high school, describing it as “interesting,” “exotic,” “weird,” and “completely different.” Instructors from both State University and Suburban High School listed a variety of student motivations for language learning including those cited in the student focus groups, but also discussed lack of motivation among some students: “I’m telling you the real thing they speak about when you ask them...why you choose Arabic to study, because this is what they offer” and “some students are not

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motivated” (State University Instructor Group); “sometimes somebody is there by chance” and “when you ask them why are you here...they would say, because my parents want me, not because he likes the language or because he wants to communicate or it’s his native language” (Suburban High School Instructor Group). While self-selection for the voluntary focus groups could be a factor in explaining discrepancies between student and instructor accounts of language learning motivations, it is nevertheless important to note these differences between the groups.

The belief that American students need a textbook to learn language was strongly expressed by instructors from both State University and Suburban High School despite their reservations about the textbooks used in their programs. An instructor from State University was explicit that “no student in the United States is going to study anything without a textbook” and another explained, “a lot of students, if they don’t have a textbook, they feel they don’t have a reference, and if they don’t have a reference, they feel like things are sort of haphazard and ad hoc.” As a Suburban High School instructor noted, “I need a book, parents want a book.” In direct contradiction to these assertions, City High School students, who do not use a textbook, were pleased with this “unstructure” as “it’s not helpful to learn something out of the book because then you can’t really use it in the outside world to really communicate with people.” Students in this group did not question their lack of a textbook but wondered how other programs effectively teach with a textbook: “Would a person be more interested in the language if they learned it from a book or without a book?” and “Did anyone ask how they teach it with a book?” Though the need to work with a textbook was not directly raised by State University students, participants in this group did express frustration with their book’s disconnect from real-world language use. State University instructors’ insistence that students feel a textbook is necessary for language learning may therefore be another example of a mismatch between beliefs of students and instructors in the same program worthy of further explanation.

One belief about language learning shared by participants in all groups is that American students view Arabic as a challenging language. Students from both State University and City High School stated that Arabic is more challenging than other commonly taught languages: “I don’t know why they don’t have Arabic and Chinese and other really difficult languages when they start you off in high school” (State University Student Group); “Spanish is something very easy to learn and I wanted something that was a challenge” (City High School Student Group). Instructors from both State University and Suburban High School concede that Arabic can be hard to learn, especially the script: “they’re comparing it with Spanish, and the reason they think it’s difficult is because they would rather learn Arabic in Latin code” and “it is difficult, I know, if someone is writing from left to right all his life” (State University Instructor Group); “it’s not an Indo-European language like the rest of the languages, so it is difficult I have

One belief about language learning shared by participants in all groups is that American students view Arabic as a challenging language.

to admit” and “the writing part is the challenge in Arabic because of the changing shapes of letters” (Suburban High School Instructor Group). The instructors go further, however, to say that misconceptions about Arabic can hinder student language learning if left unchecked, commenting that “the first thing that we do as instructors is debunk these myths; if somebody says, well, Arabic is very hard, so you say...Arabic is very systematic” (State University Instructor Group) and “marketing of Arabic language is needed” to encourage potential learners who hear from other students and counselors that Arabic is difficult (Suburban High School Instructor Group).

A final belief about language learning shared by instructors from State University and Suburban High School as well as State University students is that students learn best in study abroad environments. Multiple State University students expressed this belief, commenting that “studying in Egypt was a lot more both intense and helpful than studying in the United States” and “I learned more in that short time immersed in the program [in Yemen] than I did here.” A State University instructor explained that “we tend to encourage the student who has some kind of talent in the language to immerse in bigger communities...or to go overseas for some time,” and the Suburban High School instructor focus group closed with the comment, “I would love to see some exchange programs—the best way to learn the language is to go to the country where they speak it.” Within the student focus groups, final questions raised by the participants focused on how their learning compared with other programs: “I was kind of worried-slash-curious to know the level of rigor of the Arabic programs at other universities” (State University Student Group); “I would like to know, are they quizzed the same ways we are, do they do speaking tests, or do they have multiple choice?” (City High School Student Group).

Discussion

In response to Research Question 1, discussions during the focus groups illustrated that the current level of assessment knowledge of the students and instructors sampled is unequal and could be improved. Though the scope of the study is limited and findings may not be generalizable to other populations, the focus group discussions suggest that promoting assessment knowledge among students as well as instructors could benefit both groups and potentially lead to improved learning outcomes.

The focus group results indicate that instructors in both focus groups had higher levels of assessment knowledge than the students who participated in data collection. This finding is not unexpected, as instructors are more likely to have experience and training in assessment practices and purposes. The data show that instructors believe the assessment techniques they use are valid and that assessment training is helpful. These beliefs reflect participating instructors’ awareness of the need to develop their own assessments and the limitations of time and resources they face in implementing effective assessment.

As demonstrated in general discussion during the focus groups not specifically addressed in this paper, students in both groups had less fundamental knowledge

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of assessment than the instructors sampled, which could contribute to the lower confidence they express about assessment. The State University students were unsure that their assessments were valid, and repeatedly commented that they did not trust the real-world utility of the assessment approaches they had experienced. Though the City High School students had faith in their instructor's assessment practices, they were curious to learn more about other types of assessment. Students in both groups also expressed opinions about how their assessment systems could be improved, through more assessment of speaking (State University students and City High School students) and of dialect (State University students). This questioning of assessment purposes by students and recognition by instructors of the challenges of scarce time and resources to develop and implement assessments seems to recommend increased assessment knowledge for both groups.

In response to Research Question 2, both students and instructors showed an interest in increased understanding of assessment. Some student participants questioned the purpose and validity of the assessments they experienced, suggesting receptivity to and desire for greater understanding of assessment, while instructors in both groups reported a desire for more assessment training.

Participants in the instructor groups stated that assessment training was important in providing instructors with the information necessary to create reasonable expectations for student learning outcomes. Further, the instructors requested more and continued assessment training that can translate to effective classroom practice, including training specifically targeted to the challenges commonly faced by instructors of Arabic, such as guided practice, sample tasks, and other resources to support instructors in creating their own assessment materials (given the lack of materials available in the language).

Student participants also indicated an interest in increasing their knowledge about assessment without using the term assessment training. Students in both groups displayed uncertainty regarding the proficiency goals of their Arabic programs and raised questions about the tests being used to assess their progress towards those goals, which could reflect an issue with the tests or with student understanding of their objectives. They expressed a desire to understand what their assessment results meant in terms of functional language ability outside of the classroom, as well as in comparison with other language learners. State University students in particular were keenly aware of the difficulties facing Arabic learners who must use a variety of dialects and registers to communicate effectively. Assessment training would help students find and, more importantly, trust in the answers to these questions by inviting them to engage with the assessment practices used in their programs and in the greater Arabic language learning world.

It is worth particular mention that in both student focus groups, the concerns raised about assessment related to test validity in assessing "real world" language abilities rather than to grades. During study design, the researchers sought to ensure that focus group protocols did not make value judgments or mention evaluations or grades. It was therefore interesting to discover that students at both the high school and university levels were curious about the functional utility of assessment in providing information about their proficiency instead of its effect on

their grade point averages. This result from a self-selected group of learners echoes the conclusions of Butler (1987) and Dweck (1999) regarding the motivating influence of feedback focused on potential improvement rather than rank, and may suggest that knowledge about language proficiency and how it is assessed is specifically desired by language learners.

Finally, in response to Research Question 3, there were many instances of mismatches of beliefs, expectations, and goals regarding assessment and language learning between students and instructors, including representatives of the same university program. In terms of beliefs about assessment, students were unsure about the validity of their assessments, while the instructors felt no such doubts. Students also questioned the balance of assessment focus among the four skills that was promoted by the instructors, and unequivocally expressed a desire for testing in dialect while instructors were unsure how to address this issue. In terms of beliefs about language learning, while instructors felt that the proficiency goals of their programs were clear, students were unsure about those goals. Students also questioned the balance of the four skills in instruction that was claimed by the instructors. Although the instructors were suspicious about some student motivations, all of the student participants described themselves as very motivated learners. Finally, instructors were certain that all students needed and demanded a textbook in order to learn Arabic, while students demonstrated that this was not the case.

These areas of mismatch in instructor and student beliefs about assessment and language learning could pose a challenge to learner motivation if students feel their expectations are not being met (Schultz, 1996), which in turn could threaten learning outcomes. It is hoped that resources for instructors and students designed to build understanding of assessment and encourage dialogue about assessment theory and practice could help to address such areas of mismatch and thus bolster student motivation.

Conclusion

Based on this small qualitative study, it seems advisable to promote understanding of assessment among language students and instructors to address the interest in assessment knowledge demonstrated by the study participants. The robust focus group discussions were critical in informing development of oral proficiency assessment resources for instructors and students of Arabic. As a result of the understanding of the beliefs about assessment and language learning of both groups and limitations in their knowledge gained from this study, the resources were designed to include explanations of the importance of oral proficiency, discussion of the use of dialects in instruction and assessment, testimonials from students about their how their oral proficiency ratings translated to real-world use, and numerous samples of student target language responses to prompts at various proficiency levels, among other features.

The exploratory character of this research limits the conclusions that may be drawn from it, however. Given the short time frame and limited resources for this phase of study, only four focus groups were conducted and only two of the

Beliefs about assessment and language learning

groups sampled instructors and students from the same program. Larger numbers as well as additional methods of data collection would have provided more robust results and avoided possible artifacts arising in the data due to idiosyncrasies of the programs sampled, such as the comments about textbook use. In future research investigating areas of mismatch between students and instructors, a wider sampling of both groups from various institutions would be desirable, as well as collection of course instructional and assessment materials to allow for triangulation of data.

Ideally, the enhanced assessment understanding fostered by the newly developed oral proficiency assessment training resources would provide both students and instructors with a fundamental understanding of the purposes of different types of assessment including specific assessments used in their classrooms. Improved assessment knowledge could increase the confidence of both audiences in assessment as part of the learning process by positioning assessment as a way to mark progress towards real-world goals. Further, it might provide a bridge for dialogue between students and instructors about reasonable expectations for language learning and alleviate areas of misunderstanding between the two groups. Such outcomes have the potential to lead to increased student motivation and greater language learning.

It is the authors' view that further research on student response to assessment training resources could prove illuminating. It is clear that assessment plays a fundamental role in language learning, and that student motivation, student and instructor expectations, and communication between both groups are intertwined and critical in shaping learning outcomes. Investigating how an increased understanding of assessment and communication of expectations between students and instructors influences learner motivation and language attainment, as well as the best ways to encourage such effects, would be a fruitful area for future research.

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Reviews

Edited by Thomas S. Conner, St. Norbert College

The Northeast Conference makes available in its *Review* evaluations of both products and opportunities of interest to foreign language educators. These evaluations are written by language professionals at all levels and representing all languages. The opinions presented by reviewers and by respondents (publishers, tour operators, webmasters, association leaders, etc.) are their own and in no way reflect approval or disapproval by the Northeast Conference.

We will accept reviews of

- Software
- Videos and films
- Textbooks, instructional packages, and ancillaries
- Websites
- Grant opportunities
- Programs of study, both abroad and in this country, targeting both educators and students
- Reference materials
- Other

Arabic

Kershul, Kristine K. *Arabic in 10 minutes a day*. Seattle, Washington: Bilingual Books, 2012. Includes: book and CD-ROM. ISBN: 978-1-931873-00-0. Pp. 132. \$26.95.

As the title implies, *Arabic in 10 minutes a day* is intended for the casual user or traveler and not as a primary classroom text. For a true beginner to complete the book with no other aids would require a tremendous amount of self-discipline, despite the “10 minutes a day” claim. As an outside vocabulary supplement for students in Arabic classes, however, the book could prove very helpful. It offers a number of useful vocabulary tools, such as pre-made flashcards, “sticky labels” to put on household objects, computer vocabulary games, a foldout restaurant supplement, and a glossary of common terms. I can envision this text used much more effectively as a robust vocabulary supplement for Arabic students preparing to go abroad or wanting to enhance their proficiency than as a stand-alone Arabic learning program.

The text covers a wide variety of subjects, mostly oriented to travel and survival skills: numbers, colors, telling time, money, places, days of the week, and many more. Given that most Arabic textbooks are lacking in such practical vocabulary, this book can fill a very significant gap on the market. It offers a number of activities to practice the vocabulary, such as crossword puzzles and matching drills but, given the sheer volume of vocabulary, students will have to repeat these exercises many times and design their own review schedule. In this regard, the “10 minutes a day” claim is somewhat misleading. The book is not broken into 10-minute sections, nor is a recommended practice and review schedule given. The trademarked slogan refers to the general guideline that readers should spend 10 minutes a day working through the book, with the vague advice “some days you might want to just review.” As the exercises remain very basic, only sometimes rising to the sentence level, a carefully managed review

schedule would be essential. A reader who follows the program diligently should be able to learn basic sentences focused on the needs of travelers.

The greatest weakness of *Arabic in 10 minutes a day* is its very cursory introduction to the Arabic alphabet and the consequent reliance on transliteration throughout. For a true beginner with no other aids, this can be a major flaw. For students who have learned the Arabic alphabet and pronunciation from another source, however, this weakness would not prevent the book from being a good vocabulary supplement to a more formal study of Arabic. Those students would ignore the transliteration entirely and rely on the printed Arabic script. This shortcoming could have been alleviated with a dedicated audio pronunciation section on the CD. When I opened the package, I expected to find such a section, and I expect a number of purchasers may too, although it is not explicitly promised anywhere. Thus, readers are left largely to rely on the written text to learn Arabic pronunciation. There is a two-page overview of the alphabet, but some letters are misidentified (for example, *ayn* is described as a “glottal stop, like the pause in uh-oh”—the standard description of *hamsa*—and later, inexplicably, as “almost an ‘r’ sound” and *dhaal* is rendered as “d” throughout). More significantly, though, a large number of letters are given transliterations that will likely confuse casual users. The *jiim*, for example, is rendered throughout as “zh,” but no further examples are given. Casual users are likely to pronounce this as a “z” sound, rather than the intended sound, much closer to a “j.” In general, short vowels are rendered too long (*misr*, meaning “Egypt,” becomes *meessur*, a pronunciation unlikely to be understood by a native speaker). Also, the text can be rather confusing with its mixture of English and Arabic words in both Arabic script and transliteration in the same sentence. Since Arabic reads from right to left, the switches in direction in the middle of sentences can be very disorienting.

The accompanying computer disk provides some useful vocabulary drills to reinforce the lessons in the book, but does not really provide the missing element *Arabic in 10 minutes a day* needs. Since one of the great weaknesses of the text is its reliance on transliteration for pronunciation, this would have been a perfect area in which the CD could supplement the book, particularly with examples of difficult letters, such as *ayn*, *hamsa*, or *ghayn*. The CD, however, does not have any activities to teach the pronunciation of the Arabic alphabet (though one could deduce some of the pronunciations from the relatively small number of vocabulary items that make it onto the CD). Nor does the CD go beyond simple matching exercises of a few vocabulary categories (such as numbers, colors, objects, pronouns). There are no dialogues, for example, or entire sentences for listening comprehension, nor is there an audio CD for listening in your car, as found in many competing programs.

Several different types of users might consider *Arabic in 10 minutes a day*. Given its limited scope, it will only be useful for some of those audiences. It is neither designed nor suited to be a primary classroom text. Despite the title, I do not see it as well suited for true beginners as the sole resource in a “teach yourself” Arabic program. In fairness, neither are the majority of products sold in bookstores for that purpose. As a supplement for Arabic students who wish to enhance their practical vocabulary, prepare to travel, or challenge themselves beyond the classroom material, this text could be a very useful aid.

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Abed, Shukri B. with Arwa Sawan. *Introduction to Spoken Standard Arabic: A Conversational Course on DVD. Part 2.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013. Includes a text and DVD. ISBN: 978-0-30015904-2. Pp. 536. \$40.

It's no secret that there are very few Arabic textbooks on the market that students actually enjoy. Furthermore, there are not many that focus on proficiency, rather than grammar. As the first book in Shukri Abed's *Spoken Standard Arabic* series was the only one that succeeded in my classes on both counts, I was very eager to see the second part of this series. Once again, Dr. Abed has produced a high quality text that will engage students in direct, practical activities and one that will facilitate simple, but lively class sessions. In this volume, the topics expand on the student's immediate environment to more abstract concepts, such as religion, language, traditions, and more. Given the limited options for a proficiency-oriented classroom, it would be hard to find a better text than *Spoken Standard Arabic*.

The text consists of ten thematically-based units, each consisting of a series of recorded interviews with both native and advanced-level non-native speakers. The interviews, which are the heart of the text, are extremely well produced and edited and supported by extensive reading, writing, and speaking exercises. The quality and organization of the DVD is far above that of competing products on the market and the clarity of the recorded interviews, in itself, sets this text far above the competition. In addition to being organized by theme, the interviews in each unit build sequentially on each other in their vocabulary and complexity and seem to have been carefully scripted for that purpose. Explicit grammar instruction and practice is kept to a minimum, taking up only a short section at the beginning of each unit. This is not a grammar text and makes no pretense of being one. Teachers interested in drilling the rules for case endings need to look elsewhere.

While the first book was mostly devoted to Standard Arabic, the second volume introduces more Colloquial Arabic into the dialogues. The focus remains, however, as the title indicates, on Standard Arabic, and the text is not intended as a truly integrated Colloquial/Standard curriculum. Arabic teachers have long debated, and continue to debate, the value of "spoken" Standard Arabic, with some preferring to begin with Colloquial conversation and others to build a solid footing in Standard Arabic first, and then to add Colloquial. Those in the former category would likely disagree with Dr. Abed's method here. This text is largely written for the latter group, and in that regard, is far more effective than competing texts, as students will develop speaking and listening skills that can more easily transition to include Colloquial Arabic.

While I have only used the first book in this series as a primary course text, the praise from students and teachers alike was universal. *Part 2*, which keeps the same format as the first part, but expands on the topics, promises to be equally successful. Classes based on this text tend to be very lively, with very little lecture or teacher

explanation and a great deal of student-focused activity. Most of the class will be spent listening to dialogues, writing responses and engaging in class discussions. With Part 2 students will be able to talk about more abstract topics, such as religion, tradition and identity. The complete course is designed to prepare students to perform at the Intermediate-High to Advanced-Low level on the ACTFL scale. With sufficient class time dedicated to speaking and writing activities, this text could definitely be at the core of a curriculum designed to reach that level, although all students at the Intermediate level could effectively use the text. Ultimately, *Spoken Standard Arabic: A Conversational Course on DVD* will appeal to teachers looking to design a proficiency-focused course in Standard Arabic. Teachers looking for a more grammar-focused course could use the book as a supplement, though not as a primary text.

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Publisher's Response:

Yale University Press would like to thank Professor DiMeo for his thorough and insightful review of Part 2 of *Introduction to Spoken Standard Arabic* by Shukri Abed and Arwa Sawan. We are very proud of the text and DVD set, and know that it fills a void in the available material for intermediate and advanced Arabic courses. It can be used as a main text or supplement another text to help students advance their Arabic language skills. This book is part of a strong list of Arabic language titles from Yale University Press, including *Arabic for Life* by Bassam Frangieh, and the recently published 2nd edition of *Ahlan wa Sahlan: Intermediate Text* and the 2nd edition of the beginning textbook and workbook by Mahdi Alish and Allen Clark, *Ahlan wa Sahlan: Functional Modern Standard Arabic for Beginners*. If instructors would like to request an examination copy of *Introduction to Spoken Standard Arabic, Part 2* or any of our language textbooks, they may do so at yalebooks.com/languageexam.

Karen Stickler
Academic Discipline Marketer
Yale University Press
yalebooks.com/languages

Chinese

Kershul, Kristine K. *Chinese. A Language Map.* Seattle, WA. Illustrations by Michelle Poole, Bilingual Books, Inc. 2004. ISBN-13:978-)944502-87-7 and ISBN:-10:0-944502-87-3.

The trend nowadays is for more and more people in the world to travel to China for business and sightseeing, or a combination of both. Since Chinese is one of the less commonly taught languages in the U.S., most people who visit China usually do not have the language proficiency to communicate in Chinese with local people. Although it is often said that more people are learning English in China than the entire population of the United States and that foreign visitors can always find Chinese people who speak

English in metropolitan areas, it might still be difficult to find someone who is able to communicate in English outside the big cities, especially in the countryside. Even though everyone knows that it is a good idea to learn some Chinese before going to China—considering that the character-based written Chinese language is so different from English—people might not have the time and resources to study Chinese before traveling to China. The good news is that the Chinese phrase book under review here can come to their rescue.

Many Chinese people believe that Chinese is very difficult, even for them, and that it must be an impossible language for foreigners to learn. The author of this review has taken students to China since 1996 (more than ten times), and my students often received praise from native speakers of Chinese when they tried to speak Chinese with them. Chinese people really appreciate it when a foreigner makes an effort to try to speak Chinese. They patiently hear you out and help you to communicate in Chinese. Of course, foreigners in China often encounter people who want to practice their English. So, my advice to my students has been to insist on a 50/50 ratio when this situation occurs. The author would encourage any visitors to China to take some Chinese lessons before their trip and, if that is not possible, they should at least bring *Chinese. A Language Map* with them and try their best to use it while in China.

Like other Kristine K. Kershul Language Maps, this one is a ten-page-laminated-leaflet. It is divided into sections consisting of useful vocabulary and short phrases, such as: “Meeting People,” “Asking Questions,” “Numbers,” “Telephone and Internet,” “Mail,” “Calendar,” “Time, Shopping, Essentials Signs” (in Chinese characters), “Dining Out,” “Money, Emergencies, Sightseeing, Transportation, and Hotels.” A four-line introduction offers tips on Chinese tones and how to use the language map and is quite helpful.

In general, the fifteen topics are well chosen since they provide commonly needed language basics or chunks of language that foreign travelers frequently encounter. Even though most of the Language Map is accurate and correct, there are some grammar and diction errors that could easily have been avoided. For example, in the “Asking Questions” section, the question “When does the restaurant open?” is translated as “*Fànguǎn shénme shíhou kāi?*” instead of “*Fànguǎn shénme shíhou kāimén?*” and “When does the bank open?” is translated as “*Yínháng shénme shíhou kāi?*” instead of “*Yínháng shénme shíhou kāimén?*” Some sentences and phrases almost look like a literal translation because they substitute Chinese words with English; for example in the “Telephone and Internet” section, “I would like to send an email” is translated as “*Wǒ xiǎng yào sòng. . . (diànzǐ yóujiàn)*” instead of “*Wǒ xiǎng yào fā. . . (diànzǐ yóujiàn)*”. Another such example can be found in the “Hotel & Room Service” section; “vacancy” and “no vacancy/full are translated as “*kòngde*” and “*bukòngde*” instead of “*yǒukòngfáng*” and “*kèmán*” while “Soon, please” is translated as “*Hěnkuaì, qǐng*” instead of “*Qǐng kuàiyìdiǎnr.*” Some vocabulary items are also wrong. For example, “fax machine” is translated as “*chuánzhēnjī*” instead of “*chuánzhēnjī*” and printer is translated as “*dǎyìng jī*” instead of “*dǎyìnjī*,” and “department store” as “*bǎihuò diàn*” instead of “*bǎihuò shāngdiàn.*” Some tone marks are also wrong. For example, in the “Shopping” Section, “May I try it on?” is rendered as “*Wǒ kěyǐ shìyìshìma?*” instead of “*Wǒ kěyǐ shìyìshìma?*”

Despite these minor issues and the advance in technology that enables smart phones and other electronic devices to help travelers in a foreign land, this Language Map is still a useful and handy tool for any visitors to China who could not take regular Chinese language classes before their trip. Chinese people will really appreciate their effort in trying to communicate in Chinese.

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French

Willis, Allen, and Heather and Sébastien Dubreil. *Alliages Culturels: la Société Française en Transformation*. Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2014. ISBN: 978-1133-309963, Pp. 288. \$75.49

This brand new textbook is a welcome addition to the field of contemporary French Studies and will be much appreciated by those of us who teach upper-level culture and civilization courses. In light of the latest research in translingual and transcultural pedagogy, the book's main objective is to help promote a better understanding of what it means to be French in today's world. In order to help students enrich their knowledge of France and French society in the twenty-first century, the authors have selected a number of important and relevant topics ranging from identity and myth to education, politics, and the economy. Unlike many other textbooks in the field, the primary focus of *Alliages Culturels* is not the Francophone world, but rather metropolitan France, a multiethnic, transnational and plurilingual country at the crossroads of various cultures, religions, customs, and traditions.

The text opens with a thought-provoking introductory chapter analyzing in depth the concept and definition of culture. The authors present the three interconnected notions of culture, mode par défaut, and différences culturelles, which serve as a springboard for follow-up debates and discussions. They are further reinforced by a short story, "La Lecture d'une Vague," by well-known Italian writer Italo Calvino. Mr. Palomar, the protagonist, is fascinated by the movement and sound of ocean waves. While attempting to single out a particular wave, he soon realizes that this is an impossible endeavor. Just like the metaphorical wave, French culture cannot be easily set apart as it is intermingled and closely knit with other cultures. The inclusion of this literary passage is an excellent starting point for discussions about the nature and the notion of culture.

The preliminary chapter is followed by four parts, each consisting of several chapters. In Part I students are introduced to French society as seen by others. Part II focuses on the most representative components of French identity, including linguistic, geographic and ethnic identities. Part III offers a candid look at social and cultural issues related to immigration, religion and education. Part IV situates France within the broader, global context of the European Union and other world economies. The fifteen chapters that follow have a similar structure, but there are variations, especially

regarding the number and the nature of texts students are asked to read and to analyze. Students are exposed to a wide variety of textual genres ranging from literature and magazine articles to pictures, graphs, and opinion polls. The authentic textual artifacts are accompanied by a number of pre- and post-reading activities, as well as questions and topics for further discussion. Several chapters also include interviews with famous French personalities, such as Kory Olson, a geographer, Aurélien Djadjo Mbappé, a professional basketball player, or Norbert Merjagnan, author of science fiction books. Grammar is appropriately contextualized and presented in the broader context of communicative language learning approach. The chapter focusing on French history, for instance, is logically linked with a review and practice of past tenses, while a comparison between American and French culture is accompanied by a thorough review of the comparative and the superlative forms. At the end of each chapter, wrap-up activities with summative oral and written assignments are provided for students to test their level of comprehension. Tasks range from essays and Power Point presentations to debates and oral recordings.

The textbook is accompanied by a Website for both students and instructors. The student Website includes three types of activities: short comprehension quizzes, Web search activities, image analysis and writing activities. Many of these activities can be electronically submitted to the instructor for evaluation. The Website also includes games, in particular concentration games and crossword puzzles, which can be used in class or at home. Audio flash cards include “clickable” pronunciations of all vocabulary items from the *Expression de Base* sections. A number of activities preceded by a globe icon are designed to guide students in their independent work with authentic French language online resources. In addition, extensive audio zip files with excellent podcasts are also available to review grammatical and linguistic functions. The instructors will benefit from a separate Website with sample teaching and assessment materials, the digitized collection of interviews, image galleries, and a list of resources that may be used to supplement the textbook.

The authors do a first-rate job presenting French society today not as a monolithic entity, but rather as a changing and evolving concept characterized by cultural diversity. The examination of contemporary developments is placed within a deeper historical, intellectual, cultural and social context that makes for insightful analysis. *Alliages Culturels* is particularly well informed by a thorough analysis of the country’s unique political and institutional traditions, distinct forms of nationalism and citizenship, dynamic intellectual life and recent social trends. While analyzing the varied forms of French cultural expression and looking critically at what “Frenchness” means, the textbook will greatly contribute to developing students’ advanced competence in French and their cultural knowledge of France. Last, but not least, *Alliages Culturels* will help them become well-rounded global citizens capable of articulating and defending ideas in French, both orally and in writing.

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Publisher's Response

I am pleased to have the opportunity to reply to Professor Dziejdzic's well-written review of *Alliages culturels*. He has described so well what the authors and the publisher intended for this text, which was to create a book that would enrich students' knowledge of France and French society in the 21st century through the analysis and interpretation of textual artifacts. As a bonus, students will also be furthering their reading comprehension. Cengage Learning wishes to thank the *NECTFL Review* and the reviewer for the positive and thorough review, and welcomes French instructors to request a review copy of the text, at www.cengage.com/highered.

Martine Edwards
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Rice, Anne-Christine. Cinema for French Conversation. *Le Cinéma en Cours de Français*. 4th edition. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-58510-636-3. A Teacher's Manual (*Cahier du Professeur*) is available online at the publisher's Website.

I have used film successfully at every level of the French curriculum, but usually I have had to develop suitable teaching materials on my own to help students understand not only a particular film itself, but also various cultural topics reflected in it. For some unfathomable reason, the foreign language textbook market is overflowing with largely identical first- and second-year language programs, but still is lacking in such fields as civilization, cinema, and French literature. The need is especially severe when it comes to film. For years I had to assemble my own course packets, including introductory texts on the medium itself and introductions to famous French actors and directors, along with study questions, vocabulary lists, writing assignments, group projects, cultural modules, etc. But not any more. Thanks to the good folks at Focus Publishing in Newburyport, MA, teachers at the high school and college levels now have somewhere to turn if they choose to implement film into the curriculum in a more structured fashion. To say that Anne-Christine Rice's *Cinema for French Conversation* continues to fill a void in the market is the understatement of the year; it remains a most valuable contribution to the field and will have a profound impact on the way film is taught in the college classroom. In recent years Focus Publishing has produced a wide array of cinema texts, such as Alan Singerman's *Apprentissage au cinéma français* and *Cinéphile* by Kerry Conditto, along with a series of manuals presenting specific films, titled *Ciné-Modules* and *Cinéphile*. Focus has also published (and is planning to bring out) volumes dealing with Spanish, German, and Russian films, and so it is the uncontested leader in implementing film into the FL curriculum.

I am very excited about the recently published fourth edition of Rice's text and feel confident that it will be well received by students. These days they are accustomed to multimedia instruction and do not take kindly to programs that are entirely text-based, as I have learned the hard way.

The fourth edition of *Cinema for French Conversation* includes more than just cosmetic changes (i.e., adding or dropping the occasional film but essentially keeping the same grammar content and presentation). In point of fact, this latest edition includes no fewer than four important new films (out of a total of eighteen): *Joyeux Noël*, *Les Femmes du 6e Étage*, *Welcome*, and *Molière*. As a student of history with a special interest in twentieth-century France, I am very pleased to see the addition of *Joyeux Noël*, the bittersweet movie about how French and German troops during World War I observed a twenty-four truce in order to celebrate together. The next day the slaughter resumed and before the war was over more than two million French and German soldiers had died. I do hope to see more recent films added to the roster in future editions. For example, *The Round Up* (or *Sarah's Key*), although partially in English, tackles the ambiguities of French collaboration during World War II. True, this text includes an overall excellent presentation of the now iconic film *Au Revoir les Enfants*; however, it fails to bring out the comprehensive extent of the Collaboration.

The presentation of the eighteen films covered has been revised to include textboxes (boîtes) to help students make better use of suggested activities, stating objectives, providing practical advice, and listing useful vocabulary; and all fact sheets have been updated. To be fair, some revisions are more extensive than others. For instance, the chapter on *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* (henceforth *Amélie*), an almost Fellinian comedy with a French twist, helps one teach the geography of Paris but needs to be updated to reflect changes in the City of Light. Moreover, the presentation of this film and others contains few fundamental changes except to update the factual information contained in the first few sections of the chapter, introducing the director and actors (who are now identified with their own picture). That said, however, the physical layout of each chapter has been enhanced, which students engaging “professionally” with a foreign film for the first time will find very appealing. Finally, the author has created a Website with a plethora of additional materials expanding on all of the chapter contents.

As the title suggests, *Cinema for French Conversation* is a fiesta for film buffs and anyone interested in recent French cinema; what is more, it is a valuable tool for learning French language and culture through film. Unlike *La France Contemporaine à Travers ses Films*, also by Anne-Christine Rice (and published by Focus), the text does not include a Foreword explaining how best to use it in the classroom. The online Teacher's Manual, more than 200 pages long, is absolutely exhaustive and offers extensive answers to all the activities in the text but unfortunately does not provide any practical advice to the inexperienced instructor eager to avoid the pitfalls of using film in the classroom: after all, the activity must be educational, right? All too often, teachers add on a film as a freebie at the end of the semester, to reward their students for putting up with them and their endless grammar exercises. But just how does one go about teaching film? How many films can one hope to cover in a semester? Are 50-, 70-, or 80-minute classes to be preferred? Should one view the film with or without subtitles? Should one watch the whole film or only watch it in installments of, say, 15, 20, or 30 minutes? And what kinds of class activities and homework assignments work the best? These are very valid questions that need to be addressed, and maybe a sample lesson plan also could be provided. However, teachers would still have to learn on their own, through trial and error.

In my experience teaching beginning and intermediate French, this text is best suited to a second-year college-level course in which it can accomplish the dual goal of teaching language and culture or, rather, language through culture. The text covers vocabulary and some grammar, culture, reading, and writing harmoniously in order to immerse students fully in French. However, unlike Kerry Conditto's text, this is not a second-year language course using film and needs to be supplemented with an appropriate grammar book. Presumably, undergraduates should also be exposed to literature in their second year of study. Film is important, but so too are literature and the history of French civilization. Nevertheless, Rice's text could easily become an integral part of a second-year course in which instructors used perhaps as many as four or five films per semester.

To the best of my knowledge, *Cinema for French Conversation* is the only program of its kind anywhere to offer such extensive treatment of so many first-rate French films in one single volume that reinforces the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in such an exemplary fashion.

Cinema for French Conversation covers eighteen films, most of them box office hits in France; why, a few even made it to North American shores. *Jean de Florette*, *Manon des Sources*, *Au Revoir les Enfants*, and *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* were immensely successful in the U.S., and students love them. The eighteen films vary greatly in content, but there is something for every classroom here. No instructor can possibly cover all eighteen films—even in a year—so there is plenty of choice. The selection spans the full gamut from dramatic comedy, farce, and romantic comedy to thriller, drama, and adventure. Because this is an anthology of films rather than a coherent text with an innate sense of progression from the simple to the complex, films are listed more or less in random order. All of them can be purchased online from any one of the many American companies that specialize in foreign films; teachers can also purchase the films on their own in France, provided they have access to a multi-standard DVD player in their classroom.

The eighteen films are as follows:

- Chapter 1: *Inch'Allah Dimanche*
- Chapter 2: *Jean de Florette*
- Chapter 3: *Manon des Sources*
- Chapter 4: *Ressources Humaines*
- Chapter 5: *Joyeux Noël*
- Chapter 6: *Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain*
- Chapter 7: *L'Esquive*
- Chapter 8: *Ridicule*
- Chapter 9: *La Veuve de Saint-Pierre*
- Chapter 10: *Les Femmes du 6^e Étage*
- Chapter 11: *Welcome*
- Chapter 12: *Au Revoir les Enfants*
- Chapter 13: *Femmes*
- Chapter 14: *Cyrano de Bergerac*
- Chapter 15: *Le Hussard sur le Toit*
- Chapter 16: *Molière*

Chapter 17: *Le Dernier Métro*

Chapter 18: *Le Dîner de Cons*

Most, if not all, of these films are bound to startle 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?” Therefore, I am wondering if it would not have been wise to include a chapter on the appreciation of film (including a more comprehensive list of film vocabulary than the one at the very beginning of the text), since the films studied in this text—all of them “fine films” to the n^{th} degree—are bound to have an alienating effect on a contemporary American audience, which needs to understand that a “good” movie does not necessarily have to contain graphic violence and extravagant special effects that increasingly have come to replace the plot, to say nothing of “poetry.” Thus, studying French film will be an eye-opener to many students who, sad to say, who have not yet had the opportunity 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. Therefore, high school teachers in particular need to be prudent in order not to get into trouble with the powers that be. To her credit, Rice defies school boards around the country, stating unambiguously that “*certaines films ne plairont pas aux autorités morales. Ils font néanmoins partie de la sélection car ils présentent un intérêt culturel et linguistique*” (*Cahier du Professeur*, 3).

The presentation of each film follows the same basic order, and Rice’s approach is practical and pedagogical almost to a fault. Each chapter contains the same sections, 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, or supplement them with their own readings adapted to their classroom.

For the purposes of this review, just to give readers a sense of what to expect, I will look at Chapter 16, *Molière*, a dramatic comedy purportedly about the life and times of a certain Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, aka “Moliere” (the accent grave actually was added in the nineteenth century). I teach *Le Tartuffe* every year in my Introduction to French Literature class and would be tempted to use this hilarious film were it not for its ahistorical character and many misrepresentations of the fundamental facts. We have watched it in French Club, though, and it is a great hit with undergraduates.

The chapter opens with a short introduction to the film’s director and actors with the catchy title *Carte d’Identité*, which is followed by six distinct sections: *Préparation*, *Première Approche*, *Approfondissements*, *Le Coin du Cinéphile*, *Affinez Votre Esprit Critique*, and *Pour Aller Plus Loin*. Each of the six main sections contains myriad information and activities. For example, the various vocabulary lists throughout the chapter alert students to the nuances of important terms such as *devot* and provide them with a critical vocabulary to do the activities that follow; and the *Repères Culturels* and *Le Contexte* sections quiz students on Molière’s life and work as well as on seventeenth-century French society; however, students will have to do outside research in order to answer most of the questions, something the text does not make clear.

I particularly like the *Affinez Votre Esprit* and *Pour Aller Plus Loin* sections, where students have the opportunity to engage with actual French reviews and imagine life back then compared today. Each film is accompanied by a generally excellent *Dossier*

or *Documentation*, and in the case of *Molière*, for example, readers will find excerpts from the literary work behind the film, i.e., selections from plays such as *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and *Le Tartuffe*, reviews from mainstream French magazines, including *L'Express* and *Le Nouvel Observateur*, and testimonials from directors and actors. Other chapters also include interviews with actors and directors. My only reservation is that *Molière* is largely fantasy, and perhaps students should be told early on not to assume that this is the historical Molière, something that might interfere with their reading of his plays.

In a future edition, perhaps Rice might include a short section on the cinematographic medium, featuring a short history of film (it has strong French connections) and technical vocabulary, including definitions, in French, of the most commonly used terms that students are likely to encounter in film criticism and that they need in order to speak critically about a film. What is the difference between a *court métrage* and a *long métrage*, terms that can be found in each edition of the weekly Parisian activities guide *Pariscope*? Why not include a selection from *Pariscope* to present one of the films under study? I have used this approach with a great deal of success in order to teach terms such as V.O. (*version originale*) and V.F. (*version française*). How do you say “full shot” in French? What is the term for “close-up”? An English-language translation of the most commonly used terms would help students become more articulate film critics. Many students would probably also welcome a list of useful vocabulary to speak about characters, plot, point of view, and style, or at least a lexique at the end of the text including all the terms used in it. My own students are fairly typical in this regard, and I for one still struggle to make them understand cognates and to remember the difference between *caractère* and *personnage* (though the terms sometimes can be synonymous) and between *intrigue* and *action*. But these are minor points and could easily be corrected by teachers who sense that their students need reinforcement in a particular area and who then provide a handout of their own.

I have liked earlier editions of this text immensely and have regularly used many of its chapters in my second-year language as well as in my Introduction to French Literature and Introduction to French Civilization classes. My colleagues in the field will be impressed by the richness of the program and the ease with which it can be readily implemented in the intermediate classroom. My students love the text and are energized by cinema in a way I never thought possible.

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Publisher's Response

As always, we are indebted to reviews such as this one because they help us to improve the integration of film into the foreign language classroom. Professor Tom Conner makes many insightful comments and helpful suggestions. I would suggest that instructors go to the textbook website as we certainly will be adding new materials based on suggestions by users and reviewers. I hope that we can soon make available on the Web the kinds of materials (how to view a film, film history, technical vocabulary)

suggested by this reviewer. At Focus we believe that French film provides a gateway to a fascinating world of language, history, and culture, and are thankful for the support of so many teachers across the country.

Ron Pullins
Focus Publishing

Andrzej Dziedzic New York: Heinle Cengage, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-111-35414-5, Pp. 336. \$43.95.

I still remember the time when many teachers of French required their students to purchase *English Grammar for Students of French* published by Olivia and Hill Press. There were at least two reasons for using this book. On the one hand, many high schools had gradually dropped the study of grammar and grammatical terminology almost entirely from their curriculum. On the other hand, many of the existing French grammar books often relied on the erroneous assumption that students actually understand the structure of their own language quite well and will therefore be able to establish analogies and draw parallels between English and French. Unfortunately, when studying their native language, they do not always get the necessary linguistic background they will need for studying a foreign language. As a result, instructors often have no choice but to spend valuable class time explaining basic grammar concepts before moving on to more complex grammatical aspects of the target language.

Contextualized French Grammar is a welcome addition to the field of French pedagogy. Its main focus is the use of grammar in various contexts of discourse. Written primarily with students in mind, it is a practical guide that uses simple and comprehensible explanations and requires no prior linguistic knowledge. Rather than present all aspects of French grammar, from the most basic to the more complicated, Katz Bourns focuses on a number of selected problematic topics with which students are most likely to struggle. The choice of the topics covered is based on the author's experience teaching grammar at various universities, as well as on specific questions students have asked her over the last 25 years.

The book is divided into eleven chapters. The first chapter serves as an introduction and includes basic grammatical concepts, such as parts of speech, parts of a sentence, discourse, and verb conjugations. The remaining ten chapters each tackle a separate part of speech or a grammar problem. Chapter 2 focuses on articles and other determiners (possessives, quantifiers and demonstratives). While giving specific examples of the use of definite, indefinite and partitive articles, and the difficulty of finding a one-to-one correlation between English and the French articles, the author underlines that it is almost impossible to choose the correct article preceding French nouns without first considering the context in which these nouns are used. The section on omissions of articles will also be particularly helpful for students. Chapter 3 provides an overview of nouns and adjectives. It explains the notion of grammatical gender and discusses strategies for distinguishing and memorizing the gender of particular groups of nouns. It also mentions some of the confusing nouns, such as *humour* as opposed to *humeur*, or *espace* as opposed to *espèce*. The next three chapters focus on several frequently used, but often misunderstood verb tenses: *le présent*, *le passé composé*, *l'imparfait*,

and *le plus-que-parfait*. The author reminds and encourages readers to think of the past in context and to imagine whatever they are describing as a scene from a movie and to distinguish the general background information from on-going actions. Chapter 7 is devoted to the much-misunderstood notion of the subjunctive mood and specific verbs and expressions, which require its use. Chapter 8 will help students to better understand the various ways of asking questions in French using a number of interrogative expressions ranging from the “identifying wh-expressions” to “content wh-expressions,” such as “when,” “why,” “where,” “what,” etc. The distinction between *qu’est-ce qui* and *qu’est-ce que* on the one hand and *quel* and *lequel* on the other, is amply illustrated with contextualized examples. Chapter 9 first explains the difference between clauses and phrases before moving on to a discussion of restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses. Students will clearly understand the difference between *qui* and *que* and the notion of an antecedent. Chapter 10 concentrates on various categories of pronouns, direct versus indirect object pronouns, the pronouns *y* and *en*, possessive, demonstrative, reflexive pronouns, and several other categories of pronouns. The final chapter contains other grammatical topics, such as adverbs and their formation, *le faire causatif*, the distinction between *il est* and *c’est*, *savoir* versus *connaître* and different ways to say “since” and “for” in French.

The exercises that follow each chapter are divided into two groups: “Test your knowledge,” and “Apply your knowledge.” They are presented in various formats: sentence completions, fill-in-the-blanks, verb conjugations, or French-English translation, among others. While the exercises are well designed, instructors using this book will most likely need to provide additional activities, especially if they want their students to practice communicative pair work or group activities.

Throughout the book, Katz Bourns includes special notes, which further explain to what extent written and spoken French differ. The *Rappel* boxes turn students’ attention to the many exceptions to the rules or simply remind them that, unlike in English, days of the week are not capitalized in French or that in spoken French they will be more likely to hear *on se lave* rather than *nous nous lavons*. Additionally, the handbook contains useful pronunciation tips related to specific grammar topics. Appendices include verb conjugation tables, expressions that trigger the subjunctive, and the answer key with answers to all the exercises.

Although this book might not be a substitute for a traditional classroom textbook, it can serve as an excellent supplement to an elementary or intermediate level manual. It will help students master or review the basic concepts before moving on to more complicated and challenging activities. Last, but not least, clear and succinct grammar explanations will help develop their awareness of how grammar functions in various contexts and at different levels of discourse: formal, informal, and neutral.

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Thomas, Jacqueline, ed. *Étudiants sans Frontières. Concepts and Models for Service Learning in French*. Carbondale, ILL: American Association of Teachers of French, 2012.

Service learning has become an integral part of higher education today. What began as a bold new initiative to make what students learn in the classroom immediately relevant to them in the here and now has proved its worth, and no one any longer questions the place of service learning in the academy. The question is how significant a place a service learning project should occupy in a class and, of course, how to identify an appropriate project. At first glance, service learning may seem more relevant to some disciplines than to others. After all, the target audience is not always apparent or, for that matter, available in the area community. Whom are students supposed to “service?” Just what is “service?” And who stands to gain the most, the “service providers” (our students) or those “served?” As the volume under review here demonstrates, service learning can be implemented across the board in all disciplines, including in the foreign languages. It all depends on how you define the two terms “service” and “learning.” All too often, one thinks that service learning only targets disadvantaged minority populations and that learning must take place in a formal classroom setting.

As a French professor myself, I used to be rather skeptical about how I, living in a small community in northeastern Wisconsin, could create a meaningful service learning project for my students. For quite some time my colleagues in Spanish have engaged in various projects, but then there is a growing Hispanic population in our area, whereas to the best of my knowledge there is not much of a Francophone presence here; the French Canadians and Belgians around here are well assimilated and are not an obvious target of service learning, at least not in its stereotypical definition, since they are not bona fide minorities and in no apparent need of service in any shape or form. But this bias on my part stemmed in large part from ignorance, which is why I am grateful to the AATF for publishing what has got to be one of the most professionally significant books I have reviewed in years because *Étudiants sans Frontières* has the potential to change the way we French teachers do business in fundamental ways. It is not that I had not considered some of the ideas shared in it. But the task of “putting it all together” seemed daunting, and I was not convinced of the educational value of service learning either, especially not in the context of our ever-shrinking curriculum. Racine and Corneille seemed more important to me than teaching local kids some basic French; however, I have since realized that the fables of La Fontaine, for example, are the perfect vehicle to involve students in my Introduction to French Literature in a service learning project. I had considered doing just that years ago but abandoned the idea because of lukewarm interest on the part of my students in volunteering; my mistake was not to make it an integral and mandatory part of the course. Similarly, I tried to get the French Club involved with Heritage Hill, a local museum where the rich history of our area has been preserved and where students can learn about the first French settlers in the seventeenth century. De Pere, where I live and where my college is located, was originally named Les Rapides des Pères, after the Jesuit fathers who colonized the area. But I never pursued the idea due to logistical problems and liability issues.

The authors of *Étudiants sans Frontières* have convinced me that service learning not only is feasible but also educational. As Jayne Abrate, the Executive Director of the AATE, writes in her preface: “Service-learning projects are an effective way to connect French students to the larger community of French speakers in a meaningful and interactive way. This volume addresses an important goal of encouraging teachers to take French out of the classroom, into the school, community, and wider world” (ix).

Moreover, service learning addresses the Communities rubric in the National Standards for foreign language learning. By interacting with other Francophone speakers, primarily in French, students will have an opportunity to develop cultural proficiency as well as to test their theoretical knowledge firsthand. As an interactive pedagogy, service learning has a truly transformative potential, since it can open students’ eyes to broader social and global issues, promoting heightened social awareness and civic literacy, and even leading some students to consider a career in teaching. Service learning also promotes creativity and hones valuable job skills, such as teamwork. Students learn to work together to get the job done, a skill that will serve them well in the workplace of the future, this increasingly complex and interconnected world of ours where it is oftentimes impossible to have the “whole picture” and where consequently we will have to depend on each other in order to prosper and maybe even to survive.

Étudiants sans Frontières consists of three sections. The first, “Crossing Borders: Honing Language Skills Through Service to Local Communities,” considers a scenario that affects many French teachers in the U.S. What to do if there is no viable Francophone community in your area? The six chapters in this first part of the book propose a number of practical solutions to this dilemma. For example, students can provide tutoring on their own campus as well as in area schools, specifically elementary schools, where the kids maybe are more amenable to college students teaching a class and where my students would not feel as intimidated as they otherwise would in a high school setting. I actually do a lot of this already in the context of my student-led tutorials for first-year students. Years ago I developed a volunteer system whereby my advanced students tutored my beginning students for thirty minutes to one hour every week, helping them master the material we covered in class but also building bridges between freshmen and sophomores and upper-level students and giving the latter a valuable opportunity to review their own command of basic grammar. What I need to do now is to develop a stronger academic rationale so that my student volunteers can earn academic credit for their hard work.

In addition to tutoring, students can offer translation services in the local community, for example, to a local museum, such as Heritage Hill, mentioned above, or to an area business that works with France or another Francophone country. Schneider National was founded by one of our alums, and hundreds of their trucks cross the border to Canada every day. Why couldn’t our advanced students offer a language tutorial to drivers? What is especially gratifying to me about this volume is that it not only made me rethink my position on service learning but also helped me immediately identify so many different ways in which my students could become involved in the community at large. The many different projects described in *Étudiants sans Frontières*

are stimulating and exciting and ought to inspire even the most diehard skeptic to at least give service learning a try.

Section II of the book, “Blurring Borders: Refining Understanding of Francophone Culture and Literature Through Partnerships with Haitians and West Africans,” describes a variety of partnerships. One project involved working with a local Midwestern non-profit company producing solar ovens for Haitians (who spend far too much money on charcoal, which is expensive because it is increasingly rare due to deforestation, which in turn keeps progressing because people have no alternative sources of fuel). Students created a bilingual cookbook written in Kreyòl and French, gaining valuable insights into Haiti’s “language, cuisine, and culture” (xv) in the process. Kreyòl being so totally different from standard French, students’ language skills must have been sorely tested, but what a great learning opportunity!

Another project involved working with Malian refugees in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and had students “write, illustrate, and record stories whose plots described ways to overcome obstacles and, at the same time, become familiar with their new environment” (xv). Over the last decade or two, a growing number of refugees from Francophone Africa have settled in the U.S. and are an obvious target for service learning. In addition to writing stories, American students taught French language classes to children who had grown up here or who were too young when they left Africa to remember their French. And, of course, students volunteered in myriad ways to help Malians integrate into American society.

The third and final section of the book, titled “Dissolving Borders: Developing Communicative Competence Through Interdisciplinary Collaboration,” looks at two highly original immersion experiences in the target culture, both of them in Mali. In one, American faculty, including a professor of entomology and a professor of French, accompanied by their students (in agricultural science and the natural sciences, as well as in French), traveled to a small village in Mali. They were well prepared before departure. French students had acquired a modicum of scientific literacy, and the science students had picked up enough French to facilitate and enhance their on-site research on the relationship between health, food production, and poverty. Before long, program participants had identified malaria as the one issue that threatened the livelihood of villagers, and they vowed to work with locals to eradicate this illness. They also mounted a joint business venture selling a variety of Malian handicrafts on campus back in Bozeman, MT. Subsequent summer trips to Mali continued these and other projects, creating a lasting bond between Americans and Malians. It is hard to say who benefited the most, the science students or the French students; the latter certainly learned a lot about a country seldom studied in depth in the French classroom and for the first time perhaps realized the interconnectedness of issues such as poverty, disease, sometimes very different cultural and religious practices and beliefs, and the impact of colonization.

It would be impossible to do justice to every project described in this volume, but I hope that I have been able to provide readers with a good enough idea of what service learning can look like in the field of French Studies, as well as communicate the excitement that engaging in a new venture can mean for teachers and students alike. Not only do they test their knowledge of “French” on the field but they also broaden

their horizons in novel ways. I should add that the articles in the book typically contain sample syllabi and contracts for students to sign, outlining their responsibilities. My only reservation would be that service learning should not take up too large a portion of a course. There is still much to be said in favor of the time-honored subjects in the French curriculum.

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Publisher's Response:

We appreciate Professor Conner's in-depth review of *Etudiants sans Frontières. Concepts and Models for Service Learning in French*. The authors' and editor's goal in producing this volume and the goal of the American Association of Teachers of French in publishing it was to inspire more French teachers to find and replicate creative ways to incorporate service learning in the French classroom. We see this as not only an excellent way to connect with communities outside students' own experience but to show to students and administrators alike the continued relevance of the French language around the world.

As Professor Conner rightly points out, service learning can have a very broad definition. Broadening the scope of what can be considered service, finding new ways to establish connections when there is no linguistic community nearby, and rethinking ways in which language learning can occur will inspire students to consider ways of continuing their use of French on a career path, make them more tolerant, and increase their awareness of the position of the French language globally.

The authors teach at a wide variety and level of institutions and have really created a guidebook for others to use and take inspiration from in developing their own projects. We greatly appreciate the positive feedback on this book.

Jayne Abrate
Executive Director AATF

Capretz, Pierre J., Barry Lydgate, Béatrice Abetti, and Marie-Odile Germain. *French in Action: A Beginning Course in Language and Culture*, Third Edition, Part 1. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013. Main textbook ISBN: 978-0-300-17610-0. Pp. 374. Workbook ISBN: 978-0-300-17612-4. Pp. 496. For orders and further information, e-mail: sales.press@yale.edu (U.S. office) or sales@yaleup.co.uk (U.K. office). Website: <http://www.yalebooks.com/FiA>

Prior to arriving at Canisius College in 2006, from 1993 to 2006, I was the Director of the Foreign Language Program at Philadelphia University (Philadelphia, PA). It was my first position after having completed my doctorate and as program director, I was asked to develop, from the ground up, a four-skilled proficiency- and content-based language program that incorporated computer- and video-assisted instruction at a school that is known for its general education program and its interdisciplinary majors. With grant monies, the university had purchased the first edition of *French in Action*

and had expected that I would continue using it since, the previous year, the adjunct faculty member had successfully use it in two pilot French courses. For a good many years, I enjoyed using *French in Action* but eventually decided to change texts because I felt I needed a change so that my teaching would not become stale. The change was not a result of dissatisfaction with the *French in Action* program and, in fact, I often found that other publishers' video programs paled in comparison to it.

I was thus intrigued to review the third edition and to discover many enhancements and updates that make the original 1987 classic video series featuring Mireille, Robert, and Marie-Laure extremely attractive to students today. The 52-lesson video program has not changed since the release of the first edition in 1987 and is available for free viewing at <http://learner.org/resources/series83.html>. Changes made between the first and second editions and most recently between the second and third editions, have all been related to the books. For example, the latest edition features new, contemporary illustrations that will likely appeal to today's generation of students, as well as more pertinent information in the Documents section of each chapter lesson. When I contacted Timothy Shea, World Languages Editor at YUP responsible for the changes to the third edition, he explained the following in regards to the specific changes to the Document section: "Of the sections that existed in the second edition, this section is the one that has seen the most changes compared the second edition. In addition to much more relevant Documents, almost all the related illustrations have been replaced and they are now in color."

In addition, an entirely new feature is the journal maintained by the ever-popular character of Marie-Laure. In her journal, Marie-Laure, with her characteristic frankness and sense of humor, reflects on the changes that have occurred in the world of politics, culture and technology between 1985 and the present day. According to Shea, Marie-Laure's journal "takes students through the ups and downs of Marie-Laure's life as she has grown up since the first edition was published. Simultaneously, it introduces many themes and issues related to technology and culture that were not present in 1987." It is exactly this aspect of the third edition that will keep students interested in using *French in Action*. For example, there is the video lesson on how it is inappropriate to pay for a small item, such as a small afternoon snack, with a 500F bill. A natural student reaction might be to ask about how much a French franc would be worth in today's euros and/or how the French reacted when the changeover was made from the franc to the euro. When I last used *French in Action*, my students were able to send e-mails to Marie-Laure and ask her questions. The ability to send e-mail messages made French in Action more relevant to them and kept them more engaged in the story line. Small surprise that students felt attracted to Marie-Laure.

I also like the fact that the latest edition of *French in Action* incorporates much more material on the entire Francophone world. Since the Internet has made the world that much smaller and students are much more technologically savvy, any good beginning French textbook must expose students to the entire Francophone world. Finally, for anyone that has used the first or second edition of *French in Action* and had concerns about the relative lack of formal grammar instruction, the third edition comes complete with concise grammar explanations that support the grammar exercises in addition to thirty pages of *conjugaison des verbes* types.

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Publisher's Response

Yale University Press thanks the *NECTFL Review* and reviewer Eileen Angelini for the careful and positive review of the new edition of *French in Action*. The third edition has been revised to include color illustrations, current content, and more material about francophone areas of the world. A new feature of the textbook, with related exercises in the new workbook, is a journal by dramatic series character Marie-Laure. Through Marie-Laure's personal journal entries between the 1980s and now, the authors have brought *French in Action* up to date in an accessible and often humorous way. We thank Professor Angelini again for her summary of the updates and favorable review of this classic beginning French program and hope students and teachers will find that the books and media provide an engaging as well as appealing resource for their courses. Samples of the new books are at our website; if instructors would like to request an examination copy set of *French in Action* or any of our language textbooks, they may do so at yalebooks.com/languageexam.

Karen Stickler
Academic Discipline Marketer
Yale University Press
yalebooks.com/languages

Aubrac, Lucie. *La Résistance Expliquée à Mes Petits-Enfants*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000. ISBN: 9-782020-365710. Pp. 64 pp. € 6. Accompanied by Barnett, Barbara P. Barnett and Wendy Li, prod. *Lucie Aubrac: Shining Light of the Resistance*. DVD. Wayne, PA: Beach Lloyd Publishers, LLC., 2011 for original film and 2012 for film supplement. For orders and further information, contact: Joanne S. Silver, Mgr., Beach Lloyd Publishers, LLC., P.O. Box 2183, Southeastern, PA 19399-2183. Tel: (610) 407-0130 or toll-free (866) 218-3253, pin 8668. Fax: (775) 254-0633. E-mail: beachlloyd@erols.com. Website: www.beachlloyd.com.

This slim but powerful volume is packed with the vivacity as well as the wise perspective of Lucie Aubrac. As she astutely indicates in her introduction, there is a sharp generational difference in how her children responded to the history of the events of the World War II Occupation of France and how her grandchildren responded:

Survivants de la Résistance et des camps de déportation, nous faisons tous la même constatation : nos enfants nés pendant ou après la guerre nous ont peu ou pas du tout interrogés sur ce passé qui nous a classés dans cette catégorie bizarre appelée "Résistance."

En revanche, nos petits-enfants sont avides de souvenirs, de détails, précisément sur notre engagement et notre activité entre 1940 et 1945. Il ne s'agit pas pour eux de préciser notre biographie mais de se renseigner, auprès de témoins de plus en plus rares d'une époque déjà historique, sur les valeurs

qui ont déterminé leurs actions, leurs souffrances, leur sacrifice et finalement leur victoire.

Pourquoi cette génération veut-elle tant savoir et comprendre? (7)

We are thus fortunate that Aubrac shares her experience of speaking with thousands of school-aged children about the Résistance via her answers to their poignant questions. Her tireless efforts and dedication until her death in 2007 to help future generations understand the selfless sacrifices made by members of the Résistance in order to protect universal values for future generations shines clearly through her words. Thanks to her we understand what was involved in being part of the Résistance during the German Occupation of France on a day to day basis as well as, for example, how networks were created, a clandestine newspaper was distributed, and military actions were undertaken. As a compliment to *La Résistance expliquée à mes petits-enfants*, Beach Lloyd Publishers offers the sixteen-minute documentary short, *Lucie Aubrac: Shining Light of the Resistance*. Based on Barbara P. Barnett's 2006 interview with Aubrac, Barnett's high school student Wendy Li and she pay homage to the incredible woman that Aubrac was by including with the Aubrac interview, former French president Jacques Chirac's impassioned speech at Aubrac's funeral, historical footage and photographs from the World War II period in France, as well as contemporary photographs of Aubrac's interacting with others as she continued to strive to promote resistance in the face of tyranny as means of preserving solidarity. The interview with Aubrac highlights her upbringing in a hard-working family of humble means in Burgundy, her work with her husband Raymond to form Libération-Sud (the Résistance group in the south of France), her fond memories of and admiration for Jean Moulin, and her meeting with the famous singer Anna Marly who wrote *Le Chant des Partisans*, the song sung by Résistants after the liberation of France. Aubrac explains that Résistants could not sing *Le Chant des Partisans* during the war for fear of repercussions from the Germans so instead, for example, when trains of deportees would be heading out of France, they sang *La Marseillaise*. Aubrac also explains that Marly based *Le Chant des Partisans* on the Russian song with the same title and had translated the words into French and adapted the song to fit the Résistance movement. The supplement to the film, which precedes the film, is an interview with the filmmakers that demonstrates aptly how the work of Aubrac continues to inspire the younger generations. In short, *La Résistance expliquée à mes petits-enfants* and *Lucie Aubrac: Shining Light of the Resistance* are well suited for the teaching of French within the interdisciplinary context of the history of the Résistance movement in France as well as for courses in related disciplines.

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Publisher's Response

This review encourages us as publishers and speakers in our passion to not only honor the legacy of Lucy Aubrac, but to draw inspiration from her humanity, her

integrity and courage. Recognizing oppression and persecution, she never considered being a bystander. She inspires us all to be alert, to speak up and, if necessary, to act in the face of injustice.

Joanne S. Silver
Beach Lloyd Publishers

Mitschke, Cherie, Cheryl Tano and James Mitchell. *Promenades à Travers le Monde Francophone*. Boston: Vista Higher Learning, 2014. ISBN: 1-59334-836-6. Pp. 528. Includes: Student Edition with Supersite Access, Loose-leaf format upon request. Workbook/Video Manual Lab Manual, Lab Manual, WebSAM and VText (WebSAM contains online Workbook, Video Manual & Lab Manual), Student Edition with Supersite Plus Access, Workbook, Video Manual, Lab Manual Answer Key, Roman-photo DVD, Instructors Annotated Edition, *Promenades* Instructor's DVD Set, Flash culture and Roman-photo DVDs, Activity Pack.

The second edition of this highly successful introductory French program is ideal for a two- or three-semester sequence. *Promenades* features a flexible lesson organization designed to meet the needs of diverse teaching styles and instructional goals. It expands students' communicative skills by presenting and rehearsing situations similar to the ones they are likely to encounter in real life. The textbook thoroughly integrates all language skills and presents thematic vocabulary and grammar as tools for effective and successful communication.

The textbook contains thirteen units with two lessons in each unit (A and B), followed by the *Savoir-faire* section and a list of active vocabulary. The lessons are divided into different parts. The *Contextes* section introduces vocabulary in a variety of formats and describes the rules of French pronunciation and spelling. The *Roman-photo* section is based on the video program, which accompanies the textbook. In the *Culture* section, students can explore cultural themes introduced in the previous sections. The *Structures* section provides various types of directed and communicative practice activities. It also wraps up with three types of culturally based multimedia-oriented activities: *Projet*, *Interlude*, and *Le Zapping*.

One of the most valuable components of *Promenades* is a 26-episode video program fully integrated with the textbook. The episodes present the adventures of four college students who are studying at the Université Aix-Marseille. The video tells their story and the story of Madame Forestier, their landlady, and her teenage son, Stéphane. Each episode is correlated with the exercises in the *Roman-Photo* section of the textbook. In addition, students can watch well-designed *Flash Culture* segments, which will allow them to experience the sights and sounds of the French-speaking world, and the daily life of French speakers. The last part of each unit, *Savoir-faire* presents various aspects of the French-speaking world and offers a number of activities designed to develop reading, listening and writing skills in the context of the lesson's theme.

Promenades comes with a number of useful ancillaries, such as the Instructor's Resource Manual, Workbook/Video Manual, Laboratory Manual, Textbook MP3s, textbook MP3 CD-ROM and Video. It also has an excellent companion Website with frequent references to it throughout the text. On the Webpage students will

find numerous interactive activities for each section of the student text, additional practice exercises, reference and enrichment tools, as well as the program's multimedia components. The well-designed Workbook contains additional review activities that target grammatical tools, vocabulary, verb conjugations, and culture.

Since the first edition published in 2010, the authors have added several new components. One of them is a series of animated French grammar tutorials featuring the amusing character of *le professeur* who presents rules and exceptions to the rules in an easy-to-follow and engaging manner. Follow-up written and oral grammar activities accompany each tutorial. Several *lectures* (readings) have been revised and updated, and new authentic readings have been added, especially in units twelve and thirteen. The reading passage *Les petits commerces* replaced *Villes et villages français*, and Jean de la Fontaine's fable *La Cigale et la Fourmi* replaced an excerpt from *Le Petit Prince*. Throughout the textbook, the authors have added many photographs in place of the older, more outdated ones. Six new authentic videos have been added to the *Le Zapping* sections. The layout and the content of grammar pages have been redesigned to allow for more thorough explanations and is now supported by cross-reference sidebars. The Supersite has been further enhanced and Virtual chat and Partner chat activities. Instructors will benefit from a new activity pack with additional communicative activities for every grammar point. The testing program has been expanded to 130 mini quizzes and 26 new unit tests. Last but not least, *Promenades* is now iPad-friendly allowing students to access the VText on the go.

The authors' goal in the preparation of this manual was to create a user-friendly learning environment. *Promenades* features excellent page layout, use of colors, typefaces, and other graphic elements as an integral part of the learning process. Lesson sections are color-coded, and the textbook pages are themselves visually dramatic, with pictures, drawings, realia, charts, word lists, and maps of the French-speaking world, all designed for both instructional impact and visual appeal.

Promenades is an innovative and flexible program. What sets it apart from the other introductory textbooks is its presentation, the richness of oral and written activities and the array of instructional resources from which the instructors can pick and choose. The second edition of the program will no doubt motivate and inspire beginning French students by providing a unique and compelling learning experience.

Andrzej Dziedzic
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Publisher's Response

I am pleased to respond to Andrzej Dziedzic's flattering review of Vista Higher Learning's Introductory French program, *Promenades*, Second Edition. We feel grateful to Professor Dziedzic for identifying many of the same highlights which we were so proud to unveil.

Professor Dziedzic noted that *Promenades*, Second Edition, features a flexible lesson structure that integrates language skills and presents vocabulary and grammar

as tools for effective communication. This lesson structure is one of the hallmarks of all Vista Higher Learning programs, and we were happy to ascertain, thanks to Professor Dziejdzic, that it is self-evident to users. Professor Dziejdzic also rightly called out one of the most valuable components of *Promenades*, Second Edition: the *Roman-photo*, a 26-episode dramatic video series fully integrated with the textbook. This integration also extends to the *Flash Culture* video episodes, which allow students to experience the sights and sounds of the French-speaking world.

One of the most radical transformations that took place in the *Promenades*, Second Edition, textbook was the redesign of the grammar strand, and we were thrilled to see that Professor Dziejdzic was pleased with the result. The new design creates more room on the page for both the grammar explanations and practice activities, allowing for expanded explanations and additional practice, and more room for supporting sidebars with cross-references to other grammar points and elaboration of key concepts.

Vital to the integration of all the program's components, Professor Dziejdzic noted the prominence of the *Promenades*, Second Edition, iPad-friendly companion Supersite. At center stage are the brand new animated French grammar tutorials. Innovative and entertaining, every grammar explanation in the textbook features a corresponding tutorial. The amusing *Professeur* explains grammar in an easy-to-follow, engaging, and visually appealing manner via dynamic text and follow-up interactive activities—both mid-tutorial—to check comprehension along the way—as well as post-tutorial—for more complete practice of the individual grammar point.

Also online are new Virtual Chat and Partner Chat activities that Professor Dziejdzic aptly called attention to. The Virtual Chats allow students to practice new concepts by interacting with an avatar, whereas the Partner Chats allow them to carry out communicative activities remotely with a classmate.

Finally, for instructors and also new to *Promenades*, Second Edition, are an Activity Pack, containing an abundance of additional classroom activities, and an expanded Testing Program, containing brief quizzes and unit tests.

Armando Brito
Senior Consulting Editor
Vista Higher Learning

Italian

Abbona-Sneider, Cristina, Antonello Borra, and Cristina Pausini, eds. *Trame: A Contemporary Italian Reader*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011. ISBN: 9780300124958.

Trame (“plots,” in Italian) “...brings together short stories, poems, interviews, and other works by thirty-three renowned authors. The readings cover familiar themes—youth, family, immigration, politics, women’s voices, [and] identity.” *Trame* is designed for “high-intermediate and advanced Italian language and culture courses.” The mention of “high-intermediate and advanced Italian language learners” and the mention of “the five C’s of language learning” by the editors show their awareness and inclusion of recommendations and pedagogical considerations made by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL).

At the outset, the editors explain the purpose of the reader, how the text is structured, offer a disclaimer of “curse words and derogatory expressions” and give sample lesson plans for classes meeting twice or three times per week. The thirty-three chapters that follow are organized alphabetically and not grouped according to any particular theme or genre. Each chapter (in which all material is in Italian) follows a similar format that begins with information about the author and some pre-reading questions centered on the reading. There is a section with lower-frequency vocabulary from the reading and definitions (in Italian) and also a section on idiomatic expressions that most likely are unfamiliar to students (including some at the superior level). Next are cultural notes to help students contextualize the reading, followed by exercises asking students to fill in the blank and define terms. These exercises seem to incorporate grammatical topics (e.g., agreement of noun and adjective) as well as content. The actual text then appears (abridged in some cases but unaltered from the original Italian). The readings are relatively short (on average a few pages). The reading is followed by comprehension questions, analysis and interpretation, writing prompts, and finally a section that directs students to use the Internet. At the end of the reader is a glossary of literary terms in Italian with accompanying definitions.

The use of the ACTFL standards in designing the reader was a welcome one; those familiar with the standards can quickly assess the suitability of the reader for their classes and those not familiar with the standards can easily find and interpret them. I would agree that this reader would be appropriate for advanced students according to the ACTFL guidelines, but high-intermediate students would have to work at a much slower pace and, since this is an ungraded reader, they may find some of the grammar and syntax hard to follow, thus taking away from the style of each text. The editors’ disclaimer in the Introduction that they don’t encourage “the active use of such language” will be welcomed by instructors who feel their students may take issue with the language; however, seeing a language as it is used (especially in dealing with contemporary Italian) is indispensable. The choice of purely modern Italian readings fills a void; there are not many readers that focus on contemporary Italian and such an eclectic choice of topics and genres. The overall organization of the reader is outstanding; it is not graded i.e., the readings don’t become increasingly more difficult, but rather they allow instructors to use the book as a supplement and to pick and choose readings as they are all more or less at the same level of difficulty. The editors have written the reader for “Italian language and culture courses,” and I believe that it would be well suited to courses in composition and grammar as well as in advanced conversation courses. In terms of using the reader as a standalone text, there is plenty of material for it to be used in that capacity with grammatical points being addressed by the instructor as they arise (as well as in some of the exercises which precede the readings). The text is completely in Italian which is appropriate for the level, and the fact that it is unedited gives the students a true feel for the message behind the language. One of the strongest features of *Trame* is the inclusion of the *note culturali* (“cultural notes”) which help students frame the text by including the context. It is clear that the editors took great care in the organization of the reader, the exercises, and their suggestions for pedagogical considerations to be used by the instructor. The

editors also choose an excellent variety of issues to address in terms of content and genre, e.g., short stories, interviews, and poems.

Perhaps the strongest aspect of the text is the overall pedagogy of the presentation that allows for in-depth coverage, higher-order thinking skills, and opportunities for instructors to evaluate. It begins with background information about the author to aid in contextualization. Students are then asked open-ended questions about the theme of the reading to facilitate discussion and promote students to think about the theme of the reading. Students are provided a scaffold with vocabulary in Italian that can exponentially expand their vocabulary and at the same time, teach them skills to be able to describe a term that they may not know the word for. They are next provided with a cultural context to frame the reading (I believe many students miss the point of readings due to lack to knowledge of the cultural context). Finally, students are provided with exercises to facilitate the understanding of content and grammar. After the text, there a thorough section testing comprehension of what they have read followed by an equally thorough analysis and interpretation section. Students are then given prompts on which to write and encouraged to use the Internet to improve research skills and expand their knowledge.

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Publisher's Response

Yale University Press thanks the *NECTFL Review* and reviewer Christopher Sams for the informative and positive review of the Italian reader, *Trame*. As Dr. Sams described, the book includes various forms of writing in their original Italian, with exercises and cultural content, and is appropriate for Italian composition, grammar, and conversation courses. If instructors would like to request an examination copy of this or any of our language textbooks, they may do so at yalebooks.com/languageexam; selected books are also available to view online at yalebooks.com/e-exam.

Karen Stickler

Academic Discipline Marketer

Yale University Press

yalebooks.com/languages

Spanish

McVey Gill, Mary and Teresa Méndez-Faith. *Cultura y cine: Hispanoamérica hoy*. Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2012. Includes: Textbook and Instructor's Manual. ISBN: 978-1-58510-424-6.

Cultura y cine: Hispanoamérica hoy by Mary McVey Gill and Teresa Méndez-Faith is comprised of a textbook and instructor's manual that successfully present an overview of Hispanic America in its entirety. The textbook targets an intermediate-advanced audience the authors identify as "our digital-age students" in their preface.

The text has a comprehensive organization structured around five *Vistazo panorámico* sections, presents music through film in the *Cultura y cine* sections and invites students to do searches on YouTube and Google. Each film is paired with a theme. In Chapter One, for example, *Diarios de motocicleta* is paired with the theme, *Sudamérica por tierra: de sur a norte* (“South America by land: from South to North”). Assignments include a choice between on-line projects such as wikis, mashups, and virtual video tours, as well as more traditional topics

Each chapter is divided into seven parts: *Presentación*, *La película*, *Perspectivas*, *De la prensa*, *Actividades*, *Del rincón literario*, and *Otras películas*. Each chapter begins with *Presentación*, which illustrates introductory material, including vocabulary and focus questions. The section titled *La película* presents general information about the film under study. It is divided into five subsections: *Vocabulario*, *Exploración*, *Notas culturales*, *Temas*, and *Evaluación*. Each of these subsections provides the reader with a new set of information about the film, beginning with the subsection containing relevant vocabulary. *Exploración* is a guide to the film. Questions are included with answers provided in the instructor’s manual. *Notas culturales* provides the reader with additional background information. *Temas* contains an exploration of the topics and subtopics of the film. Its contents can be used as prompts for writing assignments or class discussion. *Evaluación* is a collection of questions that focus on critical evaluation or cultural comparison.

The section *Perspectivas* contains interviews with Hispanic Americans that correspond to the given chapter topics. *De la prensa* contains articles that correspond to the given chapter topics. The journalistic selection in the first chapter corresponding to *Diarios de motocicleta* includes *El día de San Guevara*, which is part of Ernesto Guevara’s diary, and *Venezuela y Colombia o dos proyectos en pugna*, an article by Argentinian professor and historian Luis Fernando Beraza. *Actividades* provides a mix of traditional and non-traditional assignments. *Del rincón literario* contains an optional passage, story, or selection of poems for study. Finally, the section *Otras películas* contains suggestions for further viewing that can be integrated into the course. Not only is the organization of *Cultura y cine: Hispanoamérica hoy* comprehensive, so are its contents.

Cultura y cine: Hispanoamérica hoy is a broad yet adaptable volume. It allows instructors to maintain a great deal of flexibility in designing a course, thereby allowing them to better meet the needs and interests of students. The organizational design creates the possibility for an intellectually stimulating and interactive course. The text can be best employed when all the components presented are utilized together.

Pamela Shuggi
Independent Scholar
Walkersville, MD

Publisher’s Response

There are many ways in which feature film can be integrated effectively into language courses. Most of our texts have been designed to use feature films to stimulate language conversation and to introduce students to language and culture in high interest contexts. The purpose of *Cultura y cine: Hispanoamérica hoy* is to focus

more specifically on key issues of Latin American culture and assumes language skills appropriate for the third- or fourth-year student. Films are used as a springboard to one of five key topics, including family, politics, migration, etc. Besides structuring a discussion of the films, the book provides readings, searches, and other materials that help students begin their quest to embrace the important and exciting world of Latin America through its own language and art.

Ron Pullins
Focus Publishing

McVey Gill, Mary, and Deana Smalley. *¡De película! Spanish Conversation Through Film*. Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-58510-312-6 (paperback), 978-1-58510-354-6 (hardback). Pp. 203 + xvi.

As the title suggests, *¡De película!* is designed as a textbook for Spanish courses in which conversation practice and development figure prominently. According to the book's preface, students using the book should have at least intermediate Spanish language skills and ideally be at the high intermediate or advanced level. The book is well suited for use in a typical semester-long college course. It is important to note that the present textbook draws heavily on the authors' previous textbook, *Cinema for Spanish Conversation*. Although the former book featured eighteen films, and *¡De película!* features only eight, nonetheless, five of the eight films in *¡De película!* are common to both books, and the material from the former book made its way into the latter book with only some additions and deletions. This is by no means a criticism of the present book; on the contrary, the material preserved in *¡De película!* offers numerous opportunities for students to engage with the films.

¡De película! devotes a chapter to each of the book's eight films, which are, in order of appearance, *La misma luna*, *Danzón*, *De eso no se habla*, *Un lugar en el mundo*, *Machuco*, *Guantanamera*, *Nueba Yol*, and *El viaje de Carol*. The chapter structure is the same for each film: a brief introduction to the film; vocabulary used in the film; exercises to check comprehension of the vocabulary; sections that break the film into segments with questions about the plot and cultural notes; cultural analysis and contrast; and finally a journalistic reading about the film or interview with the actors. The films are selected on the basis of quality, cultural and historical content, their appeal to students, and availability, and represent Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Spain (only one is Spanish).

One of the films included in *¡De película!* is *Guantanamera*, the Cuban film about a road trip across the country to bury a famous singer who has died unexpectedly shortly after returning to her hometown. Following a brief summary of the plot, and of director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's career, there is a list of vocabulary related to the film's plot and several activities. One asks students to explain the work of several professions seen in the film, among them, *cantante*, *economista*, and *rastrero*. Another activity requires students to complete a paragraph with the appropriate vocabulary item, and still another presents multiple-choice questions. Segments that examine the film quarter by quarter follow. The first section of *Segment 1* prepares students for watching the segment by asking questions designed to stimulate thinking about missed opportunities, a

theme touched on in the film in general and in the first segment in particular. Other *Segments* have a list of questions on the plot for post-viewing. Each *Segment* ends with a *Nota cultural* that explains aspects of the culture seen in the segment. In *Segment 2*, for example, students learn that the saint to whom a woman in labor prays for help, Santa Bárbara, is also identified with Changó, the god of thunder in the afrocuban religion *santería*. Following the final segment of the film—each film in the book is divided into four *Segments*—there is yet another vocabulary list of words and idiomatic expressions found in the film, such as the Cuban colloquial word *fula* (U.S. dollar) and standard phrases like *hacer caso* and *tener que ver (con)*. Comprehension of this list of words is then tested in fill-in-the-blank statements and paragraph-long passages that follow the plot. The *Temas de conversación o composición* section provides eight points of departure for interesting discussion, pointing out such aspects present in *Guantanamera* as the adaptability of Cubans under adverse conditions, black humor, symbolic elements, references to Cuba's colonial past that parallel contemporary conditions, and the questioning of the government's ideology that runs throughout the film. A selection of important quotes taken from the film, a question comparing the student's culture with that of the film, and quotes about the film from critics round out the discussion of the film. The chapter ends with an interview of Jorge Perrugoría, one of the film's lead actors, about *Fresa y chocolate*, another film by the same director and in which Perrugoría acted. Questions following the article test reading comprehension and also encourage students to make comparisons and contrasts between the films.

¡De película! will be very useful to instructors who use, or who want to explore using film to foment conversation, and of course this can extend to composition as well. The content devoted to each film provides multiple approaches to help students engage with the film and take the often difficult steps to understanding the language, the culture, and the story itself. Whether or not instructors choose to focus on culture, it is woven throughout the material, and both big and also little “C” culture are presented. Especially helpful to instructors are the twenty additional activities listed in the book's preface, which suggest creative and enjoyable ways to draw students into the lives and perspectives of the characters. One such example challenges students to “decide on the best gift for a certain character and tell why.” The films and the criteria for their selection make this book appropriate for students of all ages, from high school to college and beyond. The number of films featured (eight, not nine, as the preface erroneously states) is adequate for a semester-length course with or without other components that may be part of a course, such as grammar and composition. Finally, I find that the book's physical qualities add to its appeal. First, the headings, subdivisions and color-coded segments (red, yellow, and blue) give enough guidance to be helpful without being a distraction as is the case. Available in both hardback and paperback, the book's compact dimensions make it easy to use and to carry around. In summary, this book is well conceived, provides abundant material, and can be effectively used in a wide variety of course settings.

John F. Day
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De Pere, WI

January 2014

Publisher's Response

Thanks for this interesting, accurate, and informative review of *¡De película!*. The book is indeed a shorter version of *Cinema for Spanish Conversation*, intended for schools in which films must have a PG or PG-13 rating. This is not always easy to do when looking for materials that are also engaging and useful in the foreign language classroom. But the authors have done so successfully, I think, and this is what makes this book unique among the cinema books we publish.

Ron Pullins
Focus Publishing

Lunn, Patricia V. and Ernest J. Lunsford. *En otras palabras: Perfeccionamiento del español por medio de la traducción*. 2nd Edition. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013. ISBN: 978-1-58901-974-4. \$26.96, £21.00 paperback.

While it has fallen out of favor with many foreign language educators in recent decades as numerous universities have introduced communicative approaches, translation in the L2 classroom has seen a recent resurgence. While not the fixture they once were, translation activities are now common components even in communicative classrooms because of the many benefits they offer students. Recent studies have shown that translation can be a useful learning tool and can help students acquire a foreign language. One text that clearly promotes the benefits of translation is *En otras palabras: Perfeccionamiento del español por medio de la traducción*. It aims to aid students in creating precise and accurate translations of Spanish and English texts and attempts to do so in a mere 111 pages. By combining brief grammatical and lexical notes and real texts in English and Spanish, this book aspires to assist Spanish/English translators in their translation work.

As the authors state in the preface, the text is designed for advanced independent learners or students in an advanced translation course. It is soon apparent that *En otras palabras* is not for beginning students of Spanish. In fact, after a brief preface in English, it is entirely in Spanish. Despite their small size, the prefaces (one for teachers, one for students) are full of useful suggestions on how to best utilize the text, and also include some very helpful translation tips. Excluding the preface, *En otras palabras* is composed of two parts. The first, the smaller of the two, deals with structures of the Spanish language, such as narration, description and the passive voice. These brief chapters, aside from featuring Spanish and English texts to be translated, incorporate matching activities, Internet assignments, and lexical explanations to supplement the translations, giving students insight into the subtler nuances and cultural differences between the two languages. While each of these chapters incorporates some grammatical instruction that deals with a specific topic (cognates, the diminutive), they are brief. After all, this is a translation guide and not a grammar text. For the same reason, there are no pronunciation guides or notes on oral communication. Despite this, the authors do address cultural and personal differences in language use, which is refreshing to see in a translation guide.

The more expansive second section deals with applied translations and each of its chapters addresses a specific field: advertising, business, health and medicine, sports, the law, etc. Each chapter is brief and gives readers just enough exposure to the subject covered.

Within each chapter, as with the first section, the reader finds a short lexical lesson, a grammar note, texts in English and Spanish, as well as exercises to be performed on paper and on the Internet. One section of each chapter, aptly titled *¿Cómo?*, serves as a brainteaser, asking students to ponder a particularly strange linguistic phenomenon. The text also features several authentic materials, such as comic strips, recipes, photographs, and news articles, which help students learn translation in a real-world context. *En internet* requires students to go online, look for, and read or translate passages dealing with the chapter's topic.

En otras palabras doesn't shy away from the "elephant in the room" in the translation world: online translation sites. Instead, the authors choose to give examples of the shortcomings of these Websites and show how their mistranslations can be detected and corrected. As an aid to translation instructors, the authors give many helpful ways to spot and prevent fraud. Also, by encouraging students to utilize web searches in each chapter, the Internet is portrayed as a translator's tool and not his/her replacement. This inclusion is necessary considering the surge in popularity and increased quality of online translators.

One of this book's greatest assets is also its biggest flaw: its small size. Though the authors insist in the preface that students should acquire a reference grammar to supplement the present text, more explanation of some of the key points would be helpful even for advanced learners. Also, although *En otras palabras*'s place is clearly in a translation course, the authors claim its use should be limited to that of a supplement, except in the case of a beginning translation course. While the text manages to include much useful information (especially on profanity, jokes, and euphemisms), it lacks a summary chapter (or paragraph), ending abruptly after the chapter on technology, and would definitely benefit from a conclusion that ties up loose ends and reiterates the central theme of the book. An index and glossary of common translation terms are also lacking. Also, since a major audience for this book is independent learners, an answer key would be a useful tool so that these learners can monitor their progress and prevent error fossilization.

En otras palabras succeeds in being a small translation aid that manages to serve many purposes. While the inclusion of additional material would make it many times more useful, this book not only succeeds in teaching students how to be better translators, it also shows that translation is a relevant skill. Moreover, the authors manage to portray translation, a field that is considered by many to be a tedious endeavor, as a light and even fun task by including so many real-world supplements. By incorporating translation exercises from a wide range of disciplines, this text will serve the novice translator well who plans to be translating work in a variety of fields. The authors remind L2 instructors of the role of translation and, while it is not the overt goal of *En otras palabras*, might actually pave the way for incorporating translation into a traditional foreign language classroom.

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