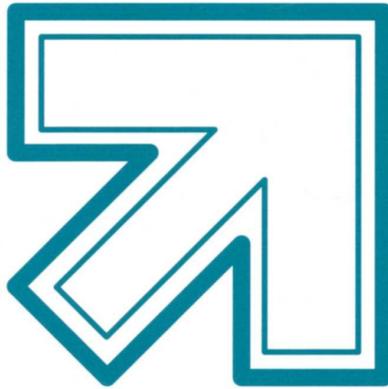


NECTFL ***REVIEW***

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



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

Number 67

January 2011

NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

on the Teaching of Foreign Languages



58th Annual Conference: Saturday, April 2 – Monday, April 4, 2011
Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel



Strengthening Connections: Colleagues, Content, & Curriculum
Charlotte Gifford, Greenfield MA Community College, Chair



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From the 2011 Chair



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As Conference Chair for 2011, it will be my privilege to welcome you to Baltimore, a beautiful city that the NECTFL has not visited since 1983. This is an exciting change for the largest regional conference organization of its type in the country.

NECTFL has always been at the center of my professional development, and the benefits of the conference have extended well beyond the one weekend each spring. I encourage you to make the 2011 conference the starting point for your sustained professional development within a supportive community of professionals.

More particularly, in 2011 at NECTFL we will work to Strengthen Connections in three broad areas: Colleagues, as we build and expand partnerships and professional networks; Content, as we explore the multidisciplinary, thematic and content-based learning in the study of language and culture; and Curriculum, as we investigate effective cycles of teaching and learning.

Prior to the conference, you will receive brief written reports on elements of the theme and you'll have the option of participating in some webinars. You can thus hit the ground running when you get to Baltimore and come away from the conference ready to share and apply what you've learned when you return home.

In spite of challenging times, our professional development ought to remain at the top of our priority lists. In fact, it's when our schools and colleges don't support us financially that we most need to make opportunities to get together and sustain ourselves — as individuals and as a community. The 2011 Northeast Conference is your perfect opportunity, especially in the affordable, friendly and exciting city of Baltimore where your Maryland colleagues are eager to welcome all of us.

In response to your requests, NECTFL has also changed the configuration of conference days: by scheduling our workshops, sessions, exhibit hall hours and special events in a Saturday/Sunday/Monday format, we can provide many more choices to attendees and reduce the time you have to be away from your

classrooms and offices. Check the website at www.nectfl.org to see the details and make your plans!

I look forward to seeing you in Baltimore!

E-mail us at nectfl@dickinson.edu if you wish further information.

Cordially,

Charlotte Gifford
Greenfield (MA) Community College
2011 Northeast Conference Chair

NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

on the Teaching of Foreign Languages



58th Annual Conference: April 2–4, 2011
Baltimore Marriott Waterfront, Baltimore, MD

Strengthening Connections: Colleagues, Content & Curriculum
Charlotte Gifford, Greenfield Community College, VT, Chair



“big city flash with small town friendliness”

From the Managing Editor

Readers of the NECTFL *Review*,

Welcome to the NECTFL *Review*, Volume 67, the latest issue of our electronic-format journal. We are proud to offer you the same quality of articles and information that you have appreciated in our earlier print versions of the journal. You can now read all of the recent journals online and download selected articles, reviews, or information, or even the entire publication in PDF format. This electronic format allows us to offer you features such as the integration of color and active links to both websites mentioned and e-mail addresses. These links are in blue; simply click on a link and you will be taken to the site mentioned, or your e-mail program will open with the address of the recipient of your message already in place.

Also in Volume 67, we continue to offer you the wide range of reviews of textbooks, media-based programs, movies, software, and other materials of interest to world language teachers. In this issue, we have separated the reviews by language(s) and/or topics of the materials. Please let me know if you like this new arrangement.

In this issue, we offer you four interesting articles...all about the integration of technology in the world language classroom. The first article is by Marina Falasca and Laura Levi Altstaedter, "Using WebQuests to Develop Intercultural Competence in the Foreign Language Classroom." The authors explore student perceptions about the effectiveness of WebQuests in developing intercultural competence. Although the study is based on intermediate-level Spanish classes, the usefulness of WebQuests is clear for any language. WebQuests offer students authentic tasks that promote positive attitudes toward the new culture but also encourage the learners to place themselves in a different context.

The second article, "Promoting L2 Reading in Less Commonly Taught Languages with Hypertexts," by Theresa Catalano, explores the use of hypermedia reading texts in the language classroom, particularly for less commonly taught languages — in this case, Italian. As in the first article, the usefulness of this particular technology is apparent for the study of any language. Catalano shows how hypertexts can be used to facilitate the teaching of reading. She also explains how teachers can create their own hypertexts and implement them in the classroom.

Lucie Viakinnou-Brinson and Steven P. Cole's "The Effect of Powerpoint and Nongraphic Paired List Presentations on the Vocabulary Production and Recognition of Elementary-Level College French Students," offers us the results of their study on students' recall performance for written production and visual recognition of French vocabulary words. Not surprisingly, we find

that students expressed a marked preference for learning vocabulary using the PowerPoint approach.

The fourth article in this issue, “A Case of Computer-Mediated Communication and multimedia integration: Breaking Classroom Barriers with More Input and Opportunities to Communicate,” by María Isabel Charle Poza, describes how a series of web-based computer-mediated communication and multimedia tools were integrated into an intermediate Spanish II course at a Historically Black University. The study investigated just which technology tools proved most effective in providing students with opportunities for meaningful communication outside of class, which increased their exposure to comprehensible input, and which increased their motivation and cultural awareness.

We hope that this issue of the NECTFL *Review* interests, informs, and instructs you. We welcome your input, suggestions, and comments.

Remember, the 2011 NECTFL annual meeting will be held in Baltimore, MD, at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront Hotel. Please read the letter on page 6 from the Chair of the 2011 Conference, Charlotte Gifford.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert M. Terry." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert M. Terry
Managing and Articles Editor

Guidelines for the Preparation of Manuscripts

All articles submitted will be evaluated by at least two, normally three, members of the Editorial Review Board. Elements to be considered in the evaluation process are the article's appropriateness for the journal's readership; its contribution to the field of teacher recruitment and retention and the originality of that contribution; the soundness of the research or theoretical base, its implications; 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 as your guide. Most 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.
2. Submit your article electronically to rterry@richmond.edu. Please follow these guidelines carefully to expedite the review and publishing process:
 - a. Use a PC- or Mac-compatible word-processing program, preferably Microsoft Word 2007/2008 or a later version.
 - b. Do not use the rich text format.
 - c. Use a font size of 12 points and use only one font throughout — we require Times New Roman or Minion Pro.
 - 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.
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)
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- vii. 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.
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 - 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). Please include this paragraph on a separate page at the end of your article. This paragraph should include the following information (no longer than 4-5 lines):
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Example:

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

8. Please note that the 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.

These guidelines and the accompanying checklist are based on similar documents prepared by Maurice Cherry, former Editor, *Dimension*, a SCOLT publication.

Robert M. Terry
Articles Editor
NECTFL Review

A Checklist for Manuscript Preparation

NECTFL Review

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

1. 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.
2. Remember that with 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.
 - a. Do *not* use automatic footnoting or end noting programs available with your computer. Simply use raised superscripts in the text and superscripts in the notes at the end. Automatic endnote/footnote programs present major problems as we prepare an article for publication.
 - b. Do *not* use automatic page numbering, since such programs often prove to be impossible to remove from a manuscript.
3. Please double-space everything in your manuscript.
4. Do *not* use full justification in the article; use left justification only.
5. The required font throughout is either Times New Roman or Minion Pro 12.
6. There should be only *one space* after each period, according to APA format.
7. Periods and commas appear within quotation marks. Semi-colons and colons should appear outside of quotation marks. Quotation 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).
8. All numbers above “nine” must appear as Arabic numerals [“nine school districts” vs. “10 textbooks”].
9. 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.
10. Use standard postal abbreviations for states in all reference items [NC, IL, NY, MS, etc.], but not in the text itself.
11. Please do not set up tabs at the beginning of the article (i.e., automatically); rather you should use the tab key on your computer each time you begin a new paragraph, which is to be indented only ¼ inch.
12. Please note the differences between the use and appearance of hyphens and dashes. Note that 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.

15. 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, please check to make certain 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 plan to 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.
16. Do not imbed boxes and other macros in your text. Remember that your manuscript will have to be reformatted to fit the size of the published volume. Therefore, a table with lines and boxes that you set up so carefully in your 8 ½" x 11" manuscript page will not necessarily fit on our journal pages.
17. Please makes certain that the components you submit are in the following order:
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 - b. First page of the manuscript — should have the title of the article and the abstract.
 - c. The text of the article
 - d. Notes; References, Appendices — in this order
 - e. The short, biographical paragraph (no more than 4-5 lines).

Call for Papers

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 you!

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Using WebQuests to Develop Intercultural Competence in the Foreign Language Classroom

Marina Falasca, *South Dakota State University*

Laura Levi Altstaedter, *East Carolina University*

Abstract

This study explores students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of WebQuests in developing intercultural competence among college students enrolled in two intermediate Spanish classes. The study addresses the question of why WebQuests are useful and presents basic definitions and foundations regarding intercultural competence. Moreover, it evaluates a specific inquiry-oriented, web-based learning activity on Chile and presents the results of a Likert-scale questionnaire and a one-paragraph self-evaluation aimed at assessing the students' attitudes and perceptions toward the task. The students' responses show that, on average, they tended to be open and ready to learn about and reflect on their culture and that of Chile.

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As a result of globalization and internationalization, other fields of inquiry, such as cultural studies or literature studies, are redrawing the boundaries of their disciplines. Thus, it would be appropriate for foreign language education to re-examine its disciplinary base and its cultural presuppositions. Its main goal can no longer be “the one-sided response to national and economic interests, and the pursuit of communicative happiness;” it must include the search for an understanding of cultural boundaries and an attempt to come to terms with these boundaries (Kramersch, 2001, p. 12). As specified in the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (NSFLL, 2006), students should demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Scholars in the field have stated the importance of promoting “the acquisition of intercultural competence and/or the ability to work well across cultures, and where employers demand quality instruments that can predict whether or not employees will function successfully in intercultural contact situations” (Sercu, 2006, p. 85). However, the significant role intercultural competence plays extends to broader contexts and is not limited to the business sphere. In this sense, intercultural competence can allow learners to develop their “ability to interact with members of other cultures while being aware of differences and similarities and preventing overemphasis on foreignness or stereotyping” (Elola & Oskoz, 2008, p. 454) while detaching themselves “from their linguistic and cultural world to consider their own situatedness from the perspective of another” (Scarino, 2010, p. 324). In order to facilitate the development of intercultural competence among students, curricular designs must include the creation of what Kramersch (1993) calls a third place, defined as a metaphorical place where students can function and alternate between the native culture and the target culture while reflecting critically upon both.

It is our contention that instructors who take systematic action to help students access updated, authentic cultural materials can help foreign language students become more interculturally competent. For example, researchers have looked into the role of blogs (Elola & Oskoz, 2008), e-mails (O’Dowd, 2003), and telecollaboration (Lomicka, 2006) in aiding the development of students’ intercultural competence. Some of the constraints facing instructors designing curricula aimed at fostering the development of intercultural awareness, however, include the impossibility of travelling abroad or the inaccessibility to native speakers with whom to interact via written asynchronous communication and/or via oral synchronous communication. Through WebQuests, however, students can explore various aspects of the target culture as well as reflect on the differences between the target country and their own. In particular, inquiry-oriented, web-based activities like WebQuests can be valuable tools for three main reasons: (1) they offer instructors the chance to present students with real-life tasks; (2) they may address various thinking skills at the same time, for example, comparing, analyzing, inducing, classifying, deducing; and (3) they can promote knowledge of the

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new culture by encouraging students to place themselves in a different context. Thus, students can reassess their own values and compare and contrast them to those of the target culture.

WebQuests: Definitions, Essential Components, and Types

The creator of the WebQuest model, Dodge (1997), defined a WebQuest as “an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the Internet” (§ 2). According to this author, WebQuests, when properly constructed, are activities, usually authentic in nature, that require students to use Internet-based resources to deepen their understanding and stretch their thinking around just about any topic imaginable. There are six parts to a good WebQuest:

1. an introduction that sets the stage and provides some background information about the topic; it may also capture the learners' interest;
2. a task that is doable and interesting;
3. a set of information sources needed to accomplish the task;
4. a description of the directions students should follow to complete the task as well as some guidance on how to organize the information acquired, e.g., concept maps, timelines, cause-and-effect diagrams, flow charts;
5. a set of criteria or a rubric to evaluate learning;
6. a conclusion that brings closure to the quest, reminds students of what they have learned, and encourages them to reflect on the experience and to extend it into other domains. (adapted from Dodge, 1997)

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As specified by Dodge (1997), WebQuests can be either short-term or long-term in nature. Short-term WebQuests usually take two to three lessons and focus on knowledge acquisition and integration of a specific content or skill. In turn, long-term WebQuests take four to twelve weeks and require extending knowledge acquisition and developing complex thinking skills through analyzing, synthesizing, creating, and transforming information. In general, short-term WebQuests are completed in the classroom although they may also be assigned as homework, which was the case of this particular WebQuest. Some of the assignments involved in long-term WebQuests may be conducted outside of class.

According to Şen and Neufeld (2006), the essence of WebQuests should lie “in the given task which requires a higher order of thinking” (p. 50). In other words, students are not expected to just receive information passively but rather to use it actively to achieve a certain purpose, such as write and share their journal entries, which allows them to impart information in a creative way while educating others. Above all, instructors should challenge students to go beyond simple information gathering. Instead, they should foster critical thinking and promote problem solving, judgment,

analysis, or synthesis (March, 1998). For example, the task section of the WebQuest may present students with a document that describes an analysis of a controversial situation, takes a stand, and invites students to add to or disagree with that stand.

WebQuests and Intercultural Competence

In reviewing the literature, several advantages to using WebQuests clearly emerged. Not only have several studies theoretically linked WebQuests to the development of higher order thinking skills, but Ikpeze and Boyd (2007) have even demonstrated “how to integrate and use multiple tasks during WebQuests to facilitate thoughtful [foreign language] literacy” (p. 646). Other studies have yielded positive results in terms of teacher and student satisfaction with WebQuests. For example, the interviews conducted by Gaskill, McNulty, and Brooks (2006) suggested that both the instructors and students involved in their project were quite pleased with WebQuests. As stated by the science and history teachers interviewed, “they [the students] were finding extra information that we really didn’t have time to cover... no one got off task earlier and didn’t wander around the computer lab without any work to do” (p. 135). Likewise, students not only thought “it was fun,” but they also stated that “it was easier than just being in the classroom because you can actually see it on the screen” (Gaskill et al., 2006, p. 135).

In keeping with the findings reported by Gaskill et al. (2006), Hassanien (2006) evaluated the effectiveness of using WebQuests as a computer-based learning tool to support undergraduate student learning. All 66 participants in his study

... found the WebQuest activity stimulating... as a teaching and learning method... Moreover, most students agreed that the WebQuest sessions were relevant and useful... Similarly, the majority agreed that the WebQuest [had] positively affected their progress and knowledge. (p. 241)

Despite the advantages previously listed, not many researchers have explored the benefits of using WebQuests in the foreign language classroom. Not only is there little evidence in terms of the usefulness and/or effectiveness of WebQuests in the context of foreign language learning, but few studies have been conducted on the relevance of WebQuests in helping students develop their intercultural competence (Hacker, 2006; Levi Altstaedter & Jones, 2009). What is more, most of the literature on foreign language learning still focuses on more traditional teaching tools and strategies such as newspapers, songs, videos, visual realia, research, and stories — to name a few (Seelye, 1994; Kramsch, 2001; Fleet, 2006).

According to Fleet (2006), it is imperative to look for alternative strategies to make sure that students are “agents of world peace in an ever-changing, multicultural, global society, long after they have left the security and safety of the language classroom” (p. 25). In her view, the goal of foreign language education should be to train students to be independent thinkers and authentic problem-solvers. In addition, instructors should “foster an intercultural competence that language students can take with them when the language classes are over” (pp. 25-6).

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One of the advantages of using WebQuests is that they are systematized tasks that provide structure to students researching an authentic topic on the Internet, which is in essence a highly unstructured medium. This scaffolding structure of WebQuests can give instructors the chance to foster autonomous learning (March, 2003). What is more, the interactive and authentic nature of WebQuests may lead to better conceptual and experiential learning, which Crozet and Liddicoat (1999) believe to be one of the most fundamental requirements to acquire intercultural competence. In turn, the process section of WebQuests allows students to have immediate access to a variety of websites and resources online, which may help develop the students' research skills while raising their cultural awareness. As March (1998) put it, "Rather than turn to a dated textbook, filtered encyclopedias or middle-of-the-road magazines, students can directly access individual experts, searchable databases, current reporting, and even fringe groups to gather their insights" (§ 10).

Intercultural Competence Defined

Byram (1997) proposed an analytic model of intercultural competence which has wide acceptance in the field of foreign language education. This model includes five components or *savoirs*, all of which are necessary for a student to become interculturally competent. The first *savoir* is defined as "knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction" (Byram, 1997, p. 58). The second *savoir*, *Savoir-comprendre*, refers to "the ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own" (Byram, 1997, p. 61). The third *savoir*, *Savoir-apprendre/faire*, is the "skill of discovery and interaction: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction" (Byram, 1997, p. 61). In turn, the fourth *savoir*, *Savoir s'engager*, is described as "critical cultural awareness/political education: an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 1997, p. 63). Finally, *Savoir-être* is defined as "curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (Byram, 1997, p. 57).

Individual differences among students can affect how they respond to target cultures. In this sense, Elola and Oskoz (2008) have pointed out that, despite students' openness and curiosity about others, their own beliefs and attitudes "may conflict with the newly acquired ones" (p. 456). It then becomes necessary to provide opportunities for learners to become aware of their own behaviors and beliefs by developing a critical cultural awareness; in other words, to help them develop the "ability to evaluate critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 1997, p. 63). The intention is not to change learners' values, but to make them aware of their own values when evaluating others.

All the considerations above were taken into account, not only when designing the WebQuest itself, but also when planning the follow-up questions and self-evaluation.

Thus, the task section of the WebQuest aimed at encouraging students to compare the aspects researched on Chile to those of the U.S. Moreover, the one paragraph self-evaluation intended to give students the opportunity to re-assess their own views of the target country and its people after the completion of the project.

Justification of the Problem

As stated earlier, a closer look at WebQuests reveals their benefits in terms of increasing student interest and motivation as well as raising their cultural awareness, particularly if the students are encouraged to conduct research, which Cullen and Sato (2000) believe can lead to “long-term interest in the target culture” (p. 4). Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the usefulness of a specific short-term WebQuest on Chile and its relevance in fostering intercultural competence among intermediate Spanish students (see the appendix for a complete description of the WebQuest).

The WebQuest was created using the model developed by Dodge (1997). It was designed by the instructor of the course, who was also one of the researchers, and it was intended to supplement the first culture section of the course. Above all, it was designed in an attempt to present the students with a more challenging task that would not only enhance their cultural development but also raise their cultural awareness. More specifically, the present study intended to investigate the following:

1. What were students’ perceptions of the WebQuest task?
2. According to students’ perceptions, did the task have a significant impact on any of the specific learning goals of the WebQuest?

Design and Procedures

Participants

The study included data collected from 43 students enrolled in two intermediate (fourth-semester) Spanish college classes at a major North American university. Participants included 30 female students and 13 male students. Five students were Spanish majors and 29 were Spanish minors. As evidenced by their responses to the pre-survey questionnaire, none of the participants had had experience with WebQuests and/or intercultural training prior to the project.

WebQuest task.

The instructor went over the instructions and layout of the WebQuest in class and asked the students to complete it individually as a homework assignment for the following week. As shown in the appendix, the first part of the WebQuest presented the students with an imaginary situation: they had to pretend to have received a grant from university authorities to travel to Chile for three days and were expected to keep a journal in Spanish for the entire duration of the trip. Upon their return, they would be asked to share their writings with their classmates. As part of the process section of the activity, the students visited various websites on Chile, all of which had been preselected by the instructor. They also created a concept map to organize their ideas

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before writing their journals, and they evaluated five websites. Finally, they wrote a one paragraph self-evaluation to re-assess their own views on Chile as well as reflect on the process of the overall task. After turning in their final products, all 43 students completed the survey described below. This survey was not part of the WebQuest and all students were required to complete it.

Survey Instrument.

The survey included five Likert-scale close-ended questions aimed at eliciting self-reported student perceptions on the following: the stimulating nature of the WebQuest task, the impact of the WebQuest on students' willingness to take up opportunities to get to know and socially interact with Chileans, the impact of the WebQuest on students' willingness to seek out opportunities to further explore Chilean culture, the impact of the WebQuest on helping students reflect on and write about Chilean culture, and the impact of the WebQuest on helping students reflect on and write about their own culture. The Likert-scale questions ranged from strongly disagree (= 1) to strongly agree (= 5). The results of the reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach Alpha of .72 for the five questions in the survey.

Results

	N= 43	
	M	SD
Stimulating nature of the WebQuest task	3.35	0.897
Impact of the WebQuest on students' willingness to take up opportunities to further interact with Chileans	3.37	0.874
Impact of the WebQuest on students' willingness to seek out opportunities to further explore the Chilean culture	3.35	0.897
Impact of the WebQuest on helping students reflect on and write about Chilean culture	3.79	0.638
Impact of the WebQuest on helping students reflect on and write about their own culture	3.09	0.750

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Students' Perceptions of the WebQuest

Quantitative Findings

What were students' perceptions of the WebQuest task? The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 15.0 (SPSS) program. The descriptive statistics table (Table I) shows means and standard deviations of students' responses to each of the questions in the survey. The mean response to each question was compared to a test value of 3 (= neutral) in order to ascertain whether students' mean responses to each question were significantly different from neutral. On average, students had indifferent to positive perceptions ($M=3.35$, $SD = 0.897$) of the stimulating nature of the WebQuest ($t = 2.551$, $p < 0.05$), moderately positive perceptions ($M=3.37$, $SD = 0.874$) of the impact of the WebQuest on their willingness to take up opportunities to further interact with Chileans ($t = 2.793$, $p < 0.01$), indifferent to positive perceptions

($M=3.35$, $SD = 0.897$) of the impact of the WebQuest on their willingness to seek out opportunities to further explore the Chilean culture ($t = 2.551$, $p < 0.05$), positive perceptions ($M=3.79$, $SD = 0.638$) of the impact of the WebQuest on helping them reflect on and write about Chilean culture ($t = 8.122$, $p < 0.01$), and neutral perceptions ($M=3.09$, $SD = 0.750$) of the impact of the WebQuest on helping them reflect on and write about their own culture ($t = .813$, $p > 0.05$).

Overall, the results show that students had significantly positive perceptions of the stimulating nature of the WebQuest (question 1), of the impact of the WebQuest on their willingness to take up opportunities to further interact with Chileans (question 2), of the impact of the WebQuest on their willingness to seek out opportunities to further explore the Chilean culture (question 3), and of the impact of the WebQuest on helping them reflect on and write about Chilean culture (question 4). In contrast, students' perceptions of the impact of the WebQuest in helping them reflect on and write about their own culture (question 5) were not significantly different than neutral, indicating that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Were there any differences in students' perceptions regarding the impact of the WebQuest task on specific learning goals of the WebQuest? The results of the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) indicated that there was a significant difference ($F = 4.061$, $p < 0.01$) among students' mean responses to the five survey questions. A Tukey post-hoc test showed that students' mean responses to questions 4 and 5 were significantly different from each other. However, there were no significant differences among questions 1, 2, 3 and 5, nor among questions 1, 2, 3 and 4. The results show that, overall, the area of highest impact of the WebQuest as perceived by the students was the impact of the WebQuest on helping students reflect on and write about Chilean culture, whereas the area of lowest impact of the WebQuest as perceived by the students was the impact of the WebQuest in helping students reflect on and write about their own culture.

Qualitative Findings

After completing the WebQuest, students were asked to reflect upon the process of completing the task by answering three sets of questions in English: (a) How did I use my time in completing this WebQuest? Did I use it effectively? Why/Why not?; (b) Did I access and evaluate at least five websites? Did I find the website evaluation form useful? Why/Why not?; and (c) If I were to do this same project again, what would I do differently? The qualitative analysis of the data showed that eighteen students thought they had used their time effectively while completing the WebQuest task, though some of them pointed out that there were some factors affecting their effectiveness. For instance, one student wrote: "I felt I used my time effectively in webquest [sic]. I would have been more efficient if I had not been distracted by my roommate [...]" Some students in this group stated specifically the process they followed in completing the task:

I used my time by first looking at all the websites and choosing my favorites. After I chose 5, I constructed a concept map. Then I completed the website evaluations. Using the concept map and the websites, I then wrote my journal entries. I think I used my time wisely because I carefully researched my topics and then started to write.

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Conversely, seventeen students reported that they had not used their time effectively. Some of the reasons they gave were: being sick, lack of confidence in reading and writing in the target language, lack of linguistic ability, and simple procrastination. Six students expressed that they devoted too much time to researching on the websites rather than to writing their journal entries and that this caused them to rush in the end. One student wrote:

For this webquest [sic] I spent most of my time researching on the websites and creating a concept map. I spent the most time on this part because I feel that it is important to learn as much about the country as possible and that will make it easier to write a journal entry. After completing this I realize [sic] that I could have been more effective by spending more time on writing the actual journal entries.

Students' responses were sometimes very candid and showed their self-awareness about the process of engaging in the completion of tasks for their college classes. While some students were very confident about their time management, others were quick to admit their lack of organization skills devoted to this particular task. One student wrote "my time was spent horribly on this assignment. I honestly did not start until late on Tuesday night," when the deadline to turn in the final product was the following day. Likewise, there were differences among students' opinions in terms of what they would change. While some students stated that they would not change anything if they were to complete another task such as this WebQuest project, others agreed that they would manage their time more wisely.

Regarding changes that they would see in the task itself, some students expressed that "the website evaluation forms were a bit tedious" and that they did not think "the assignment would have suffered any if the forms were not included." Regarding the website choice, a student stated: "I feel I could've done quite a few things differently, for example, I could've done some of my own research rather than relying on the pages provided by the professor." This last statement shows that some students are motivated and eager to expand their knowledge of other cultures and to go beyond what their instructor assigns, although sometimes, as in the case of this specific student, they do not do so.

Scholars have stated that "an assessment of intercultural competence might never be treated as absolute, or be transparently quantifiable due to the ever-changing nature of social identities and values" (Elola & Oskoz, 2008, p. 464); however, the quantitative results above appear to show a positive impact on the students' perception of the value of the task. What is more, the students' self-evaluations appear to support the quantitative findings reported, especially in terms of the impact of the WebQuest on helping them reflect on and write about Chilean culture (question 4).

Although some of the students claimed to have a limited view on Chilean culture before the start of the WebQuest, their overall attitude toward Chilean culture was positively affected by the completion of the project. Two of their comments clearly reflect their openness and "readiness to suspend disbelief" (Byram, 1997, p. 50):

... there was a positive change on my perspective after learning the culture and seeing how diverse the people were. The project helped me explore what the country had to offer. (student 2)

... after completing the project, I would say that my views on Chilean culture are more positive. After doing research about its historical ruins, social movements, and religion, I would say that my views changed because I learned more. (student 22)

Similarly, another student highlighted the value of the task in helping her relate previously-learned knowledge with the new knowledge, while making it become more authentic. As she put it,

There was a little change in my views, but overall the project replayed things I had already learned about or slightly heard about. The project was good in the sense that it made what I had heard a reality. It made these things more plausible. (student 4)

The students also manifested being aware that other cultures have parallel but different modes of interaction. This was reflected by such comments as “In Chile it seems that everyone takes part in dancing and in America people are often too embarrassed to dance and self-conscious, especially men in American culture” (student 6).

Discussion

As shown in the previous section, the qualitative results of the study provide some insight regarding the students’ beliefs about Chileans, their interest in learning about Chilean culture, and the effectiveness of using WebQuests as authentic tools for cross-cultural understanding. Although less noteworthy, the quantitative results of the study were statistically significant. In particular, they indicate that there was a considerable difference ($p < 0.05$) between the test value (3=neutral) and students’ mean responses to the following questions: the stimulating nature of the WebQuest (question 1), the impact of the WebQuest on their willingness to take up opportunities to further interact with Chileans (question 2), the impact of the WebQuest on their willingness to seek out opportunities to further explore the Chilean culture (question 3), and the impact of the WebQuest on helping them reflect on and write about Chilean culture (question 4). This suggests that students tended to be open and ready to learn about as well as reflect on Chilean culture through the use of this particular WebQuest.

Although the students’ responses on the Likert scales may have differed significantly from “neutral,” the practical significance of this finding should be interpreted with caution since, in all cases, the difference was only a fraction of a point. Students’ mean responses do not indicate that, on average, they were in strong agreement with the statements in the survey. Moreover, they do not reflect that students agreed that the WebQuest had enabled them to reflect on and write about their own culture. Perhaps the students’ perceptions were influenced by the fact that the WebQuest was assigned as homework at the beginning of the semester, which might have affected their motivation in completing the various tasks.

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Particularly interesting were some students' comments specifically about how much they learned from the WebQuest experience. While one student wrote "although the web quest [sic] is a creative approach to exploring different countries and learning about them, I feel as though I get the same information if I just read it out of a text book," another student expressed: "Overall I enjoyed this assignment because we were asked to dig deeper and learn more about Chile than we would from just one book." This discrepancy in students' opinions reflects the diversity in students' preferences instructors encounter in their classes. Although not all students might enjoy completing tasks such as this WebQuest project, their incorporation into our curriculum design may help add variety to the textbook activities while motivating our students to learn more about Hispanic countries (Levi Altstaedter & Jones, 2009).

Conclusion

Curricular designs that include tasks aimed at developing students' intercultural understanding can be an effective component of foreign language teaching. WebQuests can offer instructors the chance to present students with authentic tasks that not only promote positive attitudes toward the new culture but also encourage students to place themselves in a different context. Thus, students can reassess their own values and compare and contrast them to those of the target culture.

In this sense, through the design of WebQuests aimed at fostering intercultural language learning, which, according to Liddicoat, Crozet, and LoBianco (1999) "involves the development of a third place between native linguaculture and the target linguaculture, between self and other" and thus help the student "move beyond what s/he perceives and to discover how s/he functions within cultural boundaries (p. 181).

Although the results of this study shed some light into students' perceptions of WebQuest tasks in the college foreign language class, they could be enhanced by changing the overall structure of the WebQuest, choosing a different final task, and/or turning the WebQuest into an in-class group project. Additional work should be undertaken assessing the depth with which students reflected on the importance of comparing and contrasting their own culture to others, the value that the students assigned to completing the WebQuest tasks, and the effect of other WebQuest formats on their motivation and willingness to compare and contrast their own culture to that of others. Particularly, the WebQuest format could be enhanced by giving students specific instructions, such as identify three products, practices, and perspectives, and compare them to those of the United States. Also, students could be assigned different roles and encouraged to negotiate meaning among themselves by giving them a concrete problem to solve. For example, instructors might ask students to resolve a real-life situation by giving each group member a different set of roles to perform. A comparison with another group of non-WebQuest users would also be interesting.

Beyond WebQuests, college instructors might collaborate to incorporate a lesson on intercultural learning into established units. Moreover, they might increase their competences in the area by reviewing the main current didactic and methodological

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approaches adopted to foster the development of intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom, such as cooperative learning, debate, e-tandem learning, and telecollaboration, all of which could be incorporated into the teaching of literatures and cultures and may serve as a good supplement to the WebQuest model (Thorne, 2006).

Further research in foreign languages should look into how to measure intercultural competence among foreign language students. In other words, more studies are needed not only to measure how students tend to think and feel about cultural differences, but also to explore possible ways to help them acquire a certain level and/or degree of intercultural competence.

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Appendix

Chile: Un viaje por el "Cometa Marino" A Short-term WebQuest for Intermediate Spanish Students

Designed by Marina Falasca

Introduction | Task | Process | Evaluation | Conclusion | Credits

Introduction

You have been offered a grant to visit the Spanish speaking country of your choice. After meeting with the grant administrators, you choose Chile. You will be responsible for keeping a personal journal and sharing it with the rest of your classmates when you return. Good Luck!

The Task



You will be in Chile for 3 days, so you will write a minimum of 3 journal entries. Your journal will record what is happening to you and those around you. In addition, you will provide details so that the grant administrators and your classmates will know exactly what you were experiencing during the trip. You will also compare the aspects researched on Chile to those of the U.S.. Your journal entries will be in Spanish and at least 2 paragraphs long. They will be organized in a booklet and/or diary form for potential publication.

The Process

1. Click on the links below and research the country thoroughly. Use at least **five websites** and evaluate each, assessing their usefulness and validity for this project. Click here to access and print out the **website evaluation form**: <http://lrs.ed.uiuc.edu/students/tbarcalow/490NET/PrintRubric.htm>

This portion of the assignment can be completed in English and will be handed in separately from the journal, but you must turn in 5 completed **web evaluation forms** *with* your journal. This will be part of your self-evaluation assignment (see step # 5).

Location

Ubicación Geográfica de Chile: http://www.geocities.com/copihue_chile/ubicacion.htm

Ubicación de Chile en el Mundo: <http://www.welcomechile.com/donde/>

Geography

Geografía de Chile: http://www.profesorenlinea.cl/swf/links/frame_top.php?dest=http://www.profesorenlinea.cl/Chilegeografia/GeografiaChile.htm

Acerca de Chile y su Geografía: [http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geograf % C3 % ADa_de_Chile](http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geograf_%C3%ADa_de_Chile)

Government

Gobierno de Chile: <http://www.gobiernodechile.cl/index/index.asp>

La Nueva Presidenta de Chile: http://es.wikinews.org/wiki/Michelle_Bachelet_es_la_nueva_presidenta_de_Chile

Tourist Attractions

Turismo en Chile: <http://mapasdechile.com/turismo/index.htm>

Turismo de Aventura: <http://www.terra.es/personal/pevalper/turismo.html>

Food

Cocina a la Chilena: http://www.chile.com/tpl/articulo/detalle/ver.tpl?cod_articulo=1408

Gastronomía de Chile: http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gastronomía_de_Chile

2. In addition to the websites, you may look at pp. 204-05 in your Imagina book.
3. Summarize the information gathered in the form of a concept map. Write your concept maps in Spanish and keep the grammar and vocabulary as simple as

Using WebQuests to Develop Intercultural Competence

possible. For information on how to create a concept map, click on the following:
http://www.inspiration.com/vlearning/index.cfm?fuseaction=concept_maps

4. Write each of your 3 journal entries in Spanish and organize them into a final booklet and/or diary. Use the following check list to make sure you have included everything:
 - Did I include all the required journal entries?
 - Is my journal put together in a creative manner - such as in a booklet format?
 - Can my reader get a feeling of what I experienced throughout my trip?
5. After you have written all 3 journal entries, write a one-paragraph self-evaluation for each of the following questions. The answers to these questions can be written in English. They must be turned in separately, but make sure you submit them together with your journal and each of the 5 website evaluation forms.
 - How have my own views of Chile been transformed by this project?
 - Did I make good use of my time in completing this WebQuest?
 - Did I access and evaluate at least five websites? Did I find the website evaluation form useful? Why/Why not?
 - If I were to do this same project again, what would I do differently?

Evaluation

Your **concept map** will be assigned a holistic score on a scale of 1-10. It will be evaluated based on the following:

Appropriate Labeling of Concepts

- * Concepts should not be longer than three words.
- * The arrangement of concepts should be hierarchical, moving from general to specific.
- * Concepts should not be repeated on a map. A repeating concept should be represented by a cross-link.

Appropriate labeling of linking words

- * Does the map show a clear distinction between concepts and links?
- * Is the link between two concepts meaningful?
- * Does the link correctly represent the relationship?
- * Can complete ideas be traced through several links?

Adequate branching

- * The map is highly branched.
- * The map demonstrates developing skill.

Cross-Linking of Concepts

- * Map shows sufficient cross-links between concepts.
- * Cross-links show that you know how multiple ideas are connected.

Your **journal** will be evaluated according to the following **rubric**. Please, check it out before you start writing.

Category	Beginning 1-2 points	Developing 3-6 points	Accomplished 7-8 points	Exemplary 9-10 points	Final Score
Journal Entry	Journal entries are in English and/or less than two paragraphs long.	Journal entries are in Spanish. They meet the criteria of two paragraphs with few grammatical mistakes. All verbs are in the appropriate tense.	Journal entries are in Spanish and at least two paragraphs long. There are few to no grammatical mistakes. The verbs are in the appropriate tense.	Journal entries are in Spanish and at least two paragraphs long. The paragraphs are clear and concise. Descriptions are developed and detailed. There are few to no grammatical mistakes. The verbs are in the appropriate tense.	
Format	No format was used.	Part of the journal entries were written in a creative format.	The format could be developed further.	All journal entries were written in the required creative format (e.g., book/diary).	
Points Earned					

Your **self-evaluation assignment** and each of the 5 **website evaluation forms** are worth 10 points total.

Conclusion

You have undertaken a wonderful journey. Not only have you learned about Chile and its location, geography, government, food, and tourist attractions, but you have also been able to record your impressions and experiences in writing. Now it is time for you to share your insights with others. Have fun exchanging journals with your classmates!

Credits & References

- The picture was obtained from: <http://gosouthamerica.about.com/>
- The idea for evaluating concept maps came from: <http://www.ttuhsu.edu/SOM/success/DHPS/Concept%20Map%20Module.htm>
- The criteria for evaluating concept maps was adapted from: <http://cuip.uchicago.edu/~aetyagi/2004/rubric.htm>

Last updated on January 15, 2009. Based on a template from
The WebQuest Page

Promoting L2 Reading in Less Commonly Taught Languages with Hypertexts

Theresa Catalano, *University of Arizona*

ABSTRACT:

This study explores the use of hypermedia reading texts for the language classroom and more particularly for less commonly taught languages (LCTLs). In the article, I review relevant research on the use of hypertexts in the foreign language classroom and how they can be used to facilitate the teaching of reading. A qualitative study of the use of these hypertexts with Italian university students was conducted, along with an explanation of what hypertexts are available for LCTL teachers currently, and how teachers can create their own hypertexts and implement them in the classroom. The study suggests that although hypertexts have not been proven to improve reading comprehension, they can still be a useful tool in promoting L2 reading.

INTRODUCTION

Finding appropriate and engaging ways to teach reading can be challenging. Teaching reading has many different components such as activating previous knowledge of the subject, introducing new vocabulary, testing comprehension of the main idea, and understanding cultural references. Teachers must incorporate all of these aspects into reading lessons and at the same time motivate students to read on their own. While it is often difficult to find appropriate and interesting reading materials for students of foreign languages, this problem is multiplied for teachers of less commonly taught languages (LCTLs) such as Arabic, Korean, Japanese, Italian, Portuguese, and others. The use of hypermedia texts (or hypertexts) is one way teachers can enhance

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Hypertexts can be utilized not only to clarify, explain, and illustrate the meanings of words and expressions, but also to explain rhetorical, socio/cultural, historical, and other concepts embedded in the text.

the teaching of reading. Hypertexts can be utilized not only to clarify, explain, and illustrate the meanings of words and expressions, but also to explain rhetorical, socio/cultural, historical, and other concepts embedded in the text. This article will provide evidence that hypertexts, if implemented properly, can be a useful tool in the teaching of reading strategies and vocabulary acquisition and will demonstrate how teachers can create, access, and implement hypertexts in their language classrooms in order to promote L2 reading.

BACKGROUND

Hypertexts are texts containing references (links) to additional information and material that can be accessed immediately. In the case of this study, the texts include links to multiple forms of media (thus hypermedia) such as graphics, video, and audio. When students read the texts, they can click on blue words in the text (textual glosses) to see a definition or a picture describing the word, and green buttons (extra-textual glosses) to gain additional information about the text. These links facilitate students' understanding of the texts as shown below in Figure 1.

La mia migliore amica si chiama Lisa e vive a Roma. Noi ci conosciamo da piccole, e sempre facciamo tutto insieme. Lisa è alta, bionda e ha gli occhi blu – una classica italiana vero? Lei è molto bella e quando usciamo i ragazzi sempre la disturbano. Lisa ha 19 anni e ha appena finito la scuola superiore. Adesso sta lavorando al negozio di abbigliamento di sua sorella. Si chiama «Capriccio» e si trova vicino al Vaticano. Fare la commessa è un ottimo lavoro per Lisa visto che le piace un sacco la moda. Lei adora abbinare i vestiti e la sua passione preferita è fare shopping. Quando non sta lavorando o facendo shopping, esce con il suo ragazzo, Corrado, e fanno le passeggiate a Piazza di Spagna o a Villa Borghese. Qualche volta esco con loro e andiamo a prendere un gelato insieme o vedere un film. Lisa è un'amica fantastica perché quando ho bisogno di qualcosa, lei sempre mi aiuta. Ci raccontiamo tutto e lei mi dà consigli su che vestiti devo mettere. Lisa è figlia unica, quindi per lei sono la sorella che non ha mai avuto. Spero che siamo amiche per sempre.

Vatican - home of the pope

What is the Piazza di Spagna?

What is la passeggiata?

What is the Villa Borghese?

Figure 1. An example of an Italian Hypertext

Current models of reading demonstrate that efficient readers are able to successfully coordinate both bottom-up and top-down reading processes (Anderson, 2003 as cited in Usó-Juan & Ruiz-Madrid, 2009, p. 73). Bottom-up skills refer to using

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knowledge of the language to interpret lexical and syntactic structures. These skills constitute the decoding of written symbols, starting with smaller segments, syllables, and words, and proceeding to larger units — clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. Alternately, top-down processes focus primarily on text gist, background knowledge, or discourse organization and are associated with attending to higher level cues. Examples of commonly identified top-down strategies include recognizing main ideas, integrating scattered information, drawing on inference or recognizing text structure, among others (Usó-Juan & Ruiz-Madrid, 2009, p. 60). In the hypertexts created for this study, both textual glosses (bottom-up) and extra-textual glosses (top-down) were incorporated into each text.

The Mental Effort Hypothesis (Hulstijn, 1992) provides another basis for the use of hypertext and hypermedia glosses. This hypothesis claims “when students want to increase their vocabulary or have to learn new words for a test, they invest the necessary mental effort and memorize the words until they know their meanings” (Koren, 1999). Therefore, if readers exert more effort into processing new words, this new information learned will then go into long-term memory depending on the amount of processing required when the word was encountered. Incidental learning, in contrast, does not involve a conscious effort to learn vocabulary. This learning “just happens” (but not often). That is to say, “the number of new words learnt incidentally is relatively small compared to the number of words that can be learned intentionally” (Koren, 1999). With incidental learning, learners are able to acquire vocabulary through exposure to words in meaningful contexts, without conscious effort, and as a consequence of accomplishing a task such as reading for pleasure (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). Unfortunately, incidental vocabulary learning is a slow process because students do not pay attention to words they do not know, skip over them, are not exposed to the words enough to learn them, or do not retain the meaning of the words (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996; Rott, Williams, & Cameron, 2002). If there is minimal effort and processing, then the word is more likely not to be kept in long-term memory and is likely not to be acquired (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001; Rott et al., 2002). Because hypertext and hypermedia glosses provide information about words and expressions, at the same time requiring some effort on the part of the reader, they may promote incidental vocabulary learning.

Several other important theories that provide a theoretical basis for the creation of hypermedia reading texts are Paivio’s (1990) Dual Coding Theory and Mayer’s (2001) Generative Theory of Multimedia Learning. Paivio’s Dual Coding Theory of cognition posits that verbal and non-verbal (visual) information is processed differently and represented separately during processing. In addition, both verbal and non-verbal representations are used to organize incoming input into knowledge that can be stored and retrieved for future use. Mayer suggests that when this verbal and visual input are provided through a multimedia presentation, the learner chooses relevant information, words, and images, and organizes them separately into verbal and visual models (Mayer, 2001, p. 41). Connections are then

...when [...] verbal and visual input are provided through a multimedia presentation, the learner chooses relevant information, words, and images, and organizes them separately into verbal and visual models

established to create a coherent mental structure. In the verbal model, discrete, linear information is provided, while in the visual model, holistic nonlinear information is given. Learning takes place when the two models are integrated into the knowledge structures already in memory (Mayer, 2001). Mayer also proposes that since verbal and visual information are processed separately, interaction between the two channels can cause information to transfer from one to the other, and learners will be actively involved in the construction of knowledge. This implies that providing both visual and verbal glosses in a reading text that allows readers to be actively involved (by clicking on the words) can facilitate processing. However, Mayer also suggests that each channel has a limited capacity, and that information must be presented in a way that does not overload working memory.

Much research has been carried out on the effects of hypertexts on reading comprehension and vocabulary learning. With regard to vocabulary learning and acquisition, studies have suggested beneficial effects of providing visual and verbal glosses at the same time. For example, Plass, Chun, and Leutner (1998) found that students performed better on vocabulary posttests when they selected verbal and visual annotations as opposed to just one mode of information (Ariew, Ercetin, & Cooledge, 2008). When they did not select any annotations their performance was worse. In addition, Chun and Plass (1996) found that learners of Spanish did better on vocabulary tests when they used glosses with text plus pictures as opposed to text-only glosses or glosses with text plus videos. The positive effects of providing verbal and visual (pictures or video or both) information together on vocabulary learning and evidence for multiple representations of information have been confirmed in more recent studies (Plass, Chun, Mayer, & Leutner, 2003; Yeh & Wang, 2003; Yoshi & Flaitz, 2002) as well.

According to Ariew et al. (2008), “the link between hypertext annotation and comprehension is elusive.” In a study conducted by Ariew and Ercetin (2004), data were collected from 84 intermediate- and advanced-level adult English as a Second Language (ESL) learners using a tracking tool that recorded the amount of time readers spent on a given annotation. This tracking device was used to keep a record of the types of annotations the reader chose to view, the amount of time the reader spent on viewing the annotations, and the number of times the annotations were accessed. Results showed that annotation use did not facilitate reading comprehension for either group, while prior knowledge (knowledge the reader has about the subject before reading the text) had a significant positive impact on reading comprehension for both groups. However, for the intermediate group, there was a significant negative relationship between reading comprehension and the time spent on video annotations. The authors proposed that this was caused by what is referred to as the “short-circuit hypothesis” (Clarke, 1988), which claims that limited proficiency can lead to the use of poor reading strategies: the intermediate group relied too much on the video annotations to understand the text whereas the advanced learners combined other learning strategies with the annotations and consequently did better on the comprehension test.

Although overall quantitative analysis from Ariew and Ercetin’s study (2004) did not demonstrate improvement in reading comprehension due to the annotations, qualitative analysis revealed that participants perceived the annotations to be useful and

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that they had a positive impact on their attitudes toward reading on the computer. In a similar study conducted by Sakar and Ercetin (2005) in Turkey, participants were given a reading comprehension test that they completed while they read a text. Participants took notes while reading and used their notes while answering the comprehension questions and did not have access to the text. Qualitative data indicated that pronunciations of words were preferred significantly less and videos were preferred significantly more than all other types of annotations. Thus, the learners consistently preferred visual information (i.e., graphics and/or videos), which suggests that participants perceived visual annotations to be most vital for text comprehension. Interviews showed that most participants considered visual annotations to be important because they were interesting and motivating. However, the investigation of the relationship between reading comprehension and annotation use showed a negative correlation of reading comprehension with the frequency of access to annotations and the amount of time spent on annotations. Another recent study conducted in Turkey investigated the effects of types of multimedia learning on advanced learners (Akbulut, 2005 as cited in Ariew & Ercetin, 2008). While results showed positive effects of annotations on vocabulary learning, again, there was no significant difference found between the two groups tested in terms of reading comprehension scores.

Several recent studies support the above findings but also report other benefits of hypermedia texts. According to Usó-Juan and Ruiz-Madrid's (2009) study of English language learners, hyper-readings foster the use of more top-down and bottom-up strategies while demonstrating no effect on reading comprehension. In addition, when given the choice between an on-screen or paper version of the text, 68% of participants preferred the online option. In Abraham's (2008) meta-analysis of 11 studies of computer-mediated glosses in second language reading comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning, evidence was provided for the beneficial role of computer mediated text glosses in providing lexical support on comprehension of authentic L2 readings and vocabulary learning. A final study by Zumbach (2006) demonstrates that learners who prefer an active, problem-oriented and self-directed way of learning benefit from the less-structured hypermedia learning environment.

HYPERTEXTS AND LESS COMMONLY TAUGHT LANGUAGES

Research so far has been able to demonstrate that there are many benefits of the use of hypermedia for second language (L2) reading. While there is little evidence that hypertexts improve reading comprehension, the benefits of student enjoyment and increased vocabulary learning and the application of strategies are good reasons to use such texts, and students generally feel that they benefit from them. This is important because if students believe that the hypertexts are helping them learn the language, they may then spend more time reading and thus improve their reading as a by-product. According to Rifkin (2003), if "more of the students will be sufficiently engaged and energized in the learning

While there is little evidence that hypertexts improve reading comprehension, the benefits of student enjoyment and increased vocabulary learning and the application of strategies are good reasons to use such texts, and students generally feel that they benefit from them.

process to want to continue for a longer period of time...students will thus attain higher proficiency levels in one or more modalities than they would have if they had stopped the learning process earlier” (p. 53). Rifkin lists this as an affective goal that leads indirectly to a cognitive goal and includes this as one criterion to justify the use of technology in the classroom.

Another reason for the creation of hypertexts by teachers of LCTLs is that original materials selected and prepared for classroom use are rare for many LCTLs. While language teachers of Spanish or other commonly taught languages have numerous options for finding reading texts or hypertexts, LCTL teachers do not. LCTL teachers who have the know-how and the time to create their own hypertexts can do so (more on this later) but many teachers prefer to have access to ready-to-use ones. There are a few free sites available with reading texts for practice, some of which are hypertexts, but the quality is variable and they are usually aimed at beginners (see www.iluss.it for Italian, <http://learningchineseonline.net/> for Chinese, and www.shariahprogram.ca for Arabic). For this reason, the Center for Educational Resources, Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL) at the University of Arizona has undertaken a Hypermedia Project for LCTL languages. CERCLL is a Title VI Language Resource Center funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It focuses on culture, language, and literacy in LCTLs and is associated with the University of Arizona’s Second Language Acquisition and Teaching (SLAT) Program. Hypertexts are currently available on the project’s website for Italian, and hypertexts in Arabic were made available in late 2010 with plans for German and Portuguese in the future. CERCLL is collaborating with NMEELRC (National Middle East Language Resource Center) at Brigham Young University to make software available for hypermedia creation in a broader range of languages, including a version for Chinese and Japanese, and these texts will be available in the near future.

Currently L2 Italian texts (four for each of three proficiency levels) are available on the website for free use by instructors. Additional materials were created to accompany one Italian text (pre- and post-reading activities) for each level. These materials (to be discussed in detail later) while ready-to-use, have been made to serve as examples/suggestions for how teachers can create lesson plans based on the reading texts. To access the texts and their materials, visit <http://www.hypermedia.cercll.arizona.edu> or go to CERCLL’s homepage at www.cercll.arizona.edu and click on PROJECTS, then HYPERMEDIA.

Studies on hypermedia texts suggest that the design and implementation of hypermedia or hypertext materials are important factors in reading comprehension.

THE CERCLL TEXTS

Studies on hypermedia texts suggest that the design and implementation of hypermedia or hypertext materials are important factors in reading comprehension. The manner of access of annotations, their presentation, and the way the software behaves may also have an impact on readers’ comprehension (Ariew, Ercetin, & Cooledge, 2008, p. 61). Therefore, it is necessary to explain in detail the types of texts available and the possible ways in which they could be implemented in the classroom.

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The twelve Italian texts currently available on the website¹ (see Appendix B for English translations of the texts that appear in this article) are divided into three levels: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. The texts are meant to be used by students as homework or extra practice, and students may use their home computers or those in the the lab to do so.

The beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels are rough indicators of the level of difficulty of the texts.² The beginning texts are based on popular themes for beginning students such as eating at a restaurant (an actual menu is the text), describing a friend and her hobbies, writing to a pen pal about his/her hometown and its problems, and a Facebook page of an Italian university student. Each text is about a computer screen in length and includes one pre-reading activity that provides contextualization. This serves to tap into the learner's prior knowledge as research has shown this to be extremely important in top-down processing (Devine, 1988). Additionally, each text is followed by a "gisting" activity in which students demonstrate their comprehension of the main idea of the text. The variety of other available pre- and post-reading activities will be discussed in detail later.

Intermediate texts consist of a description of an unusual festival in Italy, an interview with two famous showgirls (known as *le veline* in Italy), a popular Italian singer's autobiography (Tiziano Ferro), and a young Italian soccer star (Mario Balotelli). Finally, the advanced texts include the story of Barack Obama's inauguration as viewed by Italians; two excerpts from Tahar Lamri's *I sessanta nomi dell'amore*, a collection of stories based on the life of immigrants living in Italy; and the true story of an Italian student studying at the University of Arizona. All texts are original and created by CERCLL hypermedia staff and friends, with the exception of Tahar Lamri's work and the transcript of the interview with the showgirls, both used with permission. Visit <http://hypermedia.cercll.arizona.edu/Students.php> to view the texts in detail.

The glosses consist of textual glosses (blue words in the text) and extra-textual glosses (green buttons). Students can click on the glossed words as they read. The blue words were decided on by distributing sample texts to random students at the appropriate level and asking them to circle the words they did not know. If the words were concrete and easy to identify through a picture (i.e., *gelato* [ice cream]), graphics were chosen to accompany a definition in English. If the words were more abstract concepts (i.e., *discorso* [speech]), the words were annotated only with text (the definition in English). As a result, when students click on the blue words they may see the definition in English (see Figures 2 and 3 on the next page).

The glosses take into account current models of reading (mentioned earlier) that incorporate bottom-up and top-down processing. To incorporate top-down processing, extra-textual glosses were provided. When students click on the green buttons to the right of and below the text, they are accessing extra information about the text that includes rhetorical, socio/cultural, historical, and other concepts embedded in the text (see Figure 4 on page 9).

Students can access the texts through the web site. Additional pre- and post-reading activities are suggested in the teacher section of the website. These activities prepare students for reading and provide additional comprehension and expression activities after reading. Teachers can choose pre- and post-reading materials to accompany one

10 gennaio, 2009

Cara Tylee,

Ciao Tylee, **come va?** Mi piace il tuo nome – è originale. Mi chiamo Mario Rossi e **vivo** a Raiano. Raiano è un **piccolo paese** negli **Appennini** in **Abruzzo**, ed è molto bello. La mia famiglia è composta da cinque persone: mio padre, mia madre, le mie **sorelle** e io. Le mie sorelle sono **più** grandi di me. La **più grande** vive a **Roma** e studia all'università **La Sapienza**. L'altra sorella **lavora** al supermercato qui a Raiano. Io **vado pazzo** per il calcio e **gioco** ogni giorno con i miei amici.

Appartengo a una squadra che non **vince mai** ma mi piace ancora. Io mi **alleno** quattro volte alla settimana e sono molto occupato ma ancora **trovo** il tempo per studiare. Nel mio paese ci sono **tanti** immigrati, molti di cui sono **clandestini**. **Purtroppo** molti vivono in **povertà**. **Siccome** è molto difficile **ottenere** un **permesso di lavoro**, spesso lavorano come **venditori di strada**. Io penso che sia una situazione molto triste. Ci sono molti immigrati nella tua città? **Da dove vengono?**

Che pensi di questo argomento?

Scrivimi presto,
Mario

I live

Where do immigrants in Italy come from?

Figure 2. Student has clicked on the word *vivo* [I live]. A text gloss appears in the blue box.

Or, they may see the text and an accompanying graphic:

La Trattoria Teresa **si trova** nel **cuore dell' Abruzzo** 20 km da Teramo.

Chi arriva alla Trattoria Teresa ha l'opportunità di gustare una **cucina** tradizionale e tipicamente **abruzzese**, fatta di prodotti caserecci e di alta qualità.

La **scelta** e la preparazione dei **piatti** è svolta dalla signora Teresa (da cui il ristorante prende il nome) e lo chef Luigi che, **malgrado** la sua giovane età, è famoso in tutta la regione per **vincere** numerosi **concorsi gastronomici**.

Il nostro locale spazioso e **ben arredato** è **capace di ospitare** oltre 100 persone ed è perfetto per una **cena romantica**, o cene con gli amici, ma è anche ideale per feste private, cene **aziendali**, eventi particolari o **banchetti**.

Ecco il nostro menù:

Antipasti:
Bruschette **miste**
Tagliere di insaccati abruzzesi
Ricotta **caprino** su radicchio
Mozzarella di bufala
Verdure **gratinate** e **grigliate**

Primi piatti:

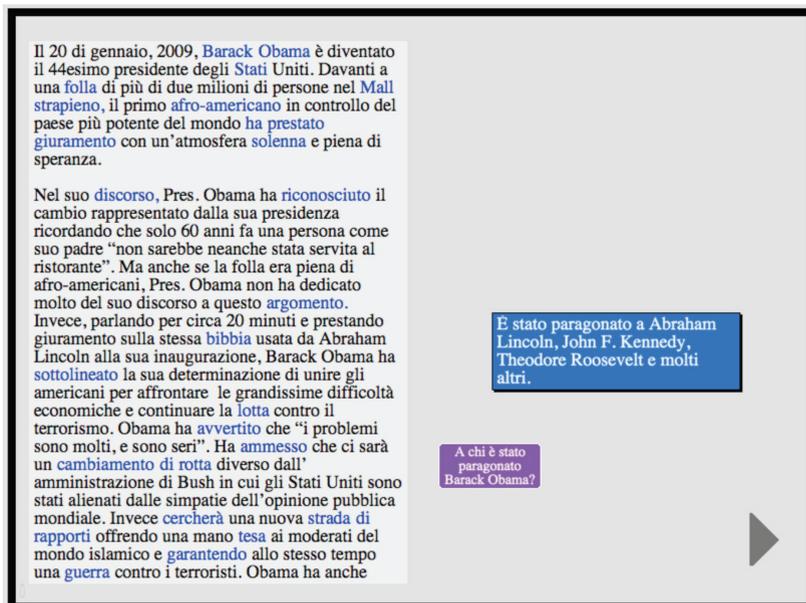


coldcuts

Figure 3. Student has clicked on the word *insaccati* [cold cuts]. An image appears as well as a text gloss.

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text from each level of the Italian texts. The three texts that include accompanying materials are *Il Menù*, (a real menu from an Italian restaurant), *Festa* (the story of a festival in Italy), and *Un Italiano a Tucson* (the story of an Italian student studying at the University of Arizona) (follow this link to find the texts: <http://hypermedia.cercll.arizona.edu/Students.php>). The pre-reading materials (located by clicking on the PRE (pre-reading) button on the website or <http://hypermedia.cercll.arizona.edu/teachers.php>) are meant to be used before the students read the texts (during class time), and they include vocabulary, grammar, culture, and expressions. Teachers can preview the materials, and then decide if they want to download and use them in their actual lesson plans. The materials come with handouts and include PowerPoints for in class presentations. If teachers do not have access to a projector to show PowerPoint presentations, alternative suggestions are included (such as the use of an overhead projector, or of a chalk/whiteboard). Some examples of pre-reading activities include the game of Jeopardy (with vocabulary words from the text); videos from www.youtube.com that go along with the texts; games involving student movement, art and music; grammar practice explanations and exercises and dialogs (see <http://hypermedia.cercll.arizona.edu/pre.php> for details). Post-reading activities (<http://hypermedia.cercll.arizona.edu/post.php>) include creating posters, commercials, comprehension questions, blogs, the creation of student-made songs/raps, artwork, and discussion questions and games. Although activities have only been created for some of the Italian texts, teachers can apply the examples provided to their own texts.



The screenshot shows a web page with Italian text. The text is divided into three paragraphs. The first paragraph describes Barack Obama's inauguration on January 20, 2009, mentioning a large crowd at the Lincoln Memorial and his role as the first African American president. The second paragraph discusses his inaugural address, noting that he recognized the change represented by his presidency and mentioned his father. The third paragraph talks about his economic policies, his stance on terrorism, and his approach to international relations. A blue callout box on the right side of the page contains the text: "E' stato paragonato a Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, Theodore Roosevelt e molti altri." Below this box is a smaller purple box with the text: "A chi è stato paragonato Barack Obama?". A grey arrow points to the right at the bottom right of the page.

Il 20 di gennaio, 2009, Barack Obama è diventato il 44esimo presidente degli Stati Uniti. Davanti a una folla di più di due milioni di persone nel Mall strapieno, il primo afro-americano in controllo del paese più potente del mondo ha prestato giuramento con un'atmosfera solenne e piena di speranza.

Nel suo discorso, Pres. Obama ha riconosciuto il cambio rappresentato dalla sua presidenza ricordando che solo 60 anni fa una persona come suo padre "non sarebbe neanche stata servita al ristorante". Ma anche se la folla era piena di afro-americani, Pres. Obama non ha dedicato molto del suo discorso a questo argomento.

Invece, parlando per circa 20 minuti e prestando giuramento sulla stessa bibbia usata da Abraham Lincoln alla sua inaugurazione, Barack Obama ha sottolineato la sua determinazione di unire gli americani per affrontare le grandissime difficoltà economiche e continuare la lotta contro il terrorismo. Obama ha avvertito che "i problemi sono molti, e sono seri". Ha ammesso che ci sarà un cambiamento di rotta diverso dall'amministrazione di Bush in cui gli Stati Uniti sono stati alienati dalle simpatie dell'opinione pubblica mondiale. Invece cercherà una nuova strada di rapporti offrendo una mano tesa ai moderati del mondo islamico e garantendo allo stesso tempo una guerra contro i terroristi. Obama ha anche

E' stato paragonato a Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy, Theodore Roosevelt e molti altri.

A chi è stato paragonato Barack Obama?

Figure 4. Student has clicked on the button in the middle of the screen. Additional information appears in the blue box.

The texts (*Menù*, *Festa*, and *Italiano*) also feature more pre- and post-reading activities incorporated into the hypermedia (see <http://hypermedia.cercll.arizona.edu/Students.php>). Instead of just introducing the theme, these texts provide cultural information with some of the new words available in the target language with audio glosses so students can hear them.

Cultural References Click on the blue words to hear them pronounced.

In Italy, those who want to enjoy a good meal go to a restaurant or trattoria that specializes in homemade (**caserecci**) products. When ordering a meal in Italy, the appetizer (**antipasto**) is ordered first, and can be anything from marinated vegetables (**verdure**) to cold cuts (**insaccati**) or toasted bread with tomatoes

Figure 5. Cultural References

This is followed by more new vocabulary words with accompanying audio and pictures.

Fruit and vegetables Click on the blue words to hear them pronounced.

<p>la macedonia fruit salad</p> 	<p>le fragole strawberries</p> 
---	--

Figure 6. New Vocabulary Words

After reading these three texts, students are able to answer more multiple-choice questions about the text and complete a summary type activity online.

THE PILOT STUDY AND EVALUATION OF THE HYPERMEDIA TEXTS³

The beginning Italian hypertexts were piloted in May 2009 at the University of Arizona. Participants were students of four different Italian 101 and 102 classes, and the total number of participants was 73. Students were assigned homework to complete one of the beginning texts (of their choice) and accompanying pre- and post- reading materials, and then to fill out an online evaluation questionnaire. The evaluation form included instructions on how to access the hypermedia reading materials and the

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Statement	Strongly Disagree 1	2	3	4	Strongly Agree 5	Total Agree	Neutral	Total Disagree
1. The texts were interesting.	0%	4%	32%	53%	11%	64%	32%	4%
2. The materials helped me improve my Italian.	0%	8.2%	28.8%	41%	0%	63%	28.8%	8.2%
3. The materials were easy to understand and use.	1.4%	4.1%	16.4%	27.4%	50.7%	78%	16.4%	5.5%
4. The materials were fun and engaging.	1.5%	6.8%	38.4%	38.4%	15.1%	53.5%	38.4%	8%
5. The materials were challenging.	5%	18%	34%	33%	10%	43%	34%	23%
6. The program was easy to use.	2.7%	2.7%	13.7%	24.7%	56.2%	80%	13.7%	5%
7. I had no trouble getting the program to work.	17.8%	9.6%	13.7%	16.4%	42.5%	59%	13.7%	27%

evaluation questionnaire. The questionnaire included items rating the hypermedia texts on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

EVALUATION RESULTS

Although the results of these evaluations can in no way attest to the effectiveness of the hypermedia texts, they can attest to the usefulness of the materials in motivating students to read. The majority of students agreed that the texts were interesting (64%) and that they improved their Italian by using them (63%). Students also said they were easy to understand and use (78%) and were fun and engaging (53.5%); they had no trouble getting the program to work (59%). The students who did say they had trouble getting the program to work commented that their problems were due to not having the required plug-in for their browser. While only 43% of the students agreed that the materials were challenging, answers to number (8) and (9) (to be discussed shortly) revealed that it was not the texts that were not challenging, but the accompanying questions. Students wanted more comprehension questions, and they wanted them to be more difficult. As a result, the accompanying materials designed later for the classroom included a larger number of more difficult comprehension questions. Questions (6) and (7) were comments made by the students as to what they liked and

what suggestions they had for improvement. A summary of the comments is listed below:

What They Liked:

It was easy for me to understand.

The Facebook page.

Clicking on the blue words/ the pictures/ the definition function

The texts were of a variety of subjects and related to everyday lives/ the texts were relevant/ the content/ use of everyday common language/ words I use in my own speech

How helpful it was/ I liked how it actually helped me with my Italian, I enjoyed it.

Learning new vocabulary

It had a personal feel to it.

The interactive text/ the interactiveness of the program

You had a chance to think about the answer and how it translates in Italian.

It was helpful to keep the flow of reading and not have to stop to look up a word or give up.

Suggestions For Improvement:

Too many definitions

Not enough definitions/ need more translations

More challenging questions at the end/ more questions/ more difficult questions

Website difficult to get to/ trouble loading the program/ it took forever to load/ make easier to use

Better page design

Run mouse over blue words instead of clicking

The comments revealed numerous things that students liked about the hypertexts. First, many students commented that they enjoyed clicking on the blue words to get the picture or definition and the fact that they did not have to stop the “flow of reading” to look up a words. Second, many students noted that they enjoyed learning new vocabulary and words they use in normal speech as well as the fact that the texts related to their everyday lives. In general, students perceived that the texts helped them learn Italian and they enjoyed its interactivity. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, some students commented on the need to improve the design of the template and include more challenging questions, and some students had trouble downloading the program and using the plug-ins.

Overall, students thought that they benefitted greatly from the use of the hypertexts and enjoyed using them as long as they did not have trouble getting them to work. However, many students commented on the texts themselves and it is the combination of high quality, authentic texts, and the use of the hypermedia that they enjoyed. Had the texts themselves not been good, results might have been different. Therefore, we can conclude that hypertexts can be useful tools in teaching L2 reading, in particular for LCTLs that do not have as many materials available for students, but the quality of the hypertexts themselves makes a difference.

CREATING YOUR OWN HYPERMEDIA TEXTS

Teachers can of course, create their own hypertext/hypermedia documents in the same way they create web pages. A hyperlink can lead to a gloss in any language. The disadvantage of this method is that students must navigate away from the document to the gloss while reading. Using a hypermedia text editor (HME) avoids this issue. The free FLAn (Foreign Language Annotator) found on the site <http://redhotwords.com>, is an alternative to hyperlinks and can be used by teachers to create their own hypertexts. This site provides easy-to-use directions and tutorials for inserting texts and creating glosses using the FLAn. Previous versions of FLAn supported only roman character sets; however, as of September, 2010, there are new versions that support a broader range of languages, including a version for Chinese and Japanese. In addition, as mentioned earlier, CERCLL (in collaboration with Brigham Young University) will make software available for Chinese and Japanese texts (as well as others) in the near future.

Regarding the creation of the actual stories/readings, it is important to choose texts that students can relate to, and that they feel are relevant to their everyday lives. Many of the students commented that the CERCLL texts contained language they could find/use in everyday life, and that there was a variety of subjects. Even presentation of a Facebook profile page was fascinating to students. For teachers creating readings for their own classes, it may be useful to look for blogs about subjects the students are studying on the web to get ideas, and to do Google searches by typing in specific phrases in quotations (e.g.—“a good movie I saw”). When using pictures or texts adapted from the web, it is important to avoid issues of copyright infringement. This can be done by avoiding copyrighted graphics or text, or by simply writing to the authors for permission to use them.

Regarding the creation of the actual stories/readings, it is important to choose texts that students can relate to, and that they feel are relevant to their everyday lives.

Another aspect of designing one's own hypermedia reading materials is deciding which words to gloss and how many of them to gloss. Generally, since beginning readers benefit the most from passive looking-up behaviors (Xu, 2009) it is a good idea to gloss a large number of words for beginners, and a much smaller number for advanced students. In order to find out which words should be glossed, teachers should distribute a copy of the plain text to students, and ask them to circle or underline the words they do not know. Teachers should then choose the words that were circled by the majority of the students.

CLASSROOM INTEGRATION

Lastly, the design of the accompanying pre- and post-reading materials is important in order for teachers to be able to properly integrate the reading texts into their units of study. Pre-reading materials need to introduce new vocabulary and grammatical concepts, and use them in context. Additionally, they should activate prior knowledge of the subject matter and can include games, videos, artwork, and PowerPoint presentations. Post-reading materials should include activities to find the main idea (gist), summarize the material, answer comprehension questions, and give their reactions to the reading (expressions), and create their own texts (pastiche).

Teachers may use the hypertexts in several ways. The first way is to simply assign the readings as extra practice that accompanies a particular chapter or unit theme. For example, in the case of the Italian hypertexts, students were assigned the text *Menù* while working on the unit on food. They were then asked to create their own menus with a partner and bring them to class the next day using the hypertext as an example. Of course teachers could have just assigned them any website with menus, but because students were beginners, the hypertext helped them read without getting frustrated by not knowing enough words. Another example is with the text *Amica* [friend]. At the time of this assignment, students had just finished learning about adjective agreement. They were assigned the hypertext *Amica* and were then asked to write in their journals about their best friend. Students used the text as a model for their own writing. Again, one could argue that a printed text could do the same thing, but one needs to consider the fact that many of today's students prefer doing things online, or at least having the option of not always using printed texts, and thus were more likely to complete the assignment. Teachers were aware that students did the reading because they tended to use words and phrases in their writing that they adopted from the hypertext (not to mention the few that just copied directly from the hypertext).

A second way to incorporate the hypertexts that focuses on reading strategies is to use the pre- and post- activities in class. Teachers should introduce the text with selected pre-reading activities in class and then assign the text for homework (or complete the text together in a computer lab if available or with students' laptops if they have them). The following day selected post-reading activities would be completed in class. Using the texts in this way maximizes their benefit by activating prior knowledge, facilitating vocabulary and grammar acquisition, and comprehension of the texts. Certainly teachers do not have time to spend two whole days on a reading every week but even once a month (depending on the frequency of the class) would be an excellent way to make sure that reading skills are being fostered in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

This paper has identified how hypertexts can be useful tools in teaching L2 reading, and how LCTL teachers can either create their own materials or access the www.cercll.arizona.edu website to obtain ready-to-use hypertexts and accompanying materials for Italian and Arabic as well as other LCTL languages in the near future. In addition, teachers must understand that more important than what technology they use in class is how it is implemented. Teachers should create reading lessons that incorporate technology and at the same time, be careful to include pre- and post-reading activities designed to maximize the benefits of the hypertexts or integrate them into classroom units or themes as extra practice.

While the research reviewed for this paper does not demonstrate that hypermedia texts improve reading comprehension, it has demonstrated that they can facilitate vocabulary acquisition, improve use of reading strategies, and that students prefer them to paper texts. This in turn results in improved motivation and attitudes about reading in a foreign language. Results from this study support the fact that students enjoy hypertexts and that they foster a favorable attitude of L2 reading and can be useful for LCTL teachers who have a hard time finding reading materials for their

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classroom. Since many teachers are often searching for activities that students find engaging, good hypertexts can provide an interesting and fun alternative to textbook texts and aid LCTLs in promoting L2 reading.

NOTES:

1. The Adobe Shockwave plug-in is necessary to download these texts from the CERCLL website and Firefox is the preferred browser.
2. Criteria for determining the level of texts was determined by the author (an experienced Italian teacher) after consulting the appropriate textbooks to determine the vocabulary and grammatical structures covered for each level.
3. A copy of the questionnaire given to students can be found in Appendix A.

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APPENDIX A

CERCLL Hypermedia Reading Project Italian Materials evaluation form

Circle the number that best corresponds with how you feel about the reading materials:

The texts were interesting.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

The materials helped me improve my Italian.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

The materials were easy to understand and use.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

The materials were fun and engaging.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

The materials were challenging.

strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly agree

What I liked most was:

Suggestions for improvement of the materials:

APPENDIX B

TRANSLATIONS OF SCREEN SHOT TEXTS

Figure 1. Translation of *Amica* [Friend]

My best friend's name is Lisa and she lives in Rome. We have known each other since we were young and we always do everything together. Lisa is tall, blond, and has blue eyes – a classic Italian right? She is very beautiful and when we go out boys always bother her. Lisa is 19 and just finished high school. Now she works in her sister's clothing store. The store's name is "Capriccio" and it's near the Vatican. Being a salesperson is an optimal job for Lisa given that she loves fashion. She adores matching up outfits and her favorite passion is shopping. When she isn't working or shopping she goes out with her boyfriend, Corrado, and they take walks at the Spanish Steps or Villa Borghese. Sometimes I go out with them and we have ice cream together or go see a movie. Lisa is a fantastic friend because whenever I need something she always helps me. Lisa is an only child, so for her, I'm the sister she never had.

I hope we are friends forever.

Figure 2. Translation of *Amici di Penna* [Pen Pals]

Dear Tylee,

Hi Tylee, how's it going? I like your name – it's original. I'm Mario Rossi and I live in Raiano. Raiano is a small town in the Appenine Mountains in Abruzzo, and it's very beautiful. My family is made up of five people: my father, my mother, my sisters and I. My sisters are older than me. The oldest one lives in Rome and is studying at La Sapienza University. The other sister works at the supermarket here in Raiano. I am crazy about soccer and I play every day with my friends. I belong to a team that never wins but I still like it.

I train four times a week and I'm very busy but I still find time to study. In my country there are many migrants, many of which are undocumented. Unfortunately many are living in poverty. Since it's very difficult to get a work permit, they often get work selling things on the street. I think it's a very sad situation. Are there many migrants where you live? Where are they from? What do you think about this issue?

Write soon,

Mario

Figure 3. Translation of *Menù*:

The Trattoria Teresa is located in the heart of Abruzzo, 20 km from Teramo.

Those who have the chance to dine there have the opportunity to taste typical traditional Abruzzese cuisine, made of homemade high-quality products.

The menu selection and preparation is carried out by Signora Teresa (from whom the restaurant gets its name) e Chef Luigi who despite his young age is famous throughout the region for winning numerous gastronomy (cooking) contests.

Our spacious locale is well decorated and capable of hosting more than 100 people and is perfect for a romantic dinner or dinner with friends, but also ideal for private parties, business dinners, special events and banquets.

Here is our menu:

Appetizers:

Bruschette

Cold cuts from Abruzzo

Goat ricotta on radicchio

Mozzarella di bufala

Grated and grilled vegetables

First courses:

Figure 4. Translation of *Barack Obama*:

On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama became the 44th president of the United States. In front of a crowd of more than two million people in the over-crowded Mall, the first African- American in control of the most powerful country in the world was sworn in with a solemn atmosphere full of hope.

In his speech, Pres. Obama recognized the changed represented by his presidency remembering that only 60 years ago a person like his father “wouldn't even have been served at the restaurant”. But even though the crowd was full of African-Americans,

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Pres. Obama didn't dedicate much of his speech to this issue. Instead, talking for about 20 minutes and swearing on the same bible used by Abraham Lincoln in his inauguration, Barack Obama emphasized his determination to unite Americans to confront the great economic challenges they are facing and continue the fight against terrorism.

Obama warned that "the problems are serious, and there are many". He admitted that there will be a change of approach from the Bush administration in which the United States were alienated from the sympathy of the world's public opinion. Instead, he will try to forge new relationships extending a hand to moderates in the Islamic world and guaranteeing at the same time a war against terrorists.

Obama still has...

The Effect of Powerpoint and Nongraphic Paired List Presentations on the Vocabulary Production and Recognition of Elementary-Level College French Students

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of presenting images via PowerPoint (PPT) and nongraphic paired lists to teach vocabulary. In this study nongraphic paired list (PL) refers to a list of French words paired with their English equivalent. The study, conducted with 38 elementary-level college students, examined their recall performance for written production and visual recognition of French vocabulary words. Students were taught French vocabulary via PPT and nongraphic PL presentations. Quantitative results indicated a significant difference between participants' mean immediate test scores favoring the PPT condition for both written production and visual recognition. The study also investigated participants' instructional perceptions of and preferences for either approach in being taught French vocabulary. Qualitative findings revealed that students expressed a marked preference for learning vocabulary with the PPT approach.

Introduction

The past decade has seen an explosion in the use of technology in all fields. The latest technologies such as document cameras, touch screen projectors, high-speed Internet connection, Blackboard and PPT, are now prevalent in many academic settings in the United States. Because the technologies appeal to visual and auditory senses, they are selected as preferred presentational modes to engage audiences and

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present information quickly and concisely. In several institutions of higher learning in the United States, courses on creating and using PPT presentations are taught to encourage both instructors and students to use the technology effectively.

Despite the wide use of this form of input enhancement and the attempts by several foreign language (FL) textbooks to include ready-made PPT presentation modules in their ancillaries, many FL instructors continue to use nongraphic PL to teach vocabulary.

Despite the wide use of this form of input enhancement and the attempts by several foreign language (FL) textbooks to include ready-made PPT presentation modules in their ancillaries (Mitschke, Tano & Thiers-Thiam, 2007; Jansma & Kassen, 2000), many FL instructors continue to use nongraphic PL to teach vocabulary. However, few studies have experimentally explored and compared the two forms of input on learners' vocabulary acquisition. In addition, the number of studies on the effectiveness of PPT as a pedagogical tool is relatively small.

The purpose of the present study is to fill the current gap in the literature. The study investigated the effectiveness of PPT and nongraphic PL presentations on the written production and visual recognition of vocabulary by elementary-level

French students. Furthermore, it examined students' instructional preferences for and general beliefs about the use of either approach to teach French vocabulary.

Review of the literature

PowerPoint presentations and learning

In a case study, Brandford and Wilson (2003) explored the usefulness of PPT presentations on high school students' motivation and oral skills development in a target language. As part of the project, students were required to give five-minute oral presentations over a period of six months. At the end of the treatment, they answered an open-ended questionnaire to assess the effectiveness of PPT presentations. Results of the study indicated that students benefitted from the project and were quite "surprised by the amount of target language they were able to produce" (p. 20). The authors concluded that the PPT presentations were a key factor in motivating students to speak and improve their oral skills in the target language (TL).

In a different study also involving high school students, Perry (2003) examined how PPT presentations about the content of a literary research paper, prior to completion of the paper itself, would prompt students to (1) learn how to conduct research, (2) start their research project sooner, (3) hone their public speaking skills, (4) improve cooperative learning, and (5) enhance their computer skills. At various stages during the treatment, students were interviewed and answered surveys in which they explained the extent to which the project helped them in the five areas of investigation. Results indicated that students made considerable progress in all five areas. In their survey responses, students confirmed the findings and acknowledged that PPT presentations were beneficial in helping them achieve all of the above-mentioned goals. Results led the researcher to conclude that "requiring students to create and present a PowerPoint project in addition to writing a research paper is an effective means of organizing research assignments for high school students" (p. 68). The researcher also added,

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“when teachers can make the learning process more enjoyable, students will always benefit” (p. 69).

Although these studies have only begun to explore the efficacy of PPT presentations in the classroom, none of them have investigated the potential power of large-scale visual presentations afforded by PPT to learn vocabulary.

Pictures and language learning

In 1979, Omaggio was the first to investigate the impact of pictures on FL acquisition. In her pioneering study, she explored the reading comprehension of psychology and French students under three textual conditions: no text, English text, and French text; and six pictorial contexts: no visual context, single-object drawing related to story, picture depicting the scene from the beginning of the story, picture depicting a scene from the main portion of the story, picture depicting a scene from the end of the story, and a series of three pictures. Students received one of the six pictorial contexts in all three textual conditions. Reading comprehension was assessed by summarizing the text in English and by completing a 20-item vocabulary test. Results of the study indicated that the use of pictures did not affect students' reading comprehension when the text was in English but did, when the text was in French. It appeared that students' viewing of pictures prior to reading the text in French positively impacted their reading comprehension. The results led the author to conclude “a picture of some kind had a significant impact on comprehension of the text, but only when the passage was read in the second language” (pp. 114-115).

Omaggio's study prompted other researchers to explore the effects of various visual and multimedia enhancements on language growth. Those studies include, but are not limited to, Terrell (1986), Underwood (1989), Oxford and Crookall (1990), Neuman and Koshinen (1992), and Jones (2004).

For instance, Terrell's (1986) binding theory suggests that for words to be acquired, they have to be ultimately associated with meaning and not translation. To illustrate his point, he discussed how his teaching of the word *paputsia* (shoes) in Greek by way of pointing to his own shoes and later on via images prompted his students to evoke several associative techniques to understand the word (p. 214). His binding construct indicates that cognitive and affective mental processes that directly link meaning to form positively affect language learning. Oxford and Crookall (1990) echoed the same sentiment. They argue that greater depth of processing is facilitated when pictures and text are combined. Paivio's dual coding theory (1971, 1986) also accentuated these theoretical constructs. His dual coding theory suggests that combining cognitive verbal and non-verbal (imagery) representations during instruction offers an additive advantage to language processing.

While these concepts have been tested in reading comprehension and other forms of input enhancement, they have not been investigated with presentational approaches that combined PPT and nongraphic PL presentations.

In light of the review of literature the present study addressed the following questions:

1. When tested immediately after instruction, do the written production and visual recognition performance of elementary-level French students differ

when they are taught French vocabulary in a PPT or in a nongraphic PL condition?

2. What are students' overall instructional preferences and general beliefs about the use of either approach in being taught French vocabulary?

Methodology and Research Design

Participants

The study was conducted with 38 students in a public university in the southern United States. Participants in the study were enrolled in elementary French (first semester). Initial data were collected for 65 students. However, a decision was made by the researchers to include only participants who were present at all immediate tests and who scored less than 70% on pretests. Including students who scored above 70% at pretest would not have allowed researchers to measure the potential impact of treatment.

All participants were undergraduate students majoring in various fields, including business, sciences, and the humanities. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 28 years. Of the 38 students, 10 (26.3%) were freshmen, 15 (39.5%) were sophomores, 10 (26.3%) were juniors, and one (2.6%) was a senior. Eleven (28.9%) were male and 25 (65.8%) were female. Thirty-three (86%) reported English as their first language while 3 (7.9%) reported another language as their primary language. All participants were non-native speakers of French. Two students did not report their demographic information. However, because they were present at all testing, their scores were included in the analyses.

Setting

Classes met twice a week for 75 minutes for 15 weeks. Students learned French via the instructional program *Espaces* (Mitschke, Tano & Thiers-Thiam, 2007). The textbook contains nongraphic PL in French and English. Sometimes the vocabulary is presented with pictures and the corresponding words in French. Both textbook and workbook contain an array of communicative activities that check understanding of texts and cultural units for each chapter. Teacher resources include online PPT presentations to teach grammar.

General procedures

The study investigated two sets of vocabulary: clothing and accessories (*les vêtements et les accessoires*) and items in the kitchen (*les objets dans la cuisine*). These two sets of vocabulary are normally introduced in second-semester French. However, for the duration of the study, the researchers chose to modify the first semester curriculum to ensure that, while the study was conducted, students did not familiarize themselves with vocabulary words in the first chapters of their textbook. The selection of second semester vocabulary also minimized students' potential knowledge of words and provided a better framework for the study.

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Testing and scoring procedures

Pretests. A week prior to the beginning the study, students were provided with a background instrument that was used to obtain demographic information, such as gender, native language, previous experience with French, and exposure to other foreign languages. In addition, to test students' prior knowledge of targeted vocabulary words, a 15-item vocabulary pretest was conducted one week before instruction of each vocabulary set. The pretest involved recognition and written production of words.

Immediate tests. Immediately following instruction in the PowerPoint and the nongraphic PL condition, written production and visual recognition tests were administered to students (see The Teaching Procedures section for further discussion of immediate testing). The tests differed in format from pretests.

Posttest. Qualitative posttests were administered at the end of the study. Participants were asked to answer open-ended questions and to explain their instructional preferences and general beliefs of the use of either approach (see Appendix C for open-ended questions).

Scoring. Students' responses for all written production pretests and immediate tests were evaluated on a 1-point scale for each item; a half-point was allowed per correct article and a half-point for correct spelling; a half-point was deducted for an incorrect article and a half-point was deducted for incorrect word spelling; a maximum of 15 points per vocabulary set was possible.

Participants' responses to all visual recognition tests were evaluated on a 1-point scale for each item. In contrast to the written production test where students were to produce in writing both article and word, there was no production involved with the recognition test as students were asked either to match English words to French equivalents or to match pictures to corresponding French words; therefore, a half-point could not be allocated as both paired English and French words or words and pictures were not treated as separate entities; a maximum of 15 points was possible per vocabulary set.

The researcher and a second scorer, not involved in the experiment, independently scored the tests. Both researcher and independent scorer were in complete agreement.

Teaching procedures. Students received vocabulary instruction on 15 clothing and accessories words and 15 kitchen words using both PPT and nongraphic PL presentations. The words used in both conditions were identical. The number fifteen was chosen because it is the number commonly utilized in vocabulary studies (e.g. Carr & Mazur-Stewart, 1988; Markham, 1989; Rodriguez & Sadoski, 2000; Smith, Miller, Grossman, & Valeri-Gold, 1994, Sildus 2006). Researchers on vocabulary recall also suggest that word selection be based on frequency and relevance to the selected topic (De-Groot & Keijzer, 2000; Feldman & Healy, 1998; Nation, 2001; Sildus, 2006; Sousa, 2001). Both vocabulary sets selected for this study are relevant and frequently appear in French textbooks.

The teaching procedures were fully integrated into participants' classroom activities. Prior to the beginning of the study, instructors received lesson plan scripts for targeted vocabulary words. There were four instructors in the study. Of the four, two were female and two were male. Two were non-native and two native speakers

of French. The primary investigator demonstrated how to teach the words in both the PPT and non-graphic PL conditions. Furthermore, she held a practice session with each instructor to ensure consistency of instruction among instructors and was also present at all teaching sessions to observe instructors' adherence to the lesson plan scripts.

At the onset of the study, one group of students received instruction on clothing and accessories in the nongraphic PL condition while the other group was instructed on clothing and accessories in the PPT condition. Four weeks later, students who received instruction on clothing and accessories in the nongraphic PL condition received instruction on kitchen words in the PPT condition; students who previously received instruction of clothing and accessories in the PPT condition now received instruction on kitchen words in the nongraphic PL condition. The teaching of vocabulary words alternated between the two instructional conditions. This type of within-subjects design, referred to as an equivalent time samples design, allows for equal representation of each participant in each condition; it is a design that is also effective in controlling individual differences.

In the PPT condition, vocabulary words and corresponding images in color were introduced and taught via PPT. The instructor introduced the purpose of the lesson in the following manner: *Aujourd'hui nous allons parler de vêtements et d'accessoires. Regardez les images et répétez après moi* [Today we are going to talk about clothing and accessories. Look at the images and repeat after me]. After the vocabulary topic was orally introduced, the instructor clicked on the mouse and a colored picture of a handkerchief was projected onto the screen together with the corresponding French word written below the picture. Students chorally repeated the word *un mouchoir* once in French after their instructor. Teaching of the additional 14 vocabulary items continued in the same manner. Furthermore, during the entire presentation, words using masculine articles were highlighted in blue and words using feminine articles were highlighted in red. Words using masculine articles were taught first, followed by words using feminine articles. Prior to moving from masculine to feminine words, the instructor signaled transition by saying *Attention* [Pay attention!]. The presentation lasted about 10 minutes.

Following instruction, the PPT presentation was turned off and immediate testing followed. To minimize possible rote memorization, the vocabulary words were rearranged and listed in a different order from the initial presentation (Sildus, 2006). In addition, the written production test was administered first, followed by the visual recognition test. The production test consisted of writing the French word and its corresponding article below the picture that represented the word. The visual recognition test required students to match the French word to its corresponding image (see Appendix A for a sample of immediate tests in the PPT condition).

In the nongraphic PL condition, each student received a page with paired words in two columns respectively; in one column there were words in French and in the second were the English equivalent of the French words. Students also received a blank index card to cover all the words. The instructor introduced the topic of the lesson in French and stated: *Aujourd'hui nous allons parler de vêtements et d'accessoires. Regardez la paire de mots de vocabulaire en français et en anglais sur votre liste et répétez*

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seulement le mot en français après moi [Today we are going to talk about clothing and accessories. Look at the paired vocabulary words in French and English on your list and repeat only the French word after me]. The instructor demonstrated by moving the index card to show the first pair of words. Students also moved the index card to display the first pair, *un mouchoir*/ a handkerchief. The instructor said: *un mouchoir* and students chorally repeated the French word once after it was introduced. Students then moved the index card below the second pair of French and English word, and the teaching of the additional 14 vocabulary words continued in the same manner. As in the PowerPoint condition, during the entire presentation, words with masculine articles were highlighted in blue while words with feminine articles were highlighted in red. Masculine words were presented first and feminine words second. Prior to moving from masculine to feminine words, the instructor signaled transition by saying *Attention* [Pay attention]! The presentation also lasted about 10 minutes.

After choral repetitions of all vocabulary words, students returned both list and blank index card to their instructor and immediate testing followed. As in the PPT condition, the written production test was administered first, consisting of writing the French word and its corresponding article below the English word. The visual recognition test consisted of matching the French word to its English equivalent (see Appendix B for a sample of immediate tests in the nongraphic PL condition).

Instructional and testing formats were identical in both conditions. Both the production and recognition tests selected for this study are the types of tests recommended by Nation (2001). The only place where testing and instruction differed was in the use of images in the PPT condition and French words with their English equivalent in the nongraphic PL condition.

Results

Preliminary analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare participants' mean total pretest scores before the beginning of the treatment. The comparison of participants' total means indicated that there was no statistically significant pretest difference among students for written production, $F(3, 34) = .366, p = .778$ or at visual recognition of clothing and accessories vocabulary words $F(3, 34) = .451, p = .718$. The same results were observed for kitchen vocabulary words. There was also no statistically significant pretest difference among participants at written production, $F(3, 34) = .350, p = .790$ or at visual recognition, $F(3, 34) = .452, p = .717$.

Test of Research Questions

Question 1: When tested immediately after instruction, do the written production and visual recognition performance of elementary-level French students differ when they are taught French vocabulary in a PPT or in a nongraphic PL condition?

A paired t test was conducted on test scores to evaluate the immediate impact of PPT and nongraphic PL instruction on students' written production and recognition of vocabulary words.

For the written production, test results indicated that the mean for immediate vocabulary test scores when students were taught vocabulary words in the PPT condition was significantly greater than the mean for immediate vocabulary scores when students were taught the same words in a nongraphic PL condition , $t(37) = 2.07$, $p = .045$, $\eta^2 = 0.34$.

For visual recognition, test results indicated that the mean for immediate vocabulary test scores when students were taught the vocabulary words in a PPT condition was significantly greater than the mean for immediate test scores when students were taught the identical words in a nongraphic PL condition , $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = 0.52$. Table 1 displays test scores means and standard deviations by condition.

Table 1. Total vocabulary immediate tests ($N = 38$)

Immediate test scores	PowerPoint condition	Nongraphic Paired list condition
Production	$M = 6.18, SD = 2.65$	$M = 5.15, SD = 2.46$
Recognition	$M = 10.39, SD = 4.03$	$M = 7.55, SD = 3.63$

Question 2: What are students’ overall instructional preferences and general beliefs about the use of either approach in being taught French vocabulary?

The response to this question was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitative results

Descriptive statistics results indicated that 29% (11 students) of participants preferred to be taught French vocabulary with nongraphic PL while 50% (19 students) indicated that they preferred to be taught French vocabulary with PPT. When asked which condition helped them best remember the vocabulary words, 30% (11 students) credited the nongraphic PL condition while 47.4% (18 students) indicated that PPT presentations was most beneficial. One student (2.6%) indicated that a combination of both nongraphic PL and PPT was most helpful for recalling vocabulary words. Overall, students’ responses were consistent with their quantitative scores at immediate testing. When asked what condition they would use if they were French instructors, 13.2% (five students) stated that they would use a nongraphic PL presentation, 34% (13 students) indicated that they would use PPT presentations, and 31.6% (12 students) stated that they would use both PPT and nongraphic PL conditions. Eight of the participating students were absent at qualitative posttests and could not answer the open-ended questions.

Qualitative results

The participants’ written responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed and coded. Responses coalesced into two groups: (a) instructional preference to teach French vocabulary and reasons for such responses, (b) overall perceptions on the use of either approach to teach French vocabulary in general.

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Responses to instructional preference to teach French vocabulary

PowerPoint preference. In their open-ended responses, the majority of students expressed a marked preference for the PPT condition. Most students felt that the word and picture association contributed to their success. One student explained, "I like this [PowerPoint] better because it was easier to associate pictures with words." The "easy" factor was a recurring theme in students' responses. There was also a general consensus among students that individual learning styles played a role in their responses. Several students admitted that they were visual learners and preferred to be taught with images. The following student's comment echoed their sentiment: "I am a visual learner and I like things that way." Another student alluded to the use of colorful images and the role it might have played in remembering the targeted vocabulary. She stated: "I could remember the words and articles because I remembered seeing the pictures and colors.... The PowerPoints were better because there were pictures, words, and colors to help me remember. Color is beneficial to memory and there is only one word per slide which makes it easier to learn that word and move on." There were also comments about the "fun" and engaging impact of PPT presentations. One student explained, "I like the PowerPoint presentations because they are more fun and encouraged more students' participation and engagement."

Nongraphic paired list preference. The few students who preferred the nongraphic PL condition also credited it for facilitating their learning of vocabulary. Some stated that having the French words next to their English equivalent made learning easier. One student said: "The two words together helped more than seeing the pictures." Other students commented on how having the vocabulary words readily in front of them was beneficial for learning and maintaining focus during instruction. A student observed, "I get distracted by the pictures and I think the paired list [nongraphic PL] worked well for me," while another wrote, "I learned better having the word right in front of me on paper."

Overall perceptions on the use of either approach to teach French vocabulary in general

Students' overall perceptions and beliefs suggested that they prefer the PPT presentations. However, it was interesting to note that when asked what they would do if they were French instructors, a number of students were reluctant to choose one or the other approach and chose both instead. A recurrent reason stated for this choice by students was that they "learned differently."

Discussion

The present study compared the effectiveness of PPT and nongraphic PL presentations on the written production and visual recognition of vocabulary by elementary-level French students. Results indicated that when taught thematic French vocabulary PPT presentations, students' written production and visual recognition of vocabulary words were significantly

Results indicated that when taught thematic French vocabulary PowerPoint (PPT) presentations, students' written production and visual recognition of vocabulary words were significantly superior in the PPT condition than in a nongraphic paired list condition.

superior in the PPT condition than in a nongraphic PL condition.

One can argue that because the vocabulary words were brought to life in the form of large-scale images, learning was better in the PPT condition. This finding is congruent with Terrell's binding construct (1986). In this study, the translation of vocabulary words from French to English did not seem to have aided students retain the words at immediate testing. However, students' cognitive skills appeared to have been deepened when taught in the PPT condition with no translation and only with images and words. The word and image association facilitated the binding process. Images were directly linked to their meaning without recourse to translation. As students were hearing, repeating, and seeing graphic representations of targeted words, they could quickly make the necessary mental connections that ultimately led them to a better performance at immediate testing.

Given the study's findings, it is reasonable to argue that the mental translations from French into English and back into French in the nongraphic PL condition may have slowed down the quick processing of words and hence impacted immediate learning. It is also possible that the act of translating back and forth may have added an additional burden in processing, a burden that could not be easily lifted at immediate testing. It appears that in the PPT condition, with the absence of words in English and a direct focus on images and their French equivalent, students were able to pay more attention to the visual and written representations of the words. Findings of this study support Omaggio's conclusion that indicated that pictures do impact comprehension only when they are used with a text written in a target language (1979).

Results of this study are also congruent with other studies that demonstrated that words are better remembered and comprehended when they are associated with images than text alone (Underwood, 1989, Oxford & Crookall, 1990). In the PPT condition

... words are better remembered and comprehended when they are associated with images than text alone.

the "text" consisted of vocabulary words written in French below the image. It appears that the combination of images and words facilitated greater depth of processing and access to various parts of the brain. In the nongraphic PL condition however, the "text" consisted of a pair of a French word and its English equivalent presented alone. There were no images, only French words paired with their English equivalent. The

results suggest that in the absence of images, students were not able to reach the same depth of processing as they were with PPT. The use of English in the nongraphic PL condition did not appear to have been an effective substitute to the visual stimuli utilized in the PPT presentation. Results of the study are also consistent with Paivio's dual coding theory (1971, 1986). As previously explained, the theory posits that the verbal and non-verbal systems present in memory and cognition can function independently. However, Paivio also argues that the two systems can also interconnect and when they do interconnect, learning is richer and more meaningful. In both the nongraphic PL and the PPT conditions students were verbally presented words by their instructor, which they repeated chorally. However, the addition of non-verbal objects, i.e., images, in PPT appear to have provided a further advantage. The interconnections of the non-verbal and verbal systems that occurred with students using PPT may have led to a more successful learning of vocabulary words.

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This study also sought to capture and incorporate students' voices in order to gain a deeper perspective on two presentational approaches: PPT and nongraphic PL presentations. The qualitative results supported, expanded, and explained the quantitative results. Students overwhelmingly preferred to be taught French vocabulary with PPT presentations. These results are not surprising considering the fact that today's students are constantly surrounded by technology that enhances and makes ample use of abundant visuals. The majority of students also stated that the PPT presentations were more helpful than the nongraphic PL presentations in recalling the vocabulary words. According to brain scientist Medina (2008), human beings are incredible at remembering pictures and remember 10% of what they hear but 65% of what they see. In the PPT presentations, students heard and saw. The combination of the two simultaneous activities allowed them to better focus their attention. Both students' voices and immediate performances speak to the benefits of the visually engaging learning experience afforded during PPT instruction.

Limitations and conclusion

First, setting and adherence to curriculum made it extremely difficult to break apart existing classes, let alone to randomly select participants to conduct experimental research. As a result, findings of this quasi-experimental study cannot be generalized to all beginning-level French students.

Secondly, this study was conducted in a controlled classroom environment and focused on the immediate impact of PPT and nongraphic PL instruction. Further studies might investigate the long-term effect of these two approaches on students' vocabulary retention. They might also explore how students' own involvement in the creation of animated and motionless PPT might affect their written learning of vocabulary words. There is also a need for research that would explore the use of color in PPT presentations and nongraphic PL. It would be worthwhile to replicate this investigation with both black and white and colored pictures to determine the potential role of color in learning.

The current study also limited itself to thematic concrete words. Future studies might investigate the impact of PPT and nongraphic PL presentations on various learning styles.

Despite the limitations of this study, this investigation fills a void in the research on FL and instructional technology. It is also an important step in building classroom-based research on the effectiveness of PPT presentations as an effective pedagogical and technological tool to learn vocabulary. Although several textbooks continue to present nongraphic PL vocabulary without regard to their effectiveness, instructors can now choose to present the same information via PPT and by so doing, facilitate learning vocabulary by their students. PPT presentations not only provide visual reinforcement but they allow information to be thematically organized, stored and recycled; they save instructional time and drastically reduce the need or temptation to use English in the classroom. Some of the pedagogical techniques used in the study can easily be applied in the classroom to enhance vocabulary learning. They are:

- (1) keeping the PPT presentation brief;

- (2) presenting only one picture per slide at a time;
- (3) writing below each image both word and article in the TL;
- (4) engaging students in choral repetition of vocabulary words.

In addition, though the following technique was not used in the study to limit the number of confounding variables in the study, PPT can also be used to review words or to engage students in follow-up questions and further discussions.

This study provides evidence suggesting that PPT presentations are an important variable in learning vocabulary words in a target language. Further, the combined quantitative and qualitative designs used to explore the research questions afforded empirically rich content in which to ground claims about the effectiveness of PPT in a FL context. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the chain of FL classroom-based research on the effectiveness of technology.

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Appendix A

Sample of immediate production and recognition tests in the PowerPoint condition

Les objets dans la cuisine: (PowerPoint condition tests)

Immediate production test # 1

Écrivez **CLAIREMENT** sous l'image le mot de vocabulaire qui correspond en français. Écrivez l'article (*un* ou *une*) et le mot de vocabulaire. [Please LEGIBLY write under the image the corresponding vocabulary word in French. Write both the article (*un* or *une*) and the vocabulary word in French.]



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____



7. _____



8. _____



9. _____



10. _____



11. _____



14. _____



12. _____



13. _____



15. _____

Please turn in immediate test # 1 first and then collect immediate test # 2.

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Les objets dans la cuisine: (PowerPoint condition tests)

Immediate recognition test # 2

Faites correspondre l'image au mot français SVP! [Please match the picture to the French word.]



1. _____



6. _____



11. _____



2. _____



7. _____



12. _____



3. _____



8. _____



13. _____



4. _____



9. _____



14. _____



5. _____



10. _____



15. _____

a. un balai
b. une assiette
c. un verre
d. un couteau
e. un tapis

f. une cuillère
g. une fouchette
h. un frigo
i. une cafetière
j. une serviette

k. un aspirateur
l. un four
m. une bouilloire
n. une casserole
o. une tasse

Please turn in immediate test #2. Merci!

Appendix B

Sample of immediate production and recognition test in the paired list condition

Les objets dans une cuisine: (Nongraphic paired list condition test)

Immediate production test # 1

Ecrivez CLAIREMENT en français le mot de vocabulaire français qui correspond au mot anglais. Ecrivez l'article (un ou une) et le mot de vocabulaire en français. [Please LEGIBLY write the French word that corresponds to the English word. Write both the article (*un* or *une*) and vocabulary word in French.]

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------|-------|
| 1. A napkin | _____ | _____ |
| 2. A coffeemaker | _____ | _____ |
| 3. An oven | _____ | _____ |
| 4. A cup | _____ | _____ |
| 5. A broom | _____ | _____ |
| 6. A kettle | _____ | _____ |
| 7. A rug | _____ | _____ |
| 8. A fork | _____ | _____ |
| 9. A glass | _____ | _____ |
| 10. A spoon | _____ | _____ |
| 11. A cooking pot | _____ | _____ |
| 12. A plate | _____ | _____ |
| 13. A vacuum cleaner | _____ | _____ |
| 14. A refrigerator | _____ | _____ |
| 15. A knife | _____ | _____ |

Please turn immediate test # 1 in first and then collect immediate test # 2.

Les objets dans une cuisine: (Nongraphic paired list condition test)

Immediate recognition test # 2

Faites correspondre le mot anglais au mot français SVP! [Please match the English word to the corresponding French word.]

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. ___ A rug | a. un balai |
| 2. ___ A glass | b. une assiette |
| 3. ___ A spoon | c. un verre |
| 4. ___ A fork | d. un couteau |
| 5. ___ A plate | e. un tapis |
| 6. ___ A broom | f. une cuillère |
| 7. ___ A knife | g. une fourchette |
| 8. ___ A kettle | h. un frigo |
| 9. ___ A napkin | i. une cafetière |
| 10. ___ A cooking pot | j. une serviette |

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- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 11. ___ A refrigerator | k. un aspirateur |
| 12. ___ A coffeemaker | l. un four |
| 13. ___ A cup | m. une bouilloire |
| 14. ___ An oven | n. une casserole |
| 15. ___ A vacuum cleaner | o. une tasse |

Appendix C

Open-ended survey questionnaire

1. You were taught French vocabulary through PowerPoint presentations and Non-graphic paired lists conditions. Which instructional approach did you prefer to be taught vocabulary in? Please indicate your preference by circling one answer and by briefly explaining your choice.
 - a. Nongraphic paired lists
Briefly explain your choice.
 - b. PowerPoint Presentations
2. In your opinion which instructional condition helped you best remember the vocabulary words?
 - a. Nongraphic paired lists
Briefly explain your choice.
 - b. PowerPoint presentations
3. In your opinion are there any advantages to using PowerPoint presentations to teach French vocabulary?
 - a. Yes
 - b. NoBriefly explain your choice.
4. In your opinion are there any disadvantages to using PowerPoint presentations to teach French vocabulary?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No.Briefly explain your choice
5. In your opinion are there any advantages to using nongraphic paired lists to teach French vocabulary?
 - a. Yes
 - b. NoBriefly explain your choice.
6. In your opinion are there any disadvantages to using nongraphic paired lists to teach French vocabulary?
 - a. Yes
 - b. NoBriefly explain your choice.
7. If you were a French instructor which instructional approach would you use to teach vocabulary:
 - a. PowerPoint presentations
Briefly explain your choice
 - b. Nongraphic paired lists?

A Case of Computer-Mediated Communication and Multimedia Integration: Breaking Classroom Barriers with More Input and Opportunities to Communicate.

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Abstract

This article describes how a series of web-based computer-mediated communication (CMC) and multimedia tools were integrated into an intermediate Spanish II course at a Historically Black University (HBCU). The tools included a chat room, a bulletin board, an e-mail dialogue journal, audio and video quizzes, and a series of readings about the Afro-Latino experience linked to a vocabulary glossary. The objectives were (1) to provide students with opportunities for meaningful communication in the second language beyond the fifty-minute class, (2) to increase students' exposure to comprehensible input, and (3) to increase student motivation and cultural awareness through readings about the African Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean. Assessment data that measured student perceptions of the technology integration showed that the participants' preferred application was the chat room, although they also favored the video and audio quizzes. The least-liked tools were the bulletin board and the dialogue journal. In general, students appreciated having more opportunities to interact in Spanish, especially in real-time via the chat room. Students felt that the additional interaction helped them think in the language and improve their writing skills. The e-mail dialogue journal served as an example of the importance of assessment. Although students felt that it improved their proficiency, many were overwhelmed by the expectations of the activity. Finally, students felt that the electronic medium increased awareness of the target culture including, but not limited to the Afro-Latino experience.

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Introduction

Pica (1994) encourages language teachers to look at second language acquisition (SLA) research findings to answer the questions that arise in the second language (L2) classroom. Following this premise, the present article seeks to use theoretical insights to improve L2 teaching and learning in the context of an HBCU. The language teaching profession has undergone significant theoretical and methodological growth since the birth of SLA as a discipline in the late 1960s to early 1970s (Larsen-Freeman, 1991, 2000). In contrast to traditional approaches that focused on the teaching of grammatical structures or emphasized practice through repetition and drilling, researchers in the late 1970s became aware of the need to look at input as a significant factor of language acquisition (Larsen-Freeman, 1991).

One of the most influential examples of this trend is Stephen Krashen's Monitor Theory (Krashen, 1982). More specifically, the Input Hypothesis in Krashen's model considers comprehensible input the sole cause of language acquisition. Undoubtedly, this claim has received a considerable amount of criticism from SLA researchers. Gregg (1984) questioned its validity as a theory, given the absence of operational definitions for the concepts that it comprises, including that of comprehensible input, and the lack of empirical research to back its claims. The contention with Krashen's model that has been most often mentioned by SLA theorists is its complete disregard for other important factors of acquisition, such as output, focus on form (Larsen-Freeman, 1991; Swain, 1985), interaction, negotiation of meaning (Pica, 1994), as well as other variables such as attention (Gass, 1997), and environmental factors (Long, 1985). However, although they disagree with Krashen about its sufficiency for acquisition, researchers agree that input is essential for language learning (Gregg, 1984; Swain 1985; Pica 1994). In addition, there is also agreement that learners need to comprehend the language that they are exposed to in order for input to become intake (Larsen-Freeman, 1991; Gass, 1997). Therefore, the term 'comprehensible input' will be used in this project not as the sole cause of acquisition, as suggested by Krashen, but as an essential element of the acquisition process, as indicated by most SLA theorists. In that light, it is the premise of this project that L2 instructors must increase students' exposure to comprehensible input in order to facilitate language acquisition.

...in spite of many instructors' best efforts to move beyond teaching grammar and to use class time to create communicative environments, the mere nature of classroom instruction presents time and space limitations that restrict learners' exposure to input and opportunities for interaction.

Another major breakthrough for SLA in moving away from traditional approaches to language teaching has been the establishment of communicative competence as the goal of our practice (Omaggio Hadley, 2001; Savignon, 1983). This shift has brought about an emphasis on communicative interaction as a major contributor to language acquisition (Pica, 1994; Gass, 1997), and it requires instructors to provide learners with multiple opportunities to interact in the L2.

In most educational institutions, the classroom is the major setting for instruction, and therefore exposure to comprehensible input and opportunities for communicative interaction are provided in this environment. However, and in spite of many instructors' best efforts to move beyond teaching grammar and to use class time to create

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communicative environments, the mere nature of classroom instruction presents time and space limitations that restrict learners' exposure to input and opportunities for interaction. Therefore, while recognizing the unquestionable value of the classroom for essential face-to-face communication, a need exists to create new environments that supplement classroom instruction and remove the time and space barriers of that environment. The growing interest in the integration of instructional technologies in all fields of education, including language teaching and learning, may constitute a vehicle create such environments.

Over the past few decades, the use of multimedia and CMC technologies in L2 courses has increased significantly. These technologies have expanded the communicative reach of the classroom by breaking the time and space barriers inherent in that environment. Nowadays, educators are using multimedia technologies such as hypertext, audio, and video, as well as CMC applications in the form of bulletin boards, chat rooms, e-mail, blogs, and social networks to increase students' exposure to comprehensible input (Chapelle, 1997; Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008), while creating authentic venues to exchange opinions and express emotions in the L2.

The present article describes how a series of web-based CMC and multimedia tools were integrated into an intermediate Spanish course at a small HBCU. The course was taught face-to-face and it included one language laboratory session per week. CMC and multimedia technologies were used as a supplement to regular classroom instruction and most tools were integrated in WebCT, the course management system available at the institution.

Review of Previous Research

Research findings have shown that the use of CMC applications, both synchronous (in real time) and asynchronous (over time) has significant benefits for language learning. These benefits are (1) a reduction of language-related anxiety (Beauvois, 1994, 1996, 1999; Kivela, 1996; Lee, 2004; Meunier, 1998; Skinner & Austin, 1999; Warschauer, 1996), and (2) an equalization of the interaction, in which weaker or introverted students feel empowered to voice their thoughts in the L2, with minimal contributions from the instructor (Beauvois, 1992, 1994, 1999; Blake, 2000; Chun, 1994; Kamhi-Stein, 2000; Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Kronenberg, 1995; Meunier, 1998; Pelletieri, 2000; Sengupta, 2001; Shetzer & Warschauer, 2000; Skinner & Austin, 1999; Toyoda, 2002; Warschauer, 1996; Weasenforth; Biesengach-Lucas & Meloni, 2002).

As far as multimedia software is concerned, the use of video, sound, and hypertext has been identified as a valuable source of L2 input, both written and auditory (Chapelle, 1997; 1998; Chapelle & Jamieson, 2008; Hanson-Smith, 1999). The possibility of exposing L2 learners to different modalities of input through multimedia serves to remove yet another barrier of the classroom setting where the instructor is customarily the sole source of input. In contrast, the use of video, sound, and hypertext exposes learners to a multiplicity of native voices and language varieties, with the added advantage of being accessible anytime anywhere.

Research findings have shown that the use of CMC applications, both synchronous (in real time) and asynchronous (over time) has significant benefits for language learning.

Chapelle (1998) states that the findings of SLA research should serve as guiding principles for the integration of multimedia activities in L2 courses. To this end, she proposes that the goal of these activities should be to provide comprehensible input that facilitates acquisition since, as mentioned earlier, researchers agree on its importance as a condition for acquisition. The two multimedia-based strategies that

The two multimedia-based strategies that are most commonly used to increase input comprehensibility in such activities are video captioning and vocabulary glosses.

are most commonly used to increase input comprehensibility in such activities are video captioning and vocabulary glosses. Video captioning has been found to aid in the development of listening-comprehension skills (Bird & Williams, 2002; Danan, 2004). Markham (1999) found that captions significantly improved a learner's ability to recognize words on video tapes. Similarly, Shea (2000) reported that captioning helped students with lower Spanish GPAs better understand L2 speech, while increasing overall student motivation. Danan (2004) attributed this improvement in listening-comprehension to the fact that learners visualize the language that they hear, making comprehension easier. Finally, in a recent study, Winkle, Gass, and Sydorenko (2010) found that students who watched captioned videos performed better on follow-up aural vocabulary tests than when they watched non captioned videos.

In spite of its benefits, video-captioning has the potential to inhibit listening comprehension if misused or overused. G. Taylor (2005) found that captions may constitute a source of distraction for the less proficient students, since they need to pay attention to significant amounts of information in multiple modes, namely image, sound, and text. In addition, it is debatable whether captioning benefits listening or reading comprehension (Pujola, 2002). In order to avoid these shortcomings of video captioning, Guillory (1998) recommends using only a few key words and phrases, as opposed to captioning the entire discourse. This strategy minimizes distraction by focusing the learners' attention on the main ideas of the video, while ensuring that listening comprehension skills are being developed.

While captioning helps students better understand the information from video materials, the ability to insert links to vocabulary glosses has been found to facilitate reading-comprehension in the L2 (Lomicka, 1998). In effect, computer-based glosses have been found to be more effective than their paper-based counterparts due to their ease of access and flexibility (A. Taylor, 2005). Concerning the language of the glosses, Yoshii (2006) found no significant difference on L2 vocabulary acquisition between using the students' L1 and the L2 for definition supply.

Technology Integration Objectives

The incorporation of CMC and multimedia tools into the intermediate Spanish course described in the present article was guided by the findings and suggestions of previous research. Consequently, the two major objectives formulated prior to the creation of the technology-based materials were (1) to provide students with opportunities for meaningful communication in the L2 beyond the fifty-minute class, and (2) to increase students' exposure to comprehensible input. In view of the fact that this project was carried out at an HBCU, a third objective was identified:

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to increase student motivation and cultural knowledge through readings about the African Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean. The readings were intended to help bridge the cultural gap between African American students and native speakers of Spanish. This third objective originated from the profession's concern about the low numbers of African American graduates with degrees in foreign languages (Brigman & Jacobs, 1981; English, 1996; Farfan-Cobb & Lassiter, 2003; Glynn, 2007; Guillaume, 1994; Hines & Jenkins, 2004; Hubbard, 1980; Huber, 1990; Kubota, Austin & Saito-Abbott, 2003). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), only 4.1% of the total number of bachelor's degrees in foreign languages from postsecondary institutions was awarded to African Americans in 2005-2006. One of the strategies identified as a way to reverse these gloomy figures has been to incorporate content about the Black experience in Spanish and other language courses (Clark, 1982; Davis, 1991; Farfan-Cobb, I., & Lassiter, L. E., 2003; Moore, 1998).

CMC Tools

In order to provide opportunities for students to interact in real time through the use of a computer, a chat room was built into the WebCT course shell. This synchronous communication tool was used during laboratory hours, since this was the only occasion on which all students could be asked to access a computer at the same time. Chat room interaction was mostly unstructured, and students were allowed to express their thoughts and opinions freely, as long as they did it in Spanish.

In addition to the chat room, a bulletin board for asynchronous communication was added to the WebCT shell. Communication on the bulletin board took place outside of class and lab hours, since the asynchronous nature of the technology did not require all students to access a computer concurrently. First, students were asked to read, summarize, and comment on articles from newspapers and magazines written in Spanish. Links to those sources were included on the web site. The purpose of was twofold. On the one hand, students were exposed to authentic written input from newspapers and magazines, and on the other, they were provided with a low anxiety venue for interaction in the L2. After the initial posting, students were asked to read and reply to each other's comments either agreeing or disagreeing, and supporting their opinions with coherent arguments. The rationale for this two-step design is given by Pelletieri (2000) who indicates that when engaging in asynchronous CMC, students do not read the contributions made by others unless they are required to do so.

A second asynchronous CMC tool, e-mail dialogue journals, was added to the course in order to provide students with an interactive writing tool that allowed them to produce longer contributions and express their feelings and opinions more profoundly. Dialogue journals have been widely used in composition courses both in English and foreign languages, since they allow for corrective feedback to be provided in a low-anxiety fashion. Instead of highlighting mistakes in the writing pieces produced by students, the instructor models the correct structures while prompting for further development of the ideas expressed. E-mail dialogue journals

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have been found to stimulate L2 writing more than paper-based versions, allowing for a greater amount of language and more variety of topics (González-Bueno, 1998). For the present project, students were asked to write 250-word messages to either the instructor or a trained dialogue journal assistant every two weeks.

Multimedia Tools

For the purpose of providing comprehensible oral input beyond the limits of the traditional classroom, the WebCT shell included a series of audio and video files about the topics that were covered in the course. Those topics included work, the environment, the indigenous populations of Latin America, and Mexican muralists. After viewing or listening to each file as many times as they wanted, students completed a self-graded quiz that assessed their comprehension of the main ideas and supporting details. In this manner, they received immediate feedback on their performance, and their progress could be easily monitored by the instructor. Following the recommendations of Guillory (1998), the videos were captioned with key words and phrases in order to make the input comprehensible without distracting students. Additionally, while the audio extracts were scripted, only cues were given to the actors of the videos. The purpose of this strategy was to provide students with semi-authentic native-speaker speech, as opposed to the overly edited language that is often found in L2 video materials.

As far as written input is concerned, the WebCT shell also included a series of readings about the Afro-Latino population of Latin America and the Caribbean. As mentioned earlier, it was believed that the content of the readings would serve to motivate students by bridging the gap between the African American experience and that of the native speakers of Spanish. Just as with the audio and video activities, these readings were followed by self-graded quizzes that tested student comprehension of the content and provided immediate feedback on performance. In order to make the input understandable and therefore more likely to become intake, key words that may have affected comprehensibility of the main ideas were linked to a vocabulary gloss that included definitions in Spanish, as well as English equivalents, based on the findings of Yoshii (2006).

Assessment

Data from student perceptions were used in order to determine how well the integration of the electronic medium had achieved the objectives formulated for the project. Sixteen of the 20 students enrolled in the intermediate Spanish course completed a survey about their perceptions of the CMC and multimedia tools (see the Appendix). The survey was administered at the end of the semester by someone other than the instructor, and it contained a series of open-ended questions, together with a scale for students to rate their level of satisfaction with each of the electronic tools. The scale contained a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from “extremely dislike” to “extremely like.”

Data from the rating scale (see Tables 1 and 2) revealed that the electronic environment was well-liked by students, as indicated by the fact that all technological

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tools received mean ratings above 3.5. The preferred application was the chat room, followed closely by the video and audio quizzes. The least favorite tool was the bulletin board, followed closely by the dialogue journals.

Tool	N	Mean	SD
Afro-Latinos Quizzes	16	3.9	0.8
Audio Quizzes	16	4.1	0.8
Bulletin Board	16	3.6	0.6
Chat	16	4.4	0.7
Dialogue Journals	16	3.8	0.9
Video Quizzes	16	4.3	0.7

Table 1. Mean Student Ratings of the CMC and Multimedia Tools

	Extremely Dislike	Dislike	Neither Like Nor Dislike	Like	Extremely Like
Afro-Latinos Quizzes	0	0	5 (31%)	7 (44%)	4 (25%)
Audio Quizzes	0	0	5 (31%)	7 (44%)	4 (25%)
Bulletin Board	0	0	7 (44%)	8 (50%)	1 (6%)
Chat	0	0	2 (13%)	6 (38%)	8 (50%)
Dialogue Journals	0	1 (6%)	5 (31%)	6 (38%)	4 (25%)
Video Quizzes	0	0	2 (13%)	8 (50%)	6 (38%)

Table 2. Percentages of Respondents for Each Score and CMC/Multimedia Tool

In addition to the quantitative data from the rating scale, the open-ended questions included in the survey provided a significant amount of qualitative data on the students' experience with the CMC and multimedia activities. The data were analyzed and coded to establish themes connecting all the responses. Four major themes emerged during data analysis: (1) perceived improvement in students' writing ability, (2) perceived increased interaction in the L2, (3) perceived increased cultural awareness, and (4) strong opinions about the dialogue journal activity.

As shown by their responses, students felt that the CMC and multimedia tools and activities improved their writing ability in Spanish and helped them think and express themselves in the language. Comments related to this include:

1. "The dialogue journal helped me with my writing (...) It was like I was really having a conversation in which I understood everything that was going on."
2. "(Chat rooms) actually made you think and chat in Spanish."

3. "(Dialogue journal) helped me to think about what I was going to explain in Spanish."
4. "These extra writing assignments allow the students to develop our writing skills."

Equally important to note is that students reported an appreciation for the additional opportunities to interact with other students in the L2. The opinions expressed in examples 1 and 2 above point in that direction. Similarly, in examples 5 and 6 students exhibit a positive attitude towards authentic communication in the chat room:

5. "I loved the chat room because I was learning more and more how to have a real conversation with others in Spanish."
6. "I enjoyed the chat room because you got to converse with your classmates and the teacher."

The third theme that emerged during data analysis was that students felt an improvement in their awareness of the culture of the native speakers of Spanish. The following examples illustrate this theme:

7. "I think it's beneficial for students who want to pursue their international career or students like I [sic] who want to learn more about the Spanish culture and its history."
8. "It allows the students to become familiar with the language and its culture and it could be a way to learn outside of the American culture and expand your knowledge."

Interestingly, no specific mention was made of the inclusion of the Afro-Latino culture in the electronic medium. Similar results were found by Moore (2005). In that study, African American college students did not express a special interest in the languages that related to their African heritage. However, the participants of the present project did appreciate the inclusion of the Black experience in the course, as shown by the fact that 69% of the students liked or extremely-liked the Afro-Latino quizzes. This is an indication that students appreciated the acquisition of cultural knowledge in general including, but not limited to, the history and traditions of the Black speakers of the language.

The last theme that emerged from the survey data refers to the intensity with which students expressed their opinions about the dialogue journal. Students were very forthcoming in both their support and criticism of the activity:

9. "As far as the dialogue journals, I think that they help us get in the flow of writing in Spanish. It helped me to think about what I wanted to write in Spanish, rather than in English. The only part that I didn't like was the fact that we had to e-mail it by a specific time. I usually tend to forget."
10. "It was a lot of work, but it helped also."
11. "The dialogue journal was a bit much. Maybe fewer words, then add more as the semester continues."

These comments indicate that the biweekly 250-word requirement was excessively strenuous for intermediate-level language learners. Although students did perceive

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the potential of the dialogue journals to develop their L2 proficiency, they were overwhelmed by the amount of work that it required. In the following example, a student makes specific mention to this conflicting view:

12. "The e-mail dialogue was a bit harder to adapt to, mostly because the 250-word requirement seems quite daunting initially, but I felt as if it helped me to write in Spanish more conversationally and perhaps improve my Spanish-speaking ability."

In addition to the four themes that were consistently mentioned by students in the survey, there were a few comments that were not mentioned frequently enough to constitute a theme, but that serve to support previous research on the integration of CMC and multimedia into language courses. For example, some students expressed an appreciation for the additional exposure to the L2 in different modalities, namely written and aural.

13. "It's good because it helps us recognize Spanish visually and audibly and also helps us get used to different Spanish accents."
14. "I felt that reading the articles was a good way to learn the language along with the video quizzes and chat rooms."
15. "Audio and video quizzes, it helps with listening comprehension."

These comments, coupled with the high ratings received by audio and video activities, reveal that students did recognize the value of the electronic medium to provide additional input in the L2.

With regard to student feelings about working with technology, the high ratings received by all the electronic activities indicate that students felt comfortable communicating in this medium. In effect, a student reported feeling more comfortable communicating through CMC than in the classroom:

16. "I think you should continue the WebCT activities because students feel more comfortable working in a solitary environment instead of an environment with students. Some students feel intimidated by other students."

This comment reflects previous research on the integration of CMC into language courses. In some instances and for some tasks CMC may constitute a low anxiety environment that empowers some students to communicate in the L2. The result is an interaction in which a multiplicity of voices is heard, as opposed to the classroom environment where peer or instructor pressure may intimidate some students.

Summary and Conclusion

The traditional classroom environment presents invaluable opportunities for L2 learners to interact face-to-face with each other and with their instructor. In addition, the classroom is the primary source of learners' exposure to comprehensible input that contributes to the acquisition of the L2. However, the benefits of this environment are restricted to the 50- to 80-minute class time and to the four walls that delimit classroom space. Moreover, the instructor is in most cases the sole source of comprehensible input in the classroom context. Consequently, instructors need to find environments to provide students with opportunities to communicate beyond the boundaries of

...instructors need to find environments to provide students with opportunities to communicate beyond the boundaries of traditional classroom instruction. Ideally, these environments will not replace, but rather supplement the valuable face-to-face practice taking place in the classroom.

traditional classroom instruction. Ideally, these environments will not replace, but rather supplement the valuable face-to-face practice taking place in the classroom. CMC and multimedia technologies may constitute a means for instructors to make this possible. A tradition of research in the area of computer assisted language learning (CALL) supports the integration of these technologies in language courses and provides useful guidelines for successful instructional design that will lead to an improvement of students' communicative competence.

The present project consisted of the development and implementation of a series of CMC and multimedia activities in an intermediate Spanish course at a small HBCU. Except for an e-mail dialogue journal activity, all the tools were included in a WebCT shell that was available to all students enrolled in the course. Instructional design in the electronic medium was guided by the findings of SLA and CALL research. Therefore, the first objective of the project was to provide students with opportunities for meaningful communication in the L2 beyond the fifty-minute class. Data from the survey's open-ended questions and rating scale showed that participants appreciated the additional opportunities to interact in Spanish, especially in real-time via the chat room. Students felt that the additional interaction helped them think in the language and improve their writing skills.

The second objective of the present project was to increase students' exposure to comprehensible input. Qualitative data from the students' perspective did not reveal a consistent theme related to the benefits of extended exposure to L2 input. Comments indicated that students favored their ability to produce L2 output over being exposed to comprehensible input. Yet, there were a number of comments that praised the electronic medium on the grounds that it exposed students to the L2 in different modalities.

Since the technology integration took place at an HBCU, a third objective was to increase student motivation and cultural knowledge through readings about the African Diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean. Although no specific mention was made of the inclusion of the Afro-Latino culture in the electronic medium, the readings ranked received high scores, indicating that students appreciated their inclusion in the course. Additionally, the acquisition of cultural knowledge was identified as a major theme emerging from the data obtained from the open-ended questions of the survey. Therefore, we can conclude that the electronic medium did meet its goal of increasing student motivation and cultural knowledge including, but not limited to, the contributions of the Black speakers of the language.

Finally, and in agreement with CALL research as it relates to the integration of CMC, students felt comfortable in the electronic environment, as shown by the high scores awarded to all activities. Although it did not constitute a major theme emerging from the qualitative data, there was mention of decreased anxiety in the electronic environment compared to the classroom.

All things considered, the integration of CMC and multimedia technologies described in this article was successful at motivating the students to study Spanish and also at breaking classroom barriers with additional exposure to comprehensible input

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and opportunities to communicate. Students felt that these sorts of activities improved their writing and cultural awareness and they believed that they should continue to be used in language courses.

Teaching Implications

The following teaching implications emerged from the design, implementation, and assessment of the present project:

1. Face-to-face communication and exposure to input taking place in the classroom can be supplemented, rather than replaced, with technology-based environments that remove time and space barriers.
2. The integration of technology in L2 courses must follow the premises of SLA and CALL research.
3. Technology integration projects must be assessed in order to improve student satisfaction in future implementations. The case of the dialogue journal in the present project serves as an example of the importance of assessment. Although students felt that the activity improved their proficiency in the L2, many were overwhelmed by the length and frequency of the required e-mail contributions. This may have hindered the benefits of the activity to improve L2 proficiency by raising the students' level of anxiety. Assessment of this project indicated that extensive writing activities, such as the dialogue journal, may be better implemented in an incremental fashion, especially if assigned in combination with a considerable number of other technology-based activities.
4. When integrating CMC into language courses, both synchronous and asynchronous tools should be used. Although the particular group of students featured in this project preferred the chat room, they also valued the benefits of asynchronous tools such as e-mail or bulletin boards to improve their writing proficiency.

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Appendix

Project Assessment Survey

Instructions: This semester, you have completed a series of Internet activities for this class. Think about your experience when completing those activities and complete this questionnaire.

1. What is your general opinion about the use of the WebCT and e-mail activities? Elaborate your response. Feel free to expand on your ideas on the back of this page.
2. What is your opinion about the usefulness of these types of activities in foreign language classes? Elaborate your response. Feel free to expand on your ideas on the back of this page.
3. Rate the WebCT and e-mail activities in terms of how much you liked/disliked them.

Activities	Extremely dislike	Dislike	Neither like nor dislike	Like	Extremely like
Dialogue Journal by E-mail	1	2	3	4	5
Discussion Board (Articles and Responses)	1	2	3	4	5
Chat Room	1	2	3	4	5
Afro-Latinos Quizzes	1	2	3	4	5
Audio Quizzes	1	2	3	4	5
Video Quizzes	1	2	3	4	5

4. Elaborate rating of each activity on question 3. Feel free to write more on the back of this page.
 - a. Dialogue Journal by E-mail:
 - b. Discussion Board (Articles and Responses):

- c. Chat Room:
 - d. Afro-Latino Quizzes:
 - e. Audio Quizzes:
 - f. Video Quizzes:
5. Which of the activities, if any, do you think I should continue to use in my Spanish classes? Justify your response. Feel free to expand on your ideas on the back of this page.
 6. What suggestions do you have for the implementation of these activities in the future? Feel free to expand on your ideas on the back of this page.

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
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ARABIC

Abu-Chacra, Faruk. *Arabic: An Essential Grammar*. New York: Routledge, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-415-41571-2.

Arabic: An Essential Grammar begins with basic concepts, such as Arabic sounds and vowels, before moving on to sun and moon letters, gender, and tenses, and concludes with verbs and prepositions, adverbs and adverbial clauses, and conditional sentences. The intended audience is students whose native or second language is English. Grammar explanations are given in English. Students whose job requires the ability to translate from Arabic may find this book more beneficial than others since it provides numerous translation exercises.

The format is fairly standard for a grammar resource book. Each chapter starts with a short introduction of the concept presented and then offers subsections on various related concepts. Explanations are always accompanied by examples. Exceptions to the rules given are typically listed towards the end of each chapter. The book provides two types of exercises: *Practice your Reading* and *Translate into Arabic*. The former includes English translation as well as transliteration up to Chapter 22. The latter has practice sentences for students to translate into Arabic.

Since the book mainly focuses on fundamental grammatical concepts, it successfully meets two of the National Standards for Foreign Language Teaching. These are: comparisons, which are implemented through the comparison between English and Arabic grammar; and connections, which are implemented through developing students' knowledge of Arabic by learning distinctive features of grammar.

On the one hand, this text has several areas of strength compared to other Arabic grammar books. In terms of accuracy and pronunciation, the thorough explanation of diacritic marks assists any non-native speakers trying to achieve higher accuracy of pronunciation and raises their awareness of how these marks are used. Also, there

is an interesting explanation of how to differentiate between some confusing sounds in Arabic, for example the plain alveolar consonant sound س and the pharyngealized consonant sound ص in the very beginning (item 14 on page 6) and other emphatic Arabic sounds that non-native speakers find confusing. English sample words are provided to provide further illustration.

Grammar explanations are accompanied by clear examples, as well as exceptions—when applicable, such as the exception to the rule of *Hamza* on page 140, where exceptions taken from the writing of well-known Arabic authors are indicated and compared with the correct forms. Moreover, I find the writer's explanation of the *Idafa* structure or Annexation by breaking it down for students into more simple terms very helpful insofar as it emphasizes how the structure is actually used. Thus, in Chapter 19, the author presents one way of using the *Idafa* structure according to the grammatical rule and then shows how it is actually used in modern literary Arabic, using such examples as the passive voice in modern literary Arabic and contrasting it with its use in classical Arabic.

Additionally, the book includes self-explanatory tables of different forms of pronouns organized according to case endings (accusative, genitive, or nominative). In the appendices there are additional tables of different forms, conjugation paradigms of verbs with *Hamza*, and vowels in different positions. The writer presents different Arabic structures from different perspectives: form and meaning. For instance, in Chapter 37, the writer presents دَاك as a verb used to indicate that an action is about to take place. He first explains the meaning of دَاك and then gives examples of two different ways in which it can be used as a main verb by introducing the imperfect subjunctive form and the imperfect indicative form in different sentences.

On the other hand, there are some areas that could be improved. For example, the explanation of predicate and attributive types of adjectives gives a basic idea of this concept in Arabic, but students also need to know how adjectives are formed or how compound adjectives are used in Arabic. Furthermore, there is a chapter whose title does not mention all the concepts explained in it. Chapter 24 has some explanation of negating nominal sentences and the use of لَا but does not mention these two grammatical concepts in the chapter title. The rules of punctuation in Arabic are not easy to explain, and the explanation provided in this book is no exception. Using tables in the appendices section seems helpful in getting students to identify the pattern of conjugating verbs of different forms. However, having the English meaning of each form may better assist students with identifying the difference in meaning among different verb forms.

Even though the exercises that follow each chapter provide receptive and productive practice in terms of learning the target grammatical forms, they lack diversity, except for Chapter 18. Having varied types of exercises should motivate students more, especially if they are more engaging and are followed by an answer key. With an answer key to a *Translate into Arabic* exercise students can better understand the difference between a literal translation and a native speaker's translation. The exercises following Chapter 16 hardly provide any practice with reciprocal pronouns, only covered once in item 4 under *Translate into Arabic*, even though this topic is included as part of the chapter objectives. Also, the first type of exercises, *Practice your Reading*, might be

more beneficial to students' accuracy if it had an audio source, like a CD or a DVD, featuring native pronunciation. Students could then check their reading against a native speaker's reading and identify their errors and mistakes.

Another suggestion that could easily be incorporated in a new edition is to provide realistic Production Activities to help students further develop their oral production skills in an authentic context. In a study done by Savignon (1972) of the acquisition of French by American college students, the learners who benefited most were those who had paid attention to form in addition to taking advantage of opportunities for communicative practice. Activities that develop communicative practice include individual dialogues and role play, especially if they are accompanied by audio samples featuring native speakers.

In conclusion, *Arabic: An Essential Grammar* brings together a comprehensive collection of Arabic grammatical concepts and provides opportunities for students to become aware of the target item and how it is used correctly. Adding answer keys to exercises, audio material to practice pronunciation, in addition to a variety of exercises with a communicative component, should enhance the quality of the book and eventually provide more efficient grammar instruction to the target audience.

Reference:

Savignon, S. (1972). *Communicative Competence: An Experiment in Foreign-Language Teaching*. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development.

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CHINESE

Jianhua Bai et al. *Chinese Grammar Made Easy: A Practical and Effective Guide for Teachers*. 对外汉语语言点教学150例. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009.

Chinese Grammar Made Easy: A Practical and Effective Guide for Teachers is the collaborative result of a group of 28 Chinese language teachers led by Professor Bai Jianhua of Kenyon College in Ohio. The authors intend for this book to be used as a desktop top grammar guide for teachers who teach Chinese as a Foreign Language. It can also serve as a self-study grammar book for native speakers of Chinese who wish to gain a superior grasp of Chinese grammar. However, since all explanations of complex grammar points are in Chinese without *pinyin* and sometimes are difficult to follow, this book is not an ideal grammar companion for learners who are not native speakers of Chinese.

Described by the authors as a pedagogical grammar book, *Chinese Grammar Made Easy* discusses 150 frequently used "grammar items" (语言点) defined as "a grammatical pattern or a word usage." The book analyzes the structural properties and functional aspects of a variety of language items selected based on their frequency in textbooks, grammar books, and curricula, as well as the collective experience of the authors.

In each section the authors design a series of scaffolding instructional techniques that teachers can use to help students learn the grammar item correctly. Each grammar item contains two parts: 1. *Information for teachers* (教師需知): It explains the structural properties, semantic, functional and pragmatic properties of the grammar item to teachers. 2. *Instructional procedures* (課堂操作): It provides step-by-step instructions and exercises at different levels of difficulty. These grammar items are arranged in alphabetical order according to the *pinyin* (pronunciation) of these items, beginning with 把 *ba* (把) and 比 (*bi*), ending with 只有 (*zhi you*), 自从 (*zi cong*), and 总之 (*zong zi*). Since these grammar points are frequently used phrases in daily usage and appear in most Chinese language textbooks, *Chinese Grammar Made Easy* is textbook-independent and therefore is a useful tool for Chinese language teachers at all levels.

Chinese Grammar Made Easy is written based on the following five pedagogical research questions: What are the best techniques for presenting grammar patterns to learners at different stages of the learning process? What techniques should be employed to help learners practice grammar and word usage so that their communication skills can be enhanced? How can teachers “scaffold” to engage learners to apply grammar rules meaningfully in communicative contexts? When and where should these grammar items be introduced and spiraled in a course of study? These five questions essentially summarize areas of challenge for many Chinese language teachers in the classroom. With these concerns in mind, the authors toiled long and hard and produced this resource which provides teachers with well-designed, spiraled activities and explanations. I would recommend that all teachers of Chinese language own a copy of this indispensable tool.

The major principle of design of *Chinese Grammar Made Easy* is 精讲多练 : essential explanation and extensive practice. While providing detailed explanations of one or two of the most important meanings of a particular grammar item, the authors offer various well-designed learning activities in order to help teachers maximize their teaching effectiveness. These instructional activities are based on the principle of 由浅入深 (instructional sequencing which helps learners proceed from a basic to a complex level, from controlled to automatic processing). The learning moves from more controlled and contextualized practice to more open-ended task-based communicative learning activities.

The authors emphasize that in order for students to master grammar, repetitive practice using the learning activities provided in *Chinese Grammar Made Easy* is key. Scaffolding is another guiding principle that helps students learn the semantic, functional and pragmatic aspects of grammar items, moving from basic to more complex levels. At every stage of instruction—from input enhancement to output practice—teachers need to make sure that students learn the grammar in meaningful and communicative contexts. Students learn to master these grammar items while engaging constantly in interactive and meaningful dialogues. While students practice the new grammar points, their primary attention is on communication with the goal of achieving language proficiency.

In summary, *Chinese Grammar Made Easy* is a research-based and user-friendly reference book that is completely independent of any available textbooks. It can help

teachers in delivering grammar effectively to learners at different levels. In addition, it contains a variety of effective instructional activities designed to help students practice grammar and word usage. In order to help students learn certain grammar items, various scenarios are provided so that teachers can use the scaffold learning process. Sentence patterns are also provided so teachers can help learners apply grammar rules meaningfully. Having taught Chinese as a foreign language to community college students at the beginner and intermediate levels, I find this book very useful. It has also helped me reflect on the effectiveness of my teaching of grammar and make informed instructional decisions guided by sound pedagogical principles. However, out of the total 150 grammar items covered in the text under review here, less than 50 are included in the discussion in the *Integrated Chinese* textbooks used in my classrooms. The remaining items are better suited for advanced language learners.

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Zhang, Phyllis, Yuan-Yuan Meng, and Donald and Liu Chang. *David and Helen in China: An Intermediate Course in Modern Chinese (Part I and II)*. 大为和海琳在中国：中级汉语教材. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008. One DVD included (audio program in MP3 format). ISBN: 088710-216-6. Simplified character edition. Parts I and II are bound separately but sold as a single set only.

The purpose of *David and Helen in China: An Intermediate Course in Modern Chinese*. 大为和海琳在中国：中级汉语教材 (Parts I-II) is to give intermediate learners of the Chinese language the opportunity to improve their four basic language skills while exploring the culture and society of China and Taiwan through the experiences of two fictitious American college students, David and Helen. This book is designed for college classes, high school AP Chinese classes, or self-study of Chinese as a foreign language. It is available in traditional or simplified editions. This textbook is suitable for students who are familiar with 600-800 basic Chinese words and some basic sentence structures and who have prior experience with elementary texts such as *Colloquial Chinese* (by Tung and Pollard), *Chinese Primer* (D.T. Chen et al.), *Practical Chinese Reader* (Liu Xue et al.), or *Integrated Chinese*, Level 1, Part I and II (T.C. Yao et al.).

David and Helen in China: An Intermediate Course in Modern Chinese consists of two separate books (Parts I and II) covering 18 lessons. Both parts conclude with an appendix (the first is an index of sentence patterns and expressions, the second a comprehensive glossary). The accompanying DVD includes an audio program containing clearly enunciated MP3 audio clips covering vocabulary, text, word usage, sentence patterns and expressions, listening comprehension, and a wide variety of exercises. I played the DVD a few times to check on the sound quality and liked what I heard. The pace set by the reader is realistic for foreign learners and the pronunciation in standard Mandarin is very clear.

The 18 lessons in this textbook make up a story which follows the real life experiences of two foreign students, David in Beijing, and Helen in Taipei. Part I focuses on daily tasks of living in Beijing and Taipei, dealing with subjects such as shopping, writing a letter, making phone calls, renting a room, and looking for a job. Part II covers culture-related topics such as Chinese holidays, marriage, myths and legends. Each lesson contains lists of vocabulary, theme-based content, discussion of specific “language points” (vocabulary, idiomatic expressions and the like, grammar structures), word usage, sentence patterns and expressions, listening comprehension, vocabulary exercises, passage reading, and short composition practices. Each lesson also contains a *Learning about Culture* section written in English discussing one specific aspect of Chinese culture. All texts are written in Chinese characters with limited displays of *pinyin*. Each lesson includes a *Focusing on Structure* segment as well, which uses English to explain targeted sentence structures. Toward the end of Part II, there is more of an emphasis on language used in business and more formal social settings.

My first impression is that this is an attractive and well-designed textbook with print that is easy to read and a page layout that is well organized with sufficient space for learners to write. I also like the humorous black-and-white illustrations accompanying some texts. The overall content is relevant to the social and developmental needs of young adult learners (at the college or high school AP Chinese level). The story line is closely related to real-life situations that can be particularly appealing, especially to those who are preparing to spend a long period of time in China or Taiwan to study Chinese. The authors go step by step, taking a sequential approach, beginning with issues related to how David and Helen prepare for their study abroad experience, arrive in the host country, meet new people, and adjust to local culture. The text covers a wide range of topics such as travel, proper phrases to say for taking leave of someone, greeting new friends, daily living routines, and issues dealing with illness (for example, the Chinese attitude toward seeing a doctor and taking medicine). For those who have settled down and adjusted to a new, Chinese way of life, the authors offer up a wide range of vocabulary providing an in-depth introduction to food, travel, education, friends and relatives, shopping and bargaining, dating, and love and marriage. Modes of communication between Helen and David such as letter writing are discussed in Lesson 5. This particular aspect reflects the need for updating since e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, Facebook, etc., are now replacing letter writing.

In summary, *David and Helen in China* is a textbook that is well suited for intermediate learners. I find the exercises (cloze, reading, oral practice, writing) excellent and effectively designed. The two appendices (A and B) at the end of Parts I and II provide useful quick reference for learners. However, some content is a bit out-of-date and requires updating. For example, detailed instruction on letter writing in Lesson 5 is a bit out-of-date while note writing practice in Lesson 4 is still a valid skill. Topics such as love, marriage, and job interviews may be relevant to college students, but not to high school students in AP Chinese classrooms. Certain characterizations in the text overly stereotypical, to say the least: not all French male students are wine-guzzling playboys!

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FRENCH

Bernard, Shane K. *Cajuns and Their Acadian Ancestors: A Young Reader's History*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2008. ISBN: 978-1-934110-78-2. For orders and further information, please visit <http://www.upress.state.ms.us/books/1096>

To grow student interest in studying French and learning more about Francophone cultures, I have tried to teach French using the French-speaking regions of North America whenever possible. I believe that if students are more aware of their own country's interactions with the French language, they will be more interested in learning French and become better students into the bargain. A wonderful book that helps teachers accomplish these noble aims is *Cajuns and Their Acadian Ancestors: A Young Reader's History* by Shane K. Bernard.

Cajuns and Their Acadian Ancestors: A Young Reader's History follows the 400-year history of the Cajun people from their early ancestors, the Acadians, to the present day. In the seventeenth century, the Acadians travelled from France to Nova Scotia, where they prospered as farmers and increased in numbers until the British expelled them in one of the first documented acts of ethnic cleansing or genocide known as *Le Grand Dérangement* ("The Great Upheaval"). Approximately one-third of the Acadian people perished from the violence inflicted upon them by British soldiers, disease, starvation, or exposure to harsh elements while on the ships that carried them from Nova Scotia back to France or, worse yet, to the thirteen American colonies, where they were subjected to discrimination and a life in poverty. Particularly helpful for understanding this troubled period is "The Expulsion: Myth versus Reality" question and answer chart (23), which helps us readers better understand how nearly three thousand Acadian survivors made their way through the American colonies and eventually settled in Spanish-controlled Louisiana.

However, the pain and suffering endured by the Acadians did not end with *Le Grand Dérangement*. As the Acadians intermarried with other ethnic groups in Louisiana, thereby becoming the group we know today as Cajuns, they continued to face economic and cultural hardship. For example, despite the fact that Louisiana was the first officially bilingual state (French and English) until shortly before the American Civil War, the compulsory education law of 1916 was the unfortunate start of the decline of French in Louisiana: "In 1916, the state of Louisiana passed legislation that forbade parents from keeping their children out of school to work around the house or farm.... These included Cajun children who spoke little or no English, which the 1921 state constitution declared the only language of the classroom. To teach French-speaking Cajun children English, educators resorted to a practice that signaled the coming decline of French in south Louisiana: the widespread punishment of Cajun children for speaking French at school. Between around 1920 and 1960, this practice subjected three generations of young Cajuns to humiliating penalties for daring to

speak their native tongue. They were whipped, slapped, and rapped on the hands with rulers. They had their ears pinched, their collars pulled, their mouths washed out with soap. They wrote lines, over and over again: ‘I will not speak French on the school grounds.’ Punishment and the ridicule that accompanied it taught Cajun children to be ashamed of their native language and of their heritage in general. When these children grew up, they refused to teach their own children to speak French. They came to regard the language as worthless in the modern, English-speaking world” (50-51). The Cajuns became even more “Americanized” thanks to the United States’ involvement in the two world wars (the Depression affected Cajuns much less since they were already poor), followed by the wars in Korea and Vietnam and then by the G.I. Bill, which allowed veterans to pursue their education. Not to be overlooked was the influential power of television and popular rock and roll music.

However, in spite of all the outside influences, Cajun culture has made a comeback in recent years, due in large part to the efforts of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), created in 1968 by the Louisiana state legislature. Funded by substantial government grants, CODOFIL has maintained its original goal: “To do any and all things necessary to accomplish the development, utilization, and preservation of the French language as found in the State of Louisiana for the cultural, economic, and tourist benefit of the State” (61). Recent Cajun contributions to American popular culture include an exotic cuisine (that has even reached fast food chains such as McDonald’s and Burger King) and musical trends (from Swamp Pop Music in the mid- to late 1950s to Fiddler Dewey Balfa in the early 1970s to the present-day activities of Zachary Richard).

A skillfully woven historical narrative that is easy to read, beautifully illustrated with authentic photographs, documents, maps, and timelines, Bernard’s *Cajuns and Their Acadian Ancestors: A Young Reader’s History* is an utterly engaging text that is sure to please instructors and students alike at a variety of educational levels. It truly fosters a greater appreciation and understanding of the Cajun people.

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Rochester, Myrna Bell and Eileen Angelini, editors. *Voltaire, Candide ou l’Optimisme*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2008. ISBN: 978-1-58510-247-1.

This Focus Student Edition of Voltaire’s *Candide* is the fourth in a series of literary classics published by Focus. It follows the publication of Camara Laye’s *L’Enfant noir* (2005), Molière’s *L’École des femmes* (2006), and Guy de Maupassant’s *Pierre et Jean* (2007), and it precedes Corneille’s *Le Cid* (2010). It is edited by Dr. Myrna Belle Rochester and Dr. Eileen M. Angelini, both of whom are scholars of French literature and experienced teachers.

Like its predecessors in the series, this edition appeals to several different kinds of readers. The high school, college, or university student who is transitioning to literature from a mostly language-centered curriculum is provided the resources that help make

the text both understandable and enjoyable. No need to look up words in a dictionary (or even in the glossary at the end of the book) while reading, for the vocabulary is located on the page itself in an easily recognizable gray box. No need to wonder what social, historical, religious, or philosophical idea is being referred to in the text, for the footnotes provide succinct information so as not to interfere with the act of reading. The multiple-choice questions and the short essay questions pertaining to each chapter (in the *Activités* section at the end of the text) ensure that the reader has understood the main ideas of the chapter. Although the Focus Student Edition series was designed originally for Advanced Placement courses in French Literature (see the NECTFL *Review*, no. 60, 2007, p. 72)—despite the fact that the original AP French Literature Examination, regrettably, has since been abolished—the texts in French literature published by Focus Publishing can nonetheless be useful in preparing students for the new AP French Language Examination, since this examination has been conceived to reflect the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*, and those standards include such authentic cultural products as literary works.

A more experienced reader of French (a student minoring in French, for instance) would gain greater insights into the text and the author's vision by focusing on the social, historical, religious, and philosophical footnotes in this edition and in pursuing the *Pistes d'exploration* suggested in the *Activités* section following the multiple-choice items and the short essay questions for each chapter. These higher-level questions invite reflection of the *analyse de texte* type or ask the reader to personalize situations encountered in *Candide*.

Even a non-eighteenth-century specialist of French literature (like myself) might enjoy recapturing (as I did) the delight experienced in first reading *Candide*, refreshing one's memory of the Enlightenment, or even discovering facts and insights about Voltaire and his world. This reviewer truly appreciated the introduction to the edition, the essential and concise biographies of the main authors during the Enlightenment, the short and well-chosen definition of the *conte philosophique*. Readers at this advanced level (and French majors would certainly qualify to be included in this group) could build on the previously mentioned *Activités* and challenge themselves to research and answer the *Essais/Discussions* questions and the *Tremplins: Pour aller plus loin* at the very end of the *Activités* section.

Whatever the reader's level of readiness, s/he will find that the Focus Student Edition of Voltaire's *Candide* will meet her/his needs most admirably. The edition is conceived and executed with a classically French sense of balance. The novice reader will not be overwhelmed by lengthy vocabulary lists and historical, philosophical, religious, and social explanations, nor will the more advanced reader be overwhelmed by overly scholarly historical data, literary references, philosophical explanations, etc., but will find just enough information to gain a deeper understanding of the text. The advanced reader will be asked to explore issues, which, while interesting and challenging, will not require a dissertation (although they could lead to one).

This edition follows the same presentation and sequence as the preceding titles in the series of Focus Student Edition[s], but includes a few additions and adjustments which should generate a better understanding of this particular author and work:

Introduction*

Notes stylistiques *

[figures de style et temps littéraires]

Chronologie *

[tableaux : 18e siècle politique ; 18e siècle littéraire ; 18e siècle philosophique, scientifique et artistique ; vie et œuvre de Voltaire]

Les Voyages de Candide : Carte *

Candide ou l'Optimisme *

[unfamiliar or difficult words and expressions are given a synonym or a paraphrase exclusively in French. Footnotes provide cultural and historical explanations also expressed exclusively in French.]

[Reproductions of illustrations from the 1913 Paris edition of Voltaire's *Candide* give the Student Focus Edition a feeling of the time period but also and especially help modern readers to visualize certain references and descriptions that would otherwise be incomprehensible to them.]

*Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne, avec sa Préface**

Activités

Mise en train

Choix multiples, Questions et Pistes d'exploration *

Essais / Discussion *

Tremplins : Pour aller plus loin

Réponses aux questions à choix multiples

Bibliographie et filmographie

Vocabulaire utile

Pour parler d'un roman

Pour parler de l'Âge des lumières

Crédits

Remerciements/Acknowledgments

About the Authors

*See sample pages on Focus Publishing: <http://www.pullins.com/txt/StudentEditionsFrench.htm> Select: *Voltaire: Candide ou l'Optimisme* → Buy this book → Click here for more information on this title → Sample pages for *Voltaire: Candide ou l'Optimisme*

There are many student editions of *Candide* (Classiques Larousse, Hachette, Hatier), but this one focuses on the needs of the non-Francophone reader. The Student Focus Edition of Voltaire's *Candide* attains its objective admirably in a booklet that is lightweight, affordable enough to mark up without guilt (at a cost of \$14.95; at the sale price of \$10.47), and balanced in fulfilling the needs of various levels of non-native readers of French.

J. Vincent H. Morrissette
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Fairfield and Sacred Heart Universities
Fairfield, CT

Publisher's Response

It is always gratifying to have the reviewer confirm what we had hoped to do with this series, i.e., to make great works of French literature available in scholarly editions that provide just the right amount of linguistic and cultural background information. Our editors have worked hard to achieve that special "touch" that strikes a happy balance between text and context, inspiring students to read the "classics."

Ron Pullins
Focus Publishing

Mahoney, Judy. Illustrated by Patrick Girouard. *Celebrating the Seasons: Teach Me Everyday French*. Volume 2. Minnetonka, MN: Teach Me Inc., 2009. 32 pp. hardcover with audio CD. ISBN 13: 978-1-59972-201-6.

_____. *Celebrating the Seasons: Teach Me Everyday Spanish*. Volume 2. Minnetonka, MN: Teach Me Inc., 2009. 32 pp. hardcover with audio CD. ISBN 13: 978-1-59972-202-3.

_____. *Celebrating the Seasons: Teach Me Everyday Italian*. Volume 2. Minnetonka, MN: Teach Me Inc., 2009. 32 pp. hardcover with audio CD. ISBN 13: 978-1-59972-207-8. For ordering information, visit www.teachmeinc.com or call toll-free (800) 456-4656.

Teach Me Inc., formerly known as Teach Me Tapes, was the first company to teach language through traditional children's songs and, for the past twenty-five years, has continued to produce award-winning titles. Each product includes a sing-along CD and illustrated storybook so that children can follow along in English as well as in the language of their choice. Created in 1985 by founder and author Judy Mahoney, who (while searching for fun and educational foreign language materials for her own children), was unable to find a product with which she was happy, well aware of the fact that music is a universal means of communication, decided to use her children's favorite songs to create her own instructional materials. Teach Me Inc. currently offers products in ten languages with over fifty titles that are fun for the whole family and encourage the exploration of different cultures and customs. Foreign language educators will thus take great delight in the Teach Me Inc. products as we all have long been aware of the studies that have repeatedly proven that a child's early exposure to new languages and cultures enhances learning skills and also promotes a better understanding and appreciation of our own multicultural society.

The second installment in the *Teach Me Everyday* series is *Celebrating the Seasons*, which continues, in glorious full-color illustration, the educational adventures of Marie and Peter as they learn about the months of the year and seasonal activities. Here, children join Marie and Peter as they visit museums, take a trip to the zoo, or spend time on grandpa's farm. Each seasonal story/song is presented in a dual language format with English translations to facilitate understanding for smaller children and their parents.

There are four titles available at present (French, Spanish, Italian, and English), and this reviewer had the pleasure of examining three of the four titles (French, Spanish and Italian). The French title reviewed contains twenty-two songs, and the Spanish and Italian titles contain nineteen each. Each of the three books begins with an illustration

of the four seasons. The full song titles that all three books have in common, listed in the order of French, Spanish and Italian, are:

1. *Tu chanteras, je chanterai/Tú cantarás y yo cantaré/Tu canterai, io canterò;*
2. *Avoine, pois et persil poussent/Avena, frijol y cebada/Avena e grano crescono;*
3. *Allons au zoo/Vamos al zoológico/Andiamo allo zoo;*
4. *Le jeu de Jacques a dit/El juego de Simón dice/Il gioco di “Il mago dice”;*
5. *Tingaleo/Tingaleo/Casimiro;*
6. *À la ferme de grand-père/A la finca de mi abuelo/Alla fattoria del nonno;*
7. *Agneau blanc/Ovejita blanca/Agnellino bianco;*
8. *Père MacDonald/El señor MacDonald/Nella vecchia fattoria;*
9. *Cinq petits potirons/Cinco calabazas/Cinque piccole zucche;*
10. *Le bonhomme de neige/Un muñeco de nieve/Il pupazzo di neve;*
11. *Vive le vent/Cascabel/Din don dan;*
12. *Sainte nuit/Noche de paz/Santa notte;*
13. *Les mois de l'année/Los meses del año/Mesi dell'anno.*

The two songs that appear in the French and Spanish books are “*Les nouveaux amis/Amigos*” and “*Si tu vas au ciel/Cuando los santos marchan.*” The song titles unique to the French book are: “*Nageons, nageons,*” “*À la claire Fontaine,*” “*Soleil se lève,*” “*Colchiques,*” and “*Ce n'est qu'un au revoir, mes frères.*” The song titles unique to the Spanish book are: “*Día,*” “*De colores,*” and “*La raspa.*” The song titles unique to the Italian book are: “*Santa Lucia,*” “*O sole mio,*” “*Reginella campagnola,*” and “*Arrivederci amici.*” Potential adopters of more than one of these three books reviewed should note that some song titles have slight differences from one language to the next, such as in French, “*Savez-vous planter les choux*” (“Do You Know How to Plant Cabbage”) vs. in Italian, “*Sapete voi piantare i fiori*” (“Do you Know How to Plant Flowers”); or, “*Rame, rame, rame*” (French)/”*Rema, rema, rema*” (Spanish) vs. “*La barchetta in mezzo al mare*” (Italian).

In conclusion, the *Celebrating the Seasons: Teach Me Everyday French/Spanish/Italian*, Volume 2 series offers gorgeous books that are sure to delight children everywhere and serve FLES instructors well. Five more language titles (German, Hebrew, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and Korean) in the same series are scheduled for publication in 2010.

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Ghillebaert, Françoise. *Face-à-face: Conversation et Rédaction*. Boston: Vista Higher Learning, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-60576-257-9. Includes: textbook, online workbook and video manual, Supersite (www.faceaface.vhlcentral.com) powered by MAESTRO. Supplementary materials for teachers include an instructor's annotated edition of the textbook and a film collection DVD with instructor Supersite pass code.

Following the success of Vista Higher Learning's *Espaces* (beginning level) and *Imaginez le monde sans frontières* (intermediate level), this new advanced-level

program, *Face-à-face*, contains an appealing, well-integrated textbook accompanied by a variety of ancillary materials. The book features a flexible lesson organization designed to meet the needs of diverse teaching styles, institutions, and instructional goals. It seamlessly integrates speaking, writing, reading, listening comprehension, and culture. According to the principles of the prevalent communicative approach, its emphasis is primarily on oral communication. The language used and practiced in the book is not only contextualized and embedded in Francophone cultures, but also representative of situations similar to those encountered in real life. Thematic vocabulary and grammar are fully integrated to help students enrich their lexicon and improve their communicative skills.

The textbook contains six lessons centered on different themes: *les relations personnelles, les médias et la technologie, les générations, les voyages et les transports, la nature et l'environnement*, and *la société*. Each lesson is divided into four sections, which follow a similar format. The first section, “*Court métrage*,” contains a short film by a contemporary filmmaker from a French-speaking country. There are eight different movies included in the program: *Manon sur le bitume, Idole, Il neige à Marrakech, Pas de bagage, Le lagon néo-calédonien*, and *Sans titre*. These films are excellent vehicles for students to listen to authentic spoken French. Pre-viewing and post-viewing exercises as well as a variety of excellent vocabulary practice exercises accompany each movie. The next section, “*Structures*,” is designed to review and practice grammar points tied to major language functions. Grammar activities are linked to a video still from the lesson’s film, thus providing a meaningful and relevant context for the grammar point in question. The “*Lectures*” section provides selections from both well-known and lesser-known French and Francophone authors in various genres and from various historical periods. Students will get to know Marie de France, Michel de Montaigne, Denis Diderot, Claude Lévy-Strauss, Andrée Chedid, and Leïla Sebbar, among others. Each reading is accompanied by well thought-out pre-reading and post-reading exercises, which serve as a springboard for conversation. Reading comprehension is further enhanced in the “*Bande dessinée*” section, which highlights cartoonists from various French-speaking countries and presents excerpts of their work. Each comic strip offers thought-provoking insights into various themes as well as comprehension questions. The “*Rédaction*” section gives students the opportunity to use their critical thinking skills and express themselves in writing about the lesson’s topic while synthesizing the vocabulary and grammar. It is designed to guide them through the writing process with pre-writing and post-writing activities, and expose them to a variety of text types, ranging from a comparative and analytical essay to an analysis of a poem. The last section, “*Conversation*,” pulls the whole lesson together with a lively discussion. Students have an opportunity to improve their speaking skills through a variety of topics and types of discourse. At the end of the textbook, the author includes a conjugation table of French verbs as well as a French-English glossary.

What sets *Face-à-face* apart from other recent advanced French textbooks is its state-of-the-art Supersite, a thoroughly planned and very well designed Website. It offers an expansive set of tools and resources that support and enhance the language teaching and learning experience. Numerous Supersite icons, which can be found throughout the textbook, indicate additional material available online both with

and without auto-grading. Students can record and submit their recording for oral assessments, access and watch a complete film collection, and listen to complete Textbook and Lab Manual audio programs in MP3 format. The Student Activities Manual, *WebSAM*, with all the accompanying exercises, is also available online. For instructors, the Supersite offers a variety of useful learning and planning resources, including the complete film collection in streaming video, audio MP3s, and dramatic readings of literary selections, testing program and teacher resource RTFs, grammar PowerPoint presentations, lesson plans, audio and video scripts, and answer keys, as well as online course management tools. Additionally, it offers Voice Board voice-recording technology ideal for whole-group or one-on-one oral communication. With fully integrated technology, the Website is very easy to use and navigate.

Overall, I found *Face-à-face* to be an innovative, original, and flexible program. It can easily be used over one or two semesters. Its unique magazine-like format and highly structured graphic design, a wide variety of oral and written activities, and an array of instructional resources for instructors make *Face-à-face* one of the best textbooks currently available on the market. This new program will no doubt motivate French students and inspire instructors by providing a unique and compelling learning experience within the framework of Francophone cultures.

Andrzej Dziejdzic
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Publisher's Response

Professor Andrzej Dziejdzic has written a glowing review of *Face-à-Face*, and we thank him. *Face-à-Face*, our advanced-level French textbook, is an excellent example of the texts we develop at Vista Higher Learning.

Because we are a specialized foreign language publisher, we focus all our resources on developing high-quality foreign language textbooks. We are aware that in today's world economy, speaking a second language is a great advantage, but we understand further that, in order to truly learn a language, students must develop an appreciation for the culture of the communities that speak the target language. Professor Dziejdzic underscores this in his review when he writes, "The language used and practiced in the book is not only contextualized and embedded in Francophone cultures, but also representative of situations similar to those encountered in real life."

Because learning a second language is a necessity nowadays, we strive to make our books both fun and educational.

Rafael Ríos
Managing Editor
Vista Higher Learning

Rochester, Myrna Bell, and Eileen M. Angelini. *Corneille, Le Cid*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2010. ISBN: 978-58510-296-9.

The Focus Student Edition series in French, which introduces students to selected works in French and Francophone literature, has added a new volume—the second from the seventeenth century—complementing Molière’s *L’École des femmes*. The authors, who have already collaborated on three other volumes in this series, have included extensive explanatory materials in an effort to make the play more accessible to students who are relatively unacquainted with the history of French literature. Their task is not an easy one. Although the language of Corneille, in some ways, is clear and straightforward, it relies on a vocabulary that students today may find somewhat baffling. Furthermore, in order to properly understand the work, the reader must have some sense of theatrical conventions in seventeenth-century France, as well as a minimal acquaintance with the historical background on which the play is loosely based.

All of the explanatory materials are written in French. A comprehensive (16-page) introduction includes a biographical sketch of Pierre Corneille, a detailed scene-by-scene summary of *Le Cid*, an overview of the literary sources, a description of the *querelle du Cid*, and finally a brief explanation of the concept of the hero in Corneille. Although perhaps more detailed than necessary for students who may be reading Corneille for the first time in a literary survey course, and although occasionally challenging the reading ability of such students, the introduction is rich in useful information, but instructors may wish to limit their assignments to selected segments.

The *Notes stylistiques* address a number of important aspects of the play related to versification and literary technique—the alexandrine, syntactical characteristics of seventeenth-century French, usage of the *tutoiement* in the play, and figures of style, including hyperbole, irony, antithesis, personification, anaphora, assonance, and ellipsis. These terms belong to the basic terminology that students will be expected to know and to use as they continue their study of literature. In order to facilitate the assimilation of some of the most frequently used terms, the authors provide an exercise in which brief quotations from *Le Cid* are to be matched with the corresponding figure of style which they exemplify. The section ends with a review of the *imparfait* and *plus-que-parfait* forms of the subjunctive, forms that students are not likely to use in their own writing, but which they will encounter frequently in seventeenth-century French theater. A series of timelines completes the introductory section, covering major political and social events in France and Europe during the seventeenth century, landmarks of seventeenth-century French literature, milestones of artistic, intellectual, and scientific achievement in Europe during the same period, and a detailed chronology of Pierre Corneille’s life and works.

The text itself is annotated in two ways. Words with which students are not likely to be acquainted or familiar words that convey a different meaning within the context of seventeenth-century speech are defined briefly at the bottom of each page. References that require a more extended explanation (the identification of historical figures, events, or places, theatrical devices, metaphors, expressions that have disappeared from current usage, etc.) are reserved for footnotes. These notes will be extremely valuable to the conscientious student who takes the time to read them, and

will greatly enhance the understanding and appreciation of this work. The notes related to vocabulary (limited to a single synonym or a definition of three or four words) average about six per page of text. There are a total of 95 longer footnotes, often paraphrasing certain verses that many students would otherwise find obscure. These glosses are essential for a proper understanding of the tensions that underlie the play. The Count's scornful but indirect reference to Don Diègue's age ("*Un prince dans un livre apprend mal son devoir*" [48:192]) is explained thus: "*Selon le Comte, l'âge de Don Diègue là déjà transformé en un livre. Don Diègue n'agit plus ; il ne fait que raconter ses exploits.*" In order to understand Corneille's skillful and subtle manipulation of language and psychology as he builds toward the climactic conflict between the two characters, it is critical that the reader grasp the full impact of this thinly veiled insult.

The edition includes an afterword by Corneille, appearing in some of the early editions, in which he reflects on the *querelle du Cid*, attempting to justify certain controversial moments of the drama that break with theatrical tradition. The pedagogical resources toward the end of the book are especially useful. A series of general pre-reading questions is followed by: (a) a set of multiple choice and open-ended questions for each scene of the play; (b) a large group of broader questions related to the play, forcing students to stretch their linguistic resources as well as their imagination ("*Imaginez une conversation entre Don Rodrigue et Chimène après la naissance de leur premier enfant*"); (c) a series of questions encouraging students to weave thematic connections between *Le Cid* and more familiar social issues or personal experience ("*Examinez la façon dont l'honneur joue un rôle dans les westerns d'Hollywood*"); and (d) a selected bibliography suggesting further reading on Corneille, the seventeenth century, and related areas, including films, audio recordings, and Websites.

This edition of Corneille's masterpiece is suitable for multiple audiences. It could be used for advanced high school French courses, for literary survey courses normally required for university French majors, or for advanced undergraduate courses. Students who take the time to conscientiously work their way through the ample explanatory material will experience an enlightened reading of a classic work of French literature.

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Publisher's Response

I take little credit for the good work of these two editors. It is indeed a daunting task to edit and annotate a work of seventeenth-century literature, and a play at that, and to provide today's students with the social and cultural context they need to better understand a classical work of literature. It is always gratifying to have the reviewer confirm what we had hoped to do with this series, i.e., to make great works of French literature available in scholarly editions that provide just the right amount of linguistic and cultural background information. Our editors have worked hard to achieve that special "touch" that strikes a happy balance between text and context, inspiring students to read the "classics."

Ron Pullins
Focus Publishing

Jansma, Kimberly, and Margaret Ann Kassen. *Motifs: An Introduction to French*. 5th Edition. Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2011. Includes: Audio CDs and student and instructor companion Websites. ISBN: 978-0-495-79749-4.

Motifs is an introductory French text that invites students to develop basic language skills via a series of pertinent themes introducing functional language most often encountered during everyday life-type situations in the Francophone world. The text is appropriate for use by beginners at the college level and is flexible enough to accompany either a traditional full-semester introduction to French or a first-year course spread over three semesters. The *Motifs* program offers an array of ancillary components to enrich the course. Complimentary Book Companion Websites and In-Text audio CDs provide the most accessible enrichment, while the *Motifs* Premium Website, iLrn course management system, and Quia online workbook are available for purchase.

The textbook is divided into 14 units called *modules* and one *module de récapitulation*, which reviews topics and encourages students to synthesize their skills via oral and written responses to fictional readings. Each *module* is separated into materials for both classroom and independent use. The white pages contain activities intended to maximize student production of language during class time through a variety of individual, partner, and group tasks. Within the white section, Structure boxes direct students to green *Structures utiles* pages at the end of each chapter that offer explicit grammar instruction in English. Nevertheless, the acquisition of vocabulary and structures through language functions (such as introducing oneself, renting a room or apartment, and making plans for the future) remains the focus of each *module*. Within the white pages for classroom use, each *module* is broken into *Thème* and *Pratique de conversation* sections. *Thème* sections expose students to vocabulary and structures in a meaningful context, while *Pratique de conversation* presents high-frequency expressions found in everyday French speech. Like the *Structures utiles* pages, vocabulary lists at the end of each module allow for students to reference the breadth of new terms contained in the chapter to benchmark their learning.

Each *module* of *Motifs* contains 18-20 activities constructed to present information gradually and keep meaning in focus while encouraging student-centered communication around the chapter theme. This communicative focus is evident in *Module 3*. In one early activity, students offer an object from their school bags to the instructor, who then asks for help in redistributing the same objects, thereby exposing learners to possessive adjectives in the process. At the end of each module, *Situations à jouer* call students to use language skills developed through the series of theme-based activities to react appropriately in diverse real-life encounters. The *Pratique de conversation* sections that precede these scenarios provide a response to student curiosity about the type of formulaic speech often required in these assessment role-play scenarios. *Perspectives culturelles* sections either precede or follow up these sections and provide readings about living in the Francophone world, including songs, poems, comic strips, or the more traditional encyclopedia-style entry.

From brief *Portraits*, which appear alongside chapter introductory activities, to longer *Lectures* with pre-reading and post-reading activities, *Motifs* provides ample opportunities for students to learn French. Of particular note are the *Voix en direct*

segments found in each *module*. In these segments, native French speakers share their beliefs and opinions on cultural themes relevant to the chapter both through an oral interview and a written transcript. The iLrn ancillary extends the availability and scope of input on the same topic, as students listen to native speakers in action, using gestures and colloquial language to communicate their messages.

New to this edition of the program are the *A vos marques, prêts, bloguez!* activities. These tasks are incorporated from the earliest chapters on, thereby encouraging students to express their own ideas from the beginning stages of acquisition through informal written assignments on a class blog. For example, a blog activity in *Module 1* asks students to greet their classmates and then briefly introduce themselves. Another task requires them to select one of the major events of the years following 2000 and explain what happened to make it an exceptional occurrence. These activities will appear natural to students, who may use them as a tool for easing into the often intimidating practice of written composition. The blog activities lead naturally into longer written expression activities at the end of each module which shift the focus from informal writing to the composition process.

Clarity, thematic relevance, and communicativity are characteristic of partner and group output tasks in *Motifs*. Yet, instructors may find it necessary to re-order many of the introductory activities in order to better prepare learners to produce the targeted vocabulary or structure and exchange meaningful information. For those comfortable with “teacher talk,” the annotations in the instructor’s edition will be tremendously helpful for enhancing these initial input activities. However, teachers seeking to expose students to new vocabulary and grammatical structures through authentic audio dialogues or visual stimuli may need to supplement their instruction with the ancillaries included or personal resources.

Through its organizational placement of green grammar pages after the white section’s communicative activities, *Motifs* strives to help teachers and students make the most efficient use of classroom time as a setting for language exchange. Yet, teachers will need to consider their own role and the motivation level of their students when deciding how to address the *Structure* boxes in each chapter that direct students elsewhere for grammatical information.

The text’s focus on themes and functional language offers learners ample opportunities to communicate, both in writing and orally, within their classroom communities. The excellent writing activities and native speaker interviews provide a launching point for extending this communication into the Francophone world. For instructors with some previous experience teaching grammar and vocabulary through the communicative approach, *Motifs* offers ample tools to assist them in their roles as architects of learning.

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Publisher's Response

We are very pleased to respond to Jennifer Holup's favorable review of Heinle, Cengage Learning's introductory French program *Motifs: An Introduction to French*, 5th edition. It is apparent that Ms. Holup has carefully examined all aspects of the program and we are most appreciative of her attention to detail.

Motifs, 5th edition, immerses students in the world of French language and culture and encourages them to become active participants in learning. The text's lively, up-to-date content and presentation blend seamlessly to engage the interest of contemporary college students. As Jennifer states in her thoughtful review, *Motifs*' "themes and functional language offers learners ample opportunities to communicate, both written and orally, within their classroom communities."

We appreciate Jennifer's acknowledgment of the robust print and media supplements available with *Motifs*. Heinle, Cengage Learning is committed to publishing high-quality foreign language textbooks and multimedia products, and we are proud to include *Motifs* among our French language publications.

Nicole Morinon
Acquisitions Editor
Heinle, Cengage Learning

Kurbegov, Eliane. *Practice Makes Perfect: French Vocabulary*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-07-148834-1.

As mentioned in its introduction, Eliane Kurbegov's *Practice Makes Perfect: French Vocabulary* is intended to be used as "a review and enrichment tool for the advanced beginner and intermediate learner of French." The target audience for this textbook consists of regular students as well as independent learners.

Practice Makes Perfect: French Vocabulary presents a rich collection of lists of current vocabulary and idiomatic expressions organized both syntactically and thematically. The four main grammatical categories (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs) are subdivided into twenty-four semantic units, which can be studied as a sequence or separately. Vocabulary cannot be entirely dissociated from syntax. Although *Practice Makes Perfect: French Vocabulary* is designed to expand one's vocabulary, a few fundamental grammar points such as gender, articles, agreement of adjectives, and formation of adverbs are reviewed in conjunction with new expressions. Similarly, vocabulary is intrinsically tied to culture, and we appreciate the concise cultural background information the author provides when introducing a new theme. For example, the French perspective on marriage as well as the legal process of the wedding ceremony are briefly mentioned in the section on "*la vie conjugale*" (married life). The section on "*les établissements éducatifs*" (educational facilities) points out differences between the French educational system and the American system. "*Les lieux de commerce et les lieux de travail*" (places of business and places of work) draws attention to the regulation regarding the maximum number or hours per week French workers can be required to work. Although those notes are brief, they do provide the cultural context necessary for understanding new vocabulary to the fullest.

The manual provides numerous and diverse types of exercises to practice the studied material (information gaps, matching words and definitions, true or false, words that fit or do not fit in a series, synonyms/ homonyms). All exercises are self-correcting. Although these types of exercises are sufficient for self-instruction, more open-ended exercises could be useful in the classroom context. With this addition, instructors could assess students' full grasp and creative use of new vocabulary.

Audio files would be a nice supplement. Students who use this book solely for review will have little difficulty with the pronunciation of most vocabulary, but this manual presents many words that will be new to the advanced beginner and intermediate student of French who will not know how to pronounce them correctly.

Eliane Kurbegov's *Practice Makes Perfect: French Vocabulary* is a rich and versatile book that can be used as a supplement to in-class instruction or by independent learners. It would be a very useful tool for students planning to take classes beyond the intermediate level and who need to build their vocabulary in order to cross the bridge to more advanced classes.

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Publisher's Response

I am happy to respond to Guylène Deasy's review of *Practice Makes Perfect: French Vocabulary*. As she points out, vocabulary cannot be completely separated from syntax.

One of the ways that the author makes this book an effective learning tool is by basing vocabulary building on an understanding of how words function grammatically.

The reviewer also looks at how the book provides a cultural background to many word groups, in the process increasing the learner's understanding of the vocabulary by placing it in context. The author, Eliane Kurbegov, is a native French speaker and frequently returns to France. Her familiarity with and enthusiasm for French culture is clear throughout the book and no doubt makes the learner's vocabulary acquisition easier and more enjoyable.

The reviewer's suggestion that we provide more open-ended exercises in the future is one we'll keep in mind, as is a recommendation for audio material, both of which I agree could benefit learners.

Garret Lemoi
Editor
McGraw-Hill Professional

Schorr, Nathalie. *Tune Up Your French*. 2nd edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-07-162795-5.

The second edition of this very popular title in McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing's ever-expanding list of titles for travelers, health care professionals, educators, law enforcement officials—to name only a few target audiences—delivers

what it promises: adding confidence and flair to your French and providing essential insights into dining, shopping, humor, travel, and culture. And it does so thanks to good organization and extensive coverage of significant topics, all presented in such a way that a general audience can acquire a maximum of information in a minimum of time, making *Tune Up Your French* a highly cost-efficient investment. You do not have to be a French major to read this book; because of its encyclopedic scope, it is not likely that the average student will read it from cover to cover, anyway. *Tune Up Your French* covers such a broad range of topics and idiomatic expressions that it could easily be used as a companion text already in an advanced intermediate language course. It could also be assigned as reserve reading in a first-year language course as well as in a French civilization class, since it contains so many useful cultural tidbits that are not readily available elsewhere. It could also help students who studied French a long time ago and who are looking for a way “back into” the language to get excited about French again; if and when they get stuck, they can always refer back to a more traditional text book. “Tune up your French” with this book, and I guarantee that you will have a better sense of what “sounds right” in French! And you will get a laugh or two, or three into the bargain (“Pronouncing the French *r* nonchalantly can seem like trying to be subtle when you gargle” [2]). Keep this little book on your bedside table, and chances are your next vacation will be in “*la douce France*.” And you might get “stuck” for good and retire in France where the mandatory retirement age is a sweet 62! Be careful what you wish for.

Tune Up Your French consists of ten basic “tune-ups,” each presenting a different linguistic and cultural topic, covering everything from body language and gestures, manners, everyday life, and table talk to conversation starters, slang, and idiomatic expressions, not counting famous French quotations, *faux amis*, and the subjunctive in everyday usage. Many of these topics are mixed up, just like in real life: “*Vogue la galère*” is a subjunctive used in an idiomatic expression which also happens to be a famous French quotation, and is the sort of expression that might be catalogued under several different rubrics. The fact that *Tune Up Your French* is written in English should not detract from its usefulness. This is not a language text per se but rather a cultural primer (which could be used in a language course); all the topical French vocabulary and phrases are translated into idiomatic English and accompanied by explanations when appropriate, but at no time (and with good reason) is there any attempt to teach grammar.

By way of introduction, the author offers us a short, ten-page guide to French pronunciation titled the “Zazie Effect” (after Raymond Queneau’s now classic iconoclastic roman in which this surrealist author plays with the full register of sounds in French), which contains a number of perceptive and pithy insights into the originality of the French language: French is very much unlike English and seems to have a mind of its own; you have to work hard to pronounce French; you use your nose as well as your mouth and throat; you don’t expect to hear what you see at the end of a word; syllables start with consonant sounds and end with vowel sounds; there is no pause between words or syllables; contractions are required; the rhythm is steady; statements become questions through a change in intonation; in fact, intonation creates meaning. No wonder Anglo-Saxons have such a difficult time with French.

To give the reader a flavor of what to expect, let me look at just one topic. After thinking long and hard, I finally chose *Tune-Up 5: Table Talk* because I am about to begin the partitive article in my first-semester French language class, which is usually taught in conjunction with food, and I have long been looking for a supplemental chapter to enhance the cultural components of my first-year French text. *Table Talk* is organized just like the other 9 *Tune-ups*: a Preview outlines chapter content; a thematic introduction follows, reminding readers of the central place of food in France; an initial cultural quiz on French table manners will reveal how much you really know about what not to do at the table; several short pieces follow on all the different meals the French regularly indulge in: where to take them, how to order, how to eat, what to drink (wine!), how to show your appreciation, how to pay (if you are in a restaurant), providing an exhaustive list of the right things to say (and what not to say [never use the word “*garçon*” to get the attention of a waiter!]), when to say them and, last but not least, how. The accompanying MP3 disc (which can be played on most every computer) contains 80 minutes’ worth of Top Ten lists from the text as well as a useful 75-minute refresher course in French, providing ample opportunity to hone correct pronunciation. A final self-correction quiz in the text recaps the main points of the chapter, the mastery of which will empower eager travelers from every walk of life to embark immediately for “Sweet France.”

As should be obvious by now, *Tune Up Your French* is an invaluable cultural resource and should be part of every French instructor’s personal library. It goes without saying that the thousands of words and phrases it contains are less useful if you do not have some background in the language; however, even if you never had much, if any, French, chances are that the cultural commentary and occasional phrase will help you to better understand France and appreciate the particularity of French culture. And you might even luck out and meet a kindred spirit, in which case you can wine and dine that special someone in the City of Light.

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Publisher’s Response

I would like to thank Tom Conner for his thorough and enthusiastic review of the second edition of *Tune Up Your French*. However, as publisher, I feel that a disclaimer is necessary: reading this title does not guarantee that you shall retire to a *gîte* in the south of France, nor that you’ll find *l’amour* along the banks of the Seine. As Professor Conner indicates, this title is likely to inspire such aspirations, but McGraw-Hill cannot be held liable should you fail to achieve either goal!

Author Natalie Schorr has a keen eye into French culture and an even keener ear for the language, and the popularity of this book lies in her ability to interlink the two. The reviewer has provided such a comprehensive picture of the title that I have little more to add, other than perhaps to take issue with the view that the student will not read it from cover to cover. During the development of this title, I found myself at each

proof stage dropping everything for a half-hour or more simply to read from the book for pleasure. I think that every student, teacher, or adult learner wishing to brush up their French or prepare for time abroad will find *Tune Up Your French* an extremely entertaining and insightful read that will be very hard to put down—and in addition find the extensive accompanying audio recordings a highly valuable resource on their MP3 player.

Christopher Brown
Publisher, Language & Study Guides
McGraw-Hill Professional

Amon, Evelyne, Judith Muyskens, and Alice C. Omaggio Hadley. *Vis-à-vis*. 5th Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-07-328945-8. Accompanied by an Instructor's Annotated Edition, a Workbook/Laboratory Manual, an Instructor's Manual, Testing Program, audio CDs and audiotapes, integrated DVD, and Online Learning Center.

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

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

The 467-page (not counting appendices) text is divided into sixteen chapters, each consisting of four *leçons* and a two-page cultural section titled *Le blog de* (named after one of the fifth edition's recurring characters—Léa, Hassan, Juliette, and Hector). Chapters open with a beautiful color picture and clear chapter outline detailing the communicative objectives of the chapter, along with the chapter vocabulary, grammar, and culture, all of which are beautifully integrated with each other to teach a given theme (e.g., school, likes and dislikes, family, dress, food, holidays, travel, the city, media, cultural heritage, to name some of the more striking chapter themes).

Fortunately, grammar topics have not been shuffled around much since the fourth edition, making it quite painless for instructors to make the transition to the new, fifth edition (even the page numbers remain the same), but the changes are substantive

enough to warrant the epithet “new.” According to the Introduction, New and updated features include the following:

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

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

- *Lecture* readings that have been revised and include new headings as well as adjustments to length and content to help students navigate the text.
- The *Pour s’amuser* feature contains jokes, puzzles, quotations, and other brief activities.
- *La vie en chantant* includes links to the new iTunes playlist, brief biographies of singers and musical groups, and pre- and post-listening exercises for each song featured.
- Video activities in *Le vidéoblog de* focus on vocabulary, comprehension, and cross-cultural comparisons.
- Images have been added to appeal to today’s students who are increasingly visual learners.

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

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

The *Workbook/Laboratory Manual* is virtually unchanged from the fourth edition, and the veteran user of *Vis-à-vis* will breathe a sigh of relief, knowing that s/he will not have to redo the entire class syllabus. The exercises in the *Workbook/Laboratory Manual* have undergone some cosmetic changes (mostly for the better) and

are basically the same, but they are splendid; it is hard to imagine how they could be further improved. This reviewer is of the opinion that Lab exercises are an integral part of any first-year program; I regularly assign most of the oral exercises, which, though sometimes tedious, give students the opportunity to improve their oral comprehension skills. I should point out that there is also the Online Workbook/Laboratory Manual, developed in collaboration with Quia, which provides an enhanced and interactive version of the book version, including instant feedback, automatic grading and scoring, and a grade report feature that can be viewed online or printed (*Instructor's Edition* xx) and makes it possible for students to do lab assignments at home and not in the "language lab" (which probably does not exist anymore anyway on most campuses, having long ago been converted into a multipurpose computer lab).

Also, on a more positive note, teachers are encouraged to adopt a companion reader, such as *C'est la Vie* (2005), a wonderful anthology of short stories specifically designed with the "high beginners" in mind, those proverbial *faux débutants* who always make up a sizeable portion of our first-year French students. This nifty reader by Evelyn Amos and Carolyn Nash consists of four original stories that bring the Francophone world to life through the experiences of students and young professionals in France, Guadeloupe, Belgium, and Canada. (*C'est la Vie* was reviewed in the pages of *The NECTFL Review*, no. 57, Spring 2005.)

Just under half the readings (*Lectures*), which thankfully still come at the end of each chapter, are new; and *Lectures* from preceding editions have been revamped with new pictures. Let me point out that it is not a bad thing to keep readings that are up-to-date and capable of interesting the average 18-year-old American student. One complaint I have had in the past has been that many readings were not only dull but impossible to use in the classroom without resorting to major pedagogical acrobatics.

The new *Bienvenue* cultural video selection appears after every fourth chapter and presents cultural footage from various Francophone cities and regions throughout the world (Paris, Québec, Dakar, Brussels, and Fort-de-France, Louisiana, Morocco, Switzerland, and Tahiti). The video is available on DVD, as well as in Centro (www.mhcentro.com), a digital platform that brings together all the online and media resources of the *Vis-à-vis* program. These short video clips present a "day in the life" of each city and are linguistically more accessible to first-year students than many of the segments in previous editions. Overall, the video is simply superb and is integrated with the *Le Blog de* section in each chapter: Léa, Hassan, Juliette, and Hector strike me as very "real" people and talk and behave the way "real" people do. The camera work and acting are first-rate, and the backdrop is always appropriate and culturally relevant to the chapter theme. Moreover, each video segment is accompanied by a host of follow-up activities. It is too bad that the authors have not included the scripts from the appendices in the *Instructor's Edition*, as was the case in the first two editions of *Vis-à-vis*; these were immensely useful to this instructor, who often needed to do some last-minute prep at home before class and who now must face the prospect of taking more than one component of the *Vis-à-vis* program home with him every day or perhaps keeping a print out of the *Instructor's Manual* (where, thankfully, the script is still available) on the kitchen table.

Furthermore, the *Vis-à-vis* online resources have been expanded and streamlined thanks to the creation of the aforementioned Centro digital platform. This valuable online resource is a godsend to students and teachers alike and includes a potpourri of materials: daily French news feeds; self-correcting quizzes for each vocabulary presentation and structure in every chapter; links, keywords, and search engines for the *On est connecté* feature referenced in the textbook; audio files for the *A l'écoute sur Internet* listening comprehension activities found at the end of each chapter in the textbook; and, finally, audio files for the complete Audio Program that accompanies the *Workbook/Laboratory Manual*.

I teach the first-year sequence and have been a faithful user of *Vis-à-vis* (and the seven editions of its predecessor *Rendez-vous*) ever since I entered the profession full-time in the mid-1980s and therefore have a frame of reference. When I reviewed the second and third editions of *Vis-à-vis* for *The NECTFL Review*, I focused on the chapters I happened to be doing in class at the time. For the sake of consistency I will proceed the same way here and consider chapter 7 (which I just finished in French 101) and chapter 12 (in French 102), in order to examine a few specifics and discuss the changes made in the fifth edition.

The title of Chapter 7, *Les Plaisirs de la Cuisine*, remains the same, as does the chapter content and organization of material. This chapter continues the study of French food and introduces students to the delights of French cuisine. In the preceding chapter—on the vagaries of the *article partitif*—students learned basic food items and how to order a meal in a restaurant. Since prices were listed in euros, this is as good a time as any to introduce a cultural unit on the euro (time permitting, of course). In chapter 7 it is time to go shopping in the neighborhood stores and then cook a gourmet meal on one's own. The chapter's grammar lesson is unchanged and focuses on interrogative and demonstrative adjectives and the verbs *vouloir*, *pouvoir*, and *devoir*. The grammar and vocabulary exercises are the same as in the first three editions, but many cultural items (photos, cultural vignettes, etc.) are new (though there are several menus and shopping lists from previous editions which, miraculously, have proved impervious to inflation!) and introduce students to the delights of French cuisine. Teaching French food is tricky, and the authors take a rather standard approach, relating it to pertinent grammar constructions such as the partitive article; however, the focus is consistent, thorough, and, I think, manageable even at the first-year level. The *Le Blog d'Hassan* takes us on a visit to a North African market in the Place Monge in Paris, and the *Reportage* section, immediately following, introduces students to a variety of typical dishes from around the Francophone world. A lot of these skits are educational (and incredibly professional!), since they cover everyday themes such as shopping, ordering a meal in a restaurant, and finding one's way about town, and in many cases echo the chapter theme.

Chapter 12, *La Passion pour les Arts*, provides an introduction to the arts in France and, happily, still includes a review of the main époques and some of the masterpieces one associates with, for example, the medieval period or the seventeenth century. The grammar lesson continues the study of direct and indirect object pronouns, as well as the use of prepositions with verbs (which used to be covered in a later chapter). Most of the material remains unchanged from previous editions, and the reading selection

is still Jacques Prévert's well-known poem *Déjeuner du matin*, which, when one thinks of it, might find a better home in Chapter 8 in a future edition (which teaches the *passé composé, justement*). In the *Le Blog de* section Juliette talks about how she learned to paint at a young age and in the *Le Vidéoblog de* section hooks up with a friend on the Pont des Arts just across from the Musée d'Orsay.

The *Instructor's Manual*, which is available in downloadable Word or PDF versions, offers more detailed teaching suggestions, sample lesson plans, and videoscripts. Even a seasoned teacher will find them useful, especially the ones about scheduling. The sections on language proficiency and ACTFL's guidelines help instructors implement assessment on a daily basis and contain many helpful suggestions about how instructors can use French in the classroom during every class. Finally, the accompanying Testing Program is exceptionally well conceived and provides a comprehensive selection of quizzes, exams, and dictations. The Instructor's Edition of the *Vis-à-vis Online Learning Center* (www.mhhe.com/visavis5) contains the same features as the Student Edition as well as the Testing Program, Instructor's Manual, Audioscript, and Digital Transparencies. A username and password can be obtained free of charge from your McGraw-Hill sales representative.

If you are looking for a new first-year French program, look no further. If student testimonials and outcomes assessment are any indication, *Vis-à-vis* really "works." Check it out at the McGraw-Hill booth at the annual NECTFL conference in Baltimore in April 2010!

Tom Conner
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Publisher's Response

McGraw-Hill is delighted to have the opportunity to respond to Professor Conner's review of the fifth edition of *Vis-à-vis*, which he has used faithfully for many editions. He describes the program as among "the best on the market today." *Vis-à-vis* is a balanced, four-skills program with an emphasis on Francophone culture, described in the above review as containing grammar, vocabulary, and culture that is "beautifully integrated" within each chapter theme. In addition, the fifth edition contains many new and dynamic features, inspired by extensive input from introductory French instructors.

In his review, Professor Conner begins with an overview of the program, including its "zillion ancillaries" which are "easy to use," and highlights in particular the Instructor's Manual (a "gold mine for instructors"), and the exercises in the Workbook/Laboratory Manual ("it's hard to imagine how they could be improved."). He also recommends *C'est la vie*, an anthology of short stories for high beginners, which can be used as a companion to *Vis-à-vis*.

Professor Conner moves on to describe the digital components of the program, newly centralized within CENTRO, which he describes as not only a "valuable online resource," but a "godsend." Within this platform, one can find the cultural videos

which Conner finds “accessible” and “simply superb,” in addition to self-quizzes, audio files, and much more. Online instructor resources are hailed as valuable to new and seasoned instructors alike, including the “exceptionally well-conceived” testing program. Readers who are in search of a new introductory French text will find an excellent overview of *Vis-à-vis* and its ancillaries in this review.

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

Katherine K. Crouch
Senior Sponsoring Editor, World Languages
McGraw-Hill Higher Education

HINDI

Bhatia, Tej K. *Colloquial Hindi — The Complete Course for Beginners*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge, 2008. Includes: text and audio CDs. ISBN: 978-0-415-39527-4.

This newly revised and expanded edition of *Colloquial Hindi* offers an extensive introduction to Hindi for beginners and serves as a solid reference for heritage speakers, who, like the rainbow, span the full gamut, and include everyone from young “Indians” who arrived in this country as children and therefore never learned Hindi properly to semi-literate adults who came here later in life and now are curious about the rich cultural heritage they forsook for one reason or another.

The text opens with a detailed and very helpful introduction to Hindi script, pronunciation, and handwriting, but essentially consists of 10 conversational units. Each unit includes: vocabulary, dialogues, pronunciation, and grammar. Vocabulary has been updated and dialogues created to cover important aspects of Indian culture. Some of the topics included are family, time, travel, cooking, social-sensitive situations, linguistic attitudes, and etiquette. Many examples and exercises are provided so that the student learns to both read and write Hindi. This book would prove invaluable both to those who wish to use the *Devanagari* (Hindi) script and to those who choose not to due to time or other considerations. While Roman is a non-syllabic script, *Devanagari* is syllabic. One of the criticisms of the first edition of this book was that differences in *Devanagari* and Roman provided cumbersome translations; this text allows for a more fluid integration of the two languages side by side.

Colloquial Hindi is aligned with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and The European Language Community standards. Native speakers discuss topics and give students a perspective on South Asian, in particular Indian, culture allowing them to learn and then make comparisons with their own culture. No attempt to translate word for word from English to Hindi is made if there is not a one-to-one correspondence. Instead, the book follows the premise that a student should learn the way that actual speakers of Hindi communicate with one another. Finally, all exercises come with an answer key, which allows independent learners to track their progress as well as provide immediate gratification.

Efficient integration of technology and multimedia is provided by the multimedia material contained in the audio CDs and the online resource guide and the unit-specific Internet links. This addition to the current program in effect creates a cutting-edge program for the study of Hindi.

Overall, we would rate *Colloquial Hindi* as superior and recommend this text as an invaluable core component of a Hindi language program; but it could also serve as a resource for independent learners such as businesspeople, travelers, heritage speakers, and all those with an interest in Indian culture. This is precisely the sort of program that colleges will want to seriously consider as they move to implement a foreign language requirement. Not all students want to study Spanish or LOTS (Languages Other Than Spanish); however, the average department of foreign languages cannot very well afford to hire an instructor of say, Tagalog or Hindi, two up-and-coming heritage languages, just because a handful of students have expressed an interest in learning the language of their ancestors (God knows if they enroll or stay enrolled!). The solution is to implement a self-instructional program along the lines of DULAP (Drake University's Language Acquisition Program [now The World Languages and Cultures Program]) or a CD-ROM self-study program like this one and then engage native speakers on the faculty or at least in the community to serve as tutors or teachers and perhaps bring in an online evaluator from an established program to test learning outcomes in a more traditional manner—through an exam.

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ITALIAN

Mahoney, Judy. Illustrated by Patrick Girouard. *Celebrating the Seasons: Teach Me Everyday Italian*. Volume 2. Minnetonka, MN: Teach Me Inc., 2009. 32 pp. hardcover with audio CD. ISBN 13: 978-1-59972-207-8. For ordering information, visit www.teachmeinc.com or call toll-free (800) 456-4656.

[See pp. 95-96]

Thomson, Robert Stuart. *Operatic Italian*. Victoria, Canada: Goodwin Books, 2008.
ISBN: 0-9696774-7-2.

Operatic Italian represents an invaluable resource for scholars of Italian, opera, etymology, or classics, in addition to being a solid reference for introductory learners as well as native speakers of Italian.

The text is divided into 21 chapters covering all aspects of grammar, idioms, libretti, operatic aspects of *canzoni*, and the influence of Dante on opera. In addition, there is an extensive bibliography and discography; insight into history, composers, and themes; photos; links to Internet sites containing arias and translations; and quizzes accompanied by answer sheets.

Whenever possible, the author provides word-for-word translations, a classic interlinear method. Extensive use of the International Phonetic Alphabet is found throughout, allowing students to remember correct sounds as well as pronunciation. The musicality of the Italian language is emphasized often, as the text shows the musical score above the lyrics. Particular attention is given to the accents, which often get lost or misused when the singer or student is not a native speaker of Italian. A native speaker of Italian listening to opera usually pays particular attention to the singer's pronunciation, and mispronounced words lead to distraction and less appreciation of the overall performance.

One of the central objectives of *Operatic Italian* is to assist the learner in thinking in Italian rather than just going through the motions of translating. Another important aspect of the program is the review of the various lyrics in a historical and cultural context. Not only must singers be able to sing the lyrics, they must also be able to convey the meaning of what is being said; however, this dimension often is lost in opera performances as well as in the classroom.

This is a visionary program that incorporates the classical culture that is such an integral part of the Italian language but is often forgotten in the classroom. It is our opinion that a thorough understanding of the Italian language cannot be achieved without an appreciation of classic literature, which helped shape Italian as we know it today.

Reading about opera's connection to Dante was particularly inspiring. What resonated most was that the musicality of opera comes to life in Dante's poetry as if Dante wrote the *Divine Comedy* as a blueprint for opera, whose music would glorify it. This text provides students not only with the motivation to learn more about opera but also to take on the additional challenge of Italian grammar.

Dante began his journey in a dark forest with no road to follow, much like students of Italian; however, they will find in *Operatic Italian* a road map leading them through the "infernal" nuances of Italian grammar to finally emerge and once again see the stars.

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JAPANESE

Sato, Anna, and Eriko Sato. *My First Japanese Kanji Book: Learning Kanji the Fun and Easy Way!* はじめての漢字の本. Illustrated by Anna Sato. Accompanied by a bilingual MP3 CD. Rutland, Vermont: Tuttle Publishing, 2009. ISBN: 978-4-8053-1037-3. E-mail: info@tuttlepublishing.com; Webpage: www.tuttlepublishing.com; Phone: 1-802-773-8930; Fax: 1-802-773-6993.

The authors of *My First Japanese Kanji Book*, an extraordinary mother-daughter team consisting of Professor Eriko Sato of the State University of New York at Stony Brook and ninth grader Anna Sato, have come up with an ingenious way of teaching 109 basic Kanji characters. The intended audience is children who already know the Japanese alphabets Hiragana and Katakana and understand some Japanese, as well as heritage speakers, primarily bilingual children in elementary school eager to learn Kanji.

Kanji are Japanese characters which express not only sounds but also meanings. The 109 Kanji that appear in this text are frequently used for reading basic Japanese and are the kind of Kanji that Japanese children growing up in Japan would learn in school. Incidentally, Japanese children, too, struggle with Kanji and typically learn Hiragana first and then, and only gradually, Kanji. The Satos only introduce Kanji that are relevant to a young person's life and move from simple to complex Kanji, always trying hard not to overwhelm students.

Let's examine how the authors go about introducing 109 Kanji to an audience of bona fide beginners. *My First Japanese Kanji Book: Learning Kanji the Fun and Easy Way!* contains 36 well-conceived and progressively more challenging lessons. Each lesson includes a short poem that reflects children's experiences and their world, illustrated with a picture painted by one of the authors of this book, the very talented teenager Anna Sato. Her work is quite exquisite, really, and either illustrates or at least reflects (often in very poetic form) the content of the lesson. The accompanying MP3 audio CD enables students to listen to a narrative (usually a short poem) read by a young Japanese native speaker. These short poems reflect children's viewpoints or Japanese parents' childhood memories and are always translated into English. Listening to the audio CD makes it easy for learners to read the poem on their own and to practice the Kanji characters that appear in each lesson. By reading the poem out loud, students will quickly learn the Kanji until they are able not only to read them but also produce them on their own in acceptable handwriting.

In Lesson 1, for example, titled *Karate*, we learn to write the numbers one, two, and three in Kanji (which is a lot harder than one might think, given the numerous derivations of each number, e.g., one, first, best, etc.). These three Kanji are introduced in an organized manner through reading and writing. First, learners need to learn how to read Kanji: usually each Kanji has a *kun*-reading (Japanese reading) and an *on*-reading (Chinese reading). The meaning of the Kanji is given in English and only then do students learn how to write actual Kanji characters. Students learn the correct stroke order by studying diagrams, traced in red, with numbers on the left side of each stroke, showing which line needs to be drawn first. The basic rule of writing Kanji is to write from left to right and/or from top to bottom. Learners simply have to follow the correct stroke order, which is not any more difficult than you make it. If you like, you

can practice writing Kanji while listening to the CD. Next, learners need to practice writing and can do so in the empty squares provided on each page. Eventually, most learners will get the hang of it. Practice makes perfect, and you can have a lot of fun while learning Kanji. Listening to the CD, learners can practice reading poems aloud and improve their pronunciation by imitating the native speakers on the CD, who speak slowly and enunciate clearly.

The first couple of lessons introduce numbers and do so in a variety of contexts that learners are bound to be familiar with, moving from karate to “my grandpa’s hometown,” by way of the clock and the park playground. Counters are a notorious pitfall in beginning Japanese, since they are determined quite arbitrarily, or so it seems, at least to non-native speakers, by the type of object being counted and its “shape” (thick or thin, etc.). Reading the poem out loud will help you remember Kanji, for example, familiar words such as *ichi* (one), *ichiji* (one o’clock), and *ichiban* (number one, the best). The list of words included on each page (and each lesson is seldom more than one or, at most, two pages long) shows learners how to use a basic Kanji—for example, one, two, or three—to form new words: one thing; one o’clock; number one; the best; January 1st. Four to eight words are introduced for each Kanji. By the time you finish Lesson 36, you will be able to identify many hundreds of words formed by the 109 Kanji you have learned.

By “Learning Kanji the Fun and Easy Way,” young learners are introduced to Kanji through culturally rich and age-appropriate poems and beautifully painted illustrations. This reviewer found that this text is conceptually imaginative and well conceived to help young learners to study on their own whether they are young Japanese living outside Japan or Japanese-English bilingual children of elementary school age.

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RUSSIAN

Aizlewood, Robin. Routledge Intensive Russian Course. London and New York: Routledge, 2007. Useful websites available at <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415223003/websites/default.asp> ISBN: 978-0-415-22300-3. \$49.95.

This straightforward beginner’s textbook in Russian covers the basics of the language in three sections, each subdivided into units and lessons. Part I, consisting of four units, provides the foundation. Along with the introduction of the alphabet, basic rules for pronunciation and intonation, and greetings, it presents the nominative, accusative, prepositional, and genitive singular cases of nouns and adjectives, along with first and second conjugation verbs in the present tense, the irregular verb *жить*, and reflexive verbs. It addresses communication skills such as asking and answering simple questions, descriptions, and time of day.

Part II concentrates on intensive development. Although it contains only three units, as the author notes, it is demanding in scope and intensity. It covers the remaining cases, most plurals, and verbs of motion. It also introduces the aspects, along with

the past and future tenses, and includes verbs with consonant mutations, numbers, and time expressions. Communicative materials center on student life and interests, more university- than home-oriented. Directions for practice and exercises appear increasingly in Russian without any English.

Part III, consisting of three units, stresses revision and development. It contains such challenging items as the genitive plural, agreement with numbers, and short comparatives. It also provides an introduction to participles and discursive Russian. Interestingly, household and food items, which usually appear early in most textbooks, occur here, although this vocabulary was previously interspersed throughout the text.

While the amount of grammar is heavy, the author addresses the students in a conversational manner. There are examples for each syntax item, in Russian with English translations. The introduction contains a glossary of grammatical terms, which are given in Russian as well as English in the text. An extensive introduction in English addresses unfamiliar concepts, such as case and aspect. The cases and verbs occur early in the text, so that students can form meaningful sentences as soon as possible.

The author makes every effort to maintain a communicative approach. Each lesson contains dialogues in authentic Russian, which students can hear and adapt. Directed exercises help them in this process, more clearly than others. The questions often appear before the text, thus directing listening comprehension. Grammar is also incorporated into communicative exercises. Speaking tasks are meaningful and contain the appropriate visual clues, but no model. For example, in one exercise, students tell when certain stores open and close, but must look elsewhere for the appropriate vocabulary.

In the beginning, the vocabulary is listed alphabetically after each unit. After Unit 5, the student must consult the glossary at the end of the volume, which indicates the units where the word occurs. This list contains most of the words used in the text. However, it provides only a Russian-English glossary, not English-Russian. Since there are translation exercises, the student must rely on a dictionary to find unknown words. While the intention may be to prevent word-for-word translations, this may be frustrating to some students.

The author indicates that the text needs supplements. This is especially true for reading. While there are authentic materials throughout, they are minimal and are usually limited to headlines of newspapers and titles, and later, lists and sample messages. In the third section short articles appear. Questions usually precede or follow. It is refreshing to find short poems throughout from authors such as Pushkin, Lermontov, and other classic writers, many not without their tinge of humor. They are followed by English translations and some pertinent commentary.

While most exercises are communicative in nature, the opportunities for drill are limited. There is no workbook to accompany the text. An answer key is provided at <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415223003/resources/answer.pdf>, and thus is accessible to teachers and students. The exercises usually follow each grammar or comprehension topic, so that there is immediate reinforcement. Speaking and writing tasks end the lesson and provide an integrating experience.

There are no specific sections on culture, which, however, is embedded throughout. For instance, when presenting numbers, the author comments briefly on the evolution

of money from Soviet to post-Soviet times. The unit on directions and travel contains a description of the Moscow metro. Like bits of poetry, Russian proverbs dot the text and add interest and culture. Of course one always travels to destinations in Russia, and the weather map features temperatures in Celsius. There are good cultural references on the Website, but no specific links in the text.

This is a “no-frills” textbook. It contains a few photographs in black and white. The book uses drawings to accompany the speaking exercises, such as city plans for directions. The arrangement is linear, with no sidebars or notes. Space is not wasted, and a new lesson begins on the same page where the previous one ended. This is basically a European model, although there is almost no use of British English. The text is both serious and informal, presenting the challenging material in an agreeable way.

Highly motivated students can benefit from such a text. It could serve best in a post-secondary class that meets daily, or at least several times a week. If adopting the text for a class with fewer meetings, one would need three or four semesters to cover the material. While students can read the explanations and do the grammar on their own, they would need a teacher or a fluent speaker for the oral sections. The author states that the book is thorough, but not exhaustive, basically an advantage to students who do not need every item and exception in the beginning.

All in all, this is a solid text, as is customary for Routledge. It addresses the Standards in a natural way, and invites the student to appreciate another language and culture. It is certainly affordable and contains all the structures one would want in a beginning text. It is navigable, with useful appendices and indices. Despite the intricacies of Russian grammar, it is not forbidding. While at first sight it may seem uninviting, it contains a wealth of material and good pedagogical tools.

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Publisher’s Response

We thank the reviewer very much for her constructive comments. Please note that there is also an accompanying workbook to this text: *Modern Grammar Workbook*, \$34.95, ISBN 978-0415-42554-4, as well as a grammar, *Modern Russian Grammar, a Practical Guide*, 2008, \$33.95. For more information please visit www.routledge.com/9780415397506 or telephone 978/0-41439750-6.

Andrea Hartill
Routledge Publishers

Kershul, Kristine K. *Russian in Ten Minutes a Day*. Seattle: Bilingual Books, Inc., 2008. Travelers’ Special (book, Language Map, CD-ROM). ISBN: 978-1-931873-17-8, \$29.95; Book and CD-ROM: ISBN-13: 978-1-931873-10-9, \$26.95; Book only: ISBN-13: 978-0-944502-47-1, \$19.95; CD-ROM only: ISBN-13: 978-1-931873-59-8, \$14.95; Language Map only: ISBN-13: 978-0-944502-90-7, \$7.95.

This slender book with an accompanying CD-ROM and Language Map is an attractive asset to travelers and to those interested in acquiring a basic familiarity with Russian. It is one of a series of twenty languages published by Bilingual Books, Inc. The author, an experienced teacher and traveler, has studied several languages. Her goal is to make language practical while avoiding the drudgery that often discourages students. She avoids traditional grammatical terminology while maintaining acceptable accuracy in the language.

The text is attractive and colorful, with illustrations on each page which, for the most part, are culturally authentic. There are images of Russian money, traffic signs, and artifacts. A plan of the Moscow metro, a map of Russia (or the Russian Federation, as it is now known) and a table for metric system conversion are also included. There are valuable cultural insights, such as the size of Russia with its eleven time zones and Russian table etiquette.

The topics address basic survival skills, beginning with the Russian alphabet and key question words. Other situations include numbers, money, telling time, dining, shopping, and transportation. The vocabulary is limited, but an appendix contains an ample food vocabulary for most occasions. There are numerous exercises to provide reinforcement. In addition, the book includes flashcards and stickers. Some exercises invite the learner to paste the stickers in the book or to place them around the house, so that the learner can repeat them whenever possible. In fact, the text recommends constant repetition and drill.

Although the text aims to avoid formal grammar, it includes conjugation exercises. However, the models do not explain which endings belong on which verbs. The learner is asked to conjugate such verbs as *продавать*, *спать*, *мочь*, and several others without any indication of irregularities, consonant mutation, or change in stem. It is hard to imagine that anyone could do that without consulting other sources. The text does use verbs correctly in several contexts, but the transfer might prove challenging to the average learner or traveler.

The text indicates the approximate pronunciation of all Russian words through English phonetics. In Russian, it is imperative to know the stressed syllable in order to account for vowel reduction. However, neither the Russian words nor the phonetic transcription indicates this distinctive feature of Russian. While the learner can hear some words on the CD, not all are included. The devoicing of final consonants is also ignored, as is the final soft sign.

Although most cultural information is accurate, the unit on the use of the telephone harks back to previous times when private and even hotel telephones were a rarity. Nowadays most people have cell phones, and it is no longer easy for the average tourist to find a public phone on the street. The accompanying vocabulary might need a second look. The unit on telling time is practical but rather complex, since it presents the conversational form rather than the universal twenty-four-hour clock, where inflections are at a minimum.

The text does not explain inflections of nouns and adjectives. They are used correctly in context, but the speaker is likely to use most forms in the nominative only. Going from *Где вода?* to *Я хочу воду* is an important distinction, especially with the

shifting stress. While the speech may be intelligible, it is also a challenge to the listener. Fortunately, most Russians are sympathetic interlocutors!

Although the text claims that the person who follows each step will achieve “intermediate level speaking ability,” it is hard to believe that the ordinary learner can arrive at this stage without further assistance, much less if the author is referring to the ACTFL definition. The author also maintains that the learner can create with the language and be understandable to the average Russian. The person can probably do this in a few cases, but not with much consistency.

The CD-ROM accompanying the text features accurate pronunciation by a native speaker, who articulates clearly and distinctly. It uses attractive graphics, allowing the learner to drag the word or object to the proper place and providing visual and audio cues. It also permits unlimited repetition and reinforcement in an interactive atmosphere. It does not follow the textbook, but proceeds by topics, among them: house, outdoors, weather, numbers, colors, verbs, buildings. One must click on the image on the home page to access them, and then follow the menu. On the whole, it is a useful tool, using both English and Russian.

While the illustrations in the text are culturally authentic, the graphics in the CD are not. They are the same for all languages; only the words are superimposed. Thus, the house becomes like a suburban one in America, while the text shows what might exist in Russia. Garages are not too common there! In addition, the graphics are sometimes confusing and even an experienced speaker is likely to misinterpret them. There is also an error in the section on opposites: *новый* is written as *новых*. The use of *приходить* is open to misinterpretation, when the text says that it means “to arrive (vehicle, train).” This is true if you are talking about the vehicle arriving, but not the person arriving by vehicle.

The Language Map, a ten-page-leaflet, is a useful tool. It contains lists with survival vocabulary, such as meeting people, asking questions, money, numbers, hotels, and emergencies. It lists the Russian expression, the translation, and the phonetic transcription. The alphabet appears on the cover, with numbers on the top and bottom of each section. Each page is sheathed in plastic, making the language Map both practical and convenient for travelers. In fact, I recommended it to my group in a 2010 trip to Russia.

On the whole, the Russian packet in the “Ten Minutes a Day” series is a useful but limited tool. It is good for travelers and can add enrichment to people who already know two or three languages and wish to learn another. For those serious about an academic approach to language, it can serve as an attractive supplement. The CD-ROM offers good reinforcement for any class or program, and the Language Map is a quick reference. This affordable series brings languages into the realm of the possible for many people and stresses their importance.

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SPANISH

Ramsey, M. M. *A Textbook of Modern Spanish as Now Written and Spoken in Castile and the Spanish-American Republics*. ASIN: B00 21 C1 IYK. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Library, 2009.

This text is one of a series of reprints from the collection of the University of Michigan Library. The original volume was published in 1894 by Marathon Montrose Ramsey, former Professor of Romance Language at Columbia University (now the George Washington University), and was revised by Robert K. Spaulding (Professor of Spanish at the University of California at Berkeley) in 1956. After being unavailable for many years (except to those of us of a certain age who keep a beloved and closely guarded edition on our shelves), *A Textbook of Modern Spanish* has been digitally reprinted and is now available from several booksellers.

Those of you unfamiliar with this text may wonder why anyone would care about a grammar published over one hundred years ago (and care so much that it was virtually impossible to find a used copy of the text because those extant were so cherished!). The answer is obvious: “Ramsey,” as Spanish college students used to refer to the tome, is the definitive, go-to authority on the grammar, vocabulary, and syntax of the Spanish language. If you have a question, Ramsey has the answer. From orthography to gender and number, prepositions to relative pronouns, uses of the subjunctive to “Laws of Agreement,” this text has it covered. *A Textbook* even includes a discussion of the literary, stylistic uses of the preterit and imperfect.

The text is organized by chapters that focus on a specific topic (e.g., Orthography and Pronunciation, *Por* and *para*, Numerals and Numerical Values, The Subjunctive Mood). The individual aspects of each topic are numbered in a continuous fashion from the beginning to the end of the volume. This format facilitates the search for a particular explanation, for example. if we look up *quien* in the index, we find “*quien*: relative, 279-80, 681-5; includes antecedent, 682; *quien* . . . *quien*, as correlatives, 697.” Easy, isn’t it? Many entries are accompanied by helpful notes entitled “Remarks” in earlier editions, now unnamed but indicated by the symbol ☞, which provide further information about actual or historical usage and etymology. The grammatical explanations are followed by examples—in Spanish, of course, but with parallel translations into English, and each chapter ends with an exercise in order to allow the diligent student to practice what he or she has just reviewed.

Practical uses aside (and these are compelling enough), Ramsey also offers the avid learner of Spanish fascinating tidbits of arcane knowledge and felicitous phrasing. In earlier editions of the volume many of the examples that accompanied the grammar explanations were taken from literary works. Thus, under the explanation of “*Alguno*, when referring to things,” one found: “*Allí se pasaba largas horas, charlando, enterándose del expedienteo, fumando algún ciagarrillo.*” (Pérez Gladós, Miau, XXI). The edition that was reprinted eliminated these literary examples but retained the original sentences penned by Ramsey; these are nearly as fascinating as his borrowed citations. We find, for example, under a discussion of the future and future perfect conditional: “*Se le veía sorbiendo su chocolate, sin que nada indicara que aquel hombre de trazas tan pacíficas se convirtiese en tigre furibundo si le contrariarse algo.*”

The reprinted edition differs from my earlier edition in some regrettable ways. My edition uses more effective outline-numbering to organize the material within the chapters; the index in the reprinted edition is incomplete (the first portion appears to have been torn out of the original); and the index that remains is less detailed. I also, of course, miss the literary examples so carefully collected by M. M. Ramsey. However, the volume is a treasure that belongs on the shelf of anyone who truly loves the Spanish language, and we all owe a heartfelt Thank You to the University of Michigan for making it available.

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Mahoney, Judy. Illustrated by Patrick Girouard. *Celebrating the Seasons: Teach Me Everyday Spanish*. Volume 2. Minnetonka, MN: Teach Me Inc., 2009. 32 pp. hardcover with audio CD. ISBN 13: 978-1-59972-202-3.

[See pp. 95-96]

Rodríguez Nogales, Francisco, Fabían A. Samaniego, and Thomas J. Blommers. *¡Dímelo tú!: A Complete Course*. Boston: Heinle, 2010. Annotated Instructor's Edition with audio CD (Hardcover). Includes: Workbook/Lab Manual, Instructor Answer Key, Lab Audio Script, iLrn: Heinle Learning Center, Video on DVD, and PowerLecture (with testbank and PowerPoint slideshows). ISBN: 1-4282-1148-9.

¡Dímelo tú! is a communication-driven textbook that aims to develop students' Spanish language abilities by maximizing interaction. This textbook is designed for college-level students, and the authors recommend it be used over three semesters. Just like most textbooks on the market today, *¡Dímelo tú!* comes with numerous ancillaries that enhance the content of the text, including the audio CD, online tools, DVD, and CD-ROM.

The textbook consists of 14 chapters plus an introductory chapter, several appendices, and Spanish-to-English as well as English-to-Spanish glossaries. Each chapter is divided into three *Pasos* (lessons) and an appropriately named *En preparación* (in preparation) section which students preview for homework. Although culture is built into each section of the text, the explicit cultural focus starts at the beginning of the chapter in *¡Las fotos hablan!* (Photos talk!) and is continued in the *Noticiero cultural* (cultural news) section. The cultural infusion is continued in the presentation of vocabulary. In a listening section, Spanish-speaking celebrities from the region speak about themselves or their culture using the targeted vocabulary in context. *¡Dímelo tú!* provides even more culturally relevant material when the literature of the country is highlighted in *El rincón de los lectores* (reader's corner). In each activity where culture is highlighted, the textbook provides search phrases for Google or YouTube to supplement learning with technology. All of these activities combine to create chapters that are focused on developing knowledge of cultures, grammar, and vocabulary, making connections and comparisons, and applying what students have

learned into their communities while advancing students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

Each *Paso* corresponds to the grammatical and cultural theme of the chapter and focuses on communication with the activities presented in *Ahora, ¡A hablar!* (Now, let's talk!) and *Y ahora, ¿por qué no conversamos?* (And now, why don't we chat?). Since the students already completed specific grammar-focused activities from *En preparación* for homework, *¡Dímelo tú!* is able to include these activities for students to interact meaningfully in pairs or small groups while in class. *Ahora, ¡A hablar!* begins students with more basic tasks and builds to information gap activities and role plays in *Y ahora, ¿por qué no conversamos?* One example of such communicative activity is in *Capítulo 4, Paso 2*. Students are directed to complete an information gap activity. One student sees the drawing in the chapter including clothing items and some prices while the second student looks at a drawing of clothing and different pricing information in *Appendix A*. The students have to use the target language to ask their partner prices of items that they want while they are in a store in Mexico City, which is an appropriate cultural reinforcement and activity that students would likely experience when traveling abroad.

The large amount of meaningful activities that combine culture and skills development is one of this textbook's strongest points. Allowing students to see well-selected, bright photographs of people and landscapes of the country under study provides potential for college-aged students to develop a genuine interest in the countries presented. Once this interest is established, students have many opportunities to participate in activities requiring interaction among each other in a cultural context, something that is imperative for second language acquisition. Students are also exposed to authentic input, allowing them to delve deeper into culture than most textbooks allow, through pictures, readings, music, and dialogues. This presentation of genuine materials provides a real glimpse of life in the countries presented. Combining such material in order to foster students' progression in all four communicative areas provides opportunity for development of effective communication in the target language.

¡Dímelo tú! also provides opportunities to use many ancillaries. Provided with the textbook are four audio CDs, which help students improve their pronunciation by studying on their own. Additionally, they include the listening material for preview before class for better comprehension. Students also have access to the companion Website (<http://www.cengage.com/spanish/dimelotu>) which provides access to music for purchase, an online verb conjugator and other potentially helpful Web links. It also provides vocabulary practice, which comes in the form of an English definition linked to a Spanish word in the forms of crossword puzzles, concentration, and flashcards. Additional ancillary components can be purchased, including: Quia, an online, audio-enhanced workbook/lab manual; iLrn: Heinle Learning Center; video on DVD; a workbook/lab manual; and a lab audio program. Instructors can also purchase PowerLecture, which includes an instructor's resource manual, the complete testing program, and PowerPoint slideshows corresponding to each chapter. They can also buy a workbook/lab manual answer key and lab audio script. PowerLecture will likely save instructors who take advantage of the slideshow presentations a large amount of time. Furthermore, the testing program could save instructors time designing materials. It

could be used for additional practice for students if instructors prefer to design their own assessments. The ancillaries provided are potentially very helpful to both teachers and students.

Although well-selected pictures begin the presentation of culture in *¡Dímelo tú!* in ways that other textbooks do not, an aspect that would benefit from more pictures is the presentation of vocabulary. The students are exposed to vocabulary aurally in the chapter and then to comprehensive lists of Spanish words followed by their English definitions. Although vocabulary in context is helpful, the opportunity to bind the L2 meaning with a picture should be combined with this technique for a more effective presentation. Although it would be almost impossible to provide pictures for every vocabulary word included, it would help to gloss the targeted words with pictures in the first presentation of vocabulary. Moreover, it would be helpful to also include other related words and their picture counterparts in this same section. For example, if *fútbol* (soccer) was a targeted word, gloss it with a picture and provide other activities [e.g., *béisbol* (baseball) and *baloncesto* (basketball)] in the same section to further enhance vocabulary presentation.

Overall, *¡Dímelo tú!* is a comprehensive textbook that focuses largely on the unique cultures of many Spanish-speaking countries through reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities. This textbook provides the opportunity for students to become familiar with grammar concepts outside the classroom so that they can focus entirely on communicating and interacting in the target language while in class, something that is very important in a communicative-based course. This being said, *¡Dímelo tú!* would be ideal for institutions with extremely motivated students who are prepared to master material outside of class and instructors who are willing to adhere to this design.

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Marqués, Sarah. *La lengua que heredamos: curso de español para bilingües*. 6th Edition. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2009. ISBN: 978-0-470-08155-6.

The latest edition of *La lengua que heredamos: curso de español para bilingües* was designed for students of Hispanic background to improve their formal knowledge of Spanish. The text contains one preliminary lesson, 22 chapters, five reviews, a Spanish-English dictionary, an appendix, and an index. The preliminary lesson contains suggestions for improving reading, writing, and vocabulary; additional preparatory activities; and before and after activities. Each of the subsequent chapters is intended to be a self-contained unit as the text is not written in sequential order. Rather, this text is designed as a reference tool to help students address certain deficiencies in their ability to use Spanish correctly. Each chapter begins with a map and related data about a country. Miscellaneous information about the Hispanic world is provided to allow for deeper discussions. Rather than being geared toward any particular group or region, this text covers many, if not most, Spanish-speaking regions in the world.

Reading sections offer information about Spanish-speaking countries and Spanish-speaking subgroups in the United States. Additional sections are: *Antes de leer* (Before the Reading), which includes questions related to the reading and strategies to improve reading skills; *Después de leer* (After Reading), which includes comprehension questions; *Más allá de la lectura* (Beyond the Reading), which requires more subjective answers; *Mejore su vocabulario* (Improve Your Vocabulary), which includes exercises where the students utilize new terms learned, often taken from periodicals and literary works; *Temas para redactar y conversar* (Topics for Writing and Discussion), which gives three related topics from the reading allowing the opportunity for additional oral and written practice; *Semejanzas y Contrastes* (Similarities and Differences), which is devoted to false cognates and overextension of English. It also discusses idioms; *Gramática* (Grammar) offers many grammar exercises to provide a strong foundation in the Spanish language. Topics include accents, prefixes and suffixes, verb conjugations, letter writing, and humor. Reference material in this text includes a list of authors detailing the Hispanic experience in the United States. False cognates, jokes, popular phrases using animals, an answer key is available upon an instructor's request

The focus on grammatical and structural concepts that are particularly difficult for English speakers trying to master Spanish is one of the strengths of the program. Particular attention is given to idiomatic meanings of certain expressions that might confuse the inexperienced speaker, who naturally has a tendency to literally translate into English. Effective strategies aimed at clarifying the real meaning of expressions taught are always provided in context.

In each chapter, we find several sections presenting new vocabulary, as well as a comprehensive analysis of sentence structure. Each chapter begins with a fully integrated tool where students can put all their strategies, vocabulary, and grammar knowledge together, engaging in listening, reading, writing, and speaking activities at the discourse level in a realistic cultural setting.

Although *La lengua que heredamos: curso de español para bilingües* is primarily designed for students of Hispanic background, it would be an excellent resource for educators who are not familiar with every single Spanish-speaking culture or country. The organization of the text into self-contained units allows for efficient application of differentiated instruction in a classroom with a multilevel background.

In conclusion, the potential of the program definitely surpasses the general requirements of a conventional classroom setting. Without hesitation, we would recommend it as an invaluable core component of a world language program at both the high school and university levels.

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Gallego, Olga, and Concepción B. Godev. *Más allá de las palabras: A Complete Program in Intermediate Spanish*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2008. Includes: Textbook, audio CD. ISBN: 0-471-46578-X.

As stated in the preface, *Más allá de las palabras: A Complete Program in Intermediate Spanish* is “geared towards beginning-intermediate programs” and “designed for use at the third and fourth semesters of college study.” It meets the National Standards in Foreign Language Education. The standards are also stated in the preface.

This is a two-part textbook. Part I consists of four units, or *Unidades*, and Part II of five units. Each unit is further divided into themes, or *temas*.

The textbook contains a fairly traditional arrangement of chapters; that is, it follows the graduated approach to foreign language acquisition. Part I focuses mostly on the review of previously learned grammar and previously learned and new vocabulary; Part II contains new grammatical structures.

However, in comparison with other intermediate Spanish language textbooks, *Más allá* distinguishes itself in three major areas: first, the variety of well-chosen, interesting, and informative reading selections; second, the inclusion of the *Miniconferencia*, a CD containing lecture material designed for listening comprehension; and third the thematically integrated manner in which the material is presented. I will address each of the three areas, beginning with the reading section.

The topics of the reading section presented in the form of articles focus on cultural traditions of Hispanic people everywhere, their history, their literature, and their expression in the fine arts, as well as in the modern, popular arts. They are written succinctly but contain enough information to be meaningful to a student. From my experience as a former foreign language student and now instructor of Spanish, the importance of interesting reading material cannot be overemphasized in the teaching of a new language. It is precisely through reading about a people that a student acquires an interest in the language, previously viewed as a requirement to be fulfilled, often after some frustration and suffering. It is also in reading that the student encounters new vocabulary, and, in the context of the text, learns it much more effortlessly. Finally, it is by reading that the student can see and understand the practical application of the various grammatical structures practiced in model sentences, where he sees them at work. And as the student's ability and confidence of expression in the new language increases, good and interesting reading material provides ample opportunity for class discussion. When such a discussion ensues, when students begin to participate in that discussion, well, that is the moment of absolutely positive class dynamics, otherwise known as enthusiasm. In my opinion and experience, *Más allá* provides students and instructors alike with precisely the ingredient which many other foreign language programs have neglected: it provides thematically integrated, informative, and, most importantly, interesting reading selections, which are neither too short, sacrificing content, nor too long, leaving the student overwhelmed.

As noted earlier, the *Miniconferencia* consists of a CD that presents a series of readings designed for the student's listening comprehension. Complementing to the textbook, the *Miniconferencia* also consists of Parts I and II. The readings in Part I explore the cultural differences in the perception of friendship in English-speaking

and Hispanic society, as well as different perspectives on death. The reading on bilingualism considers long accepted myths and misconceptions relating to a speaker's native language and the acquired second language. All three readings are instructive and thought-provoking. The readings in Part II mostly explore different types of musical expressions in the Hispanic world, including their historical background. Each of these readings is also quite instructive and lends itself to further class discussion. The reading on the European Union is the only one that seemed to me to be somewhat tedious. Each of the readings is followed by the *caja de palabras*, that is, a chest of new vocabulary in that particular reading. My only suggestion here would be to perhaps present the new vocabulary prior to the reading rather than after.

My last comment examines the thematic integration of the material presented in *Más allá*. To illustrate this point, I will use as an example *Part I, Unidad 3, tema 8*, of the text. Here, the introduction in the text analyzes the term "bilingual." Next, a set of preparatory vocabulary and expressions is presented. It is followed by the listening comprehension reading on bilingualism, followed by the *Miniconferencia*. The reading selection continues the topic by addressing the modern phenomenon of "cyberspanglish." The grammar section of *Unidad 3*, the use of the subjunctive with expressions of emotion, is further modeled around the topic of bilingualism with a reading and an 'opinion' writing section.

I used *Unidad 3, tema 8*, merely to illustrate the thematic integration of the program presented in *Más allá*. This thematic approach is consistent throughout the chapters of *Más allá* and, as such, is conducive to a more in-depth examination of each culturally and historically based topic, which in turn invites reflection and stimulates student interest, and also that of the instructor.

In summary, I can only praise *Más allá de las palabras*; it is an outstanding work because it combines traditional teaching of grammar with what has been needed now for many years: instructive and intelligent content presenting the history, civilization, art, and cultural traditions of Hispanic peoples everywhere.

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Stein, Gail. *Working Spanish for Teachers and Education Professionals*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2008. ISBN 978-0-470-09523-2.

The small phrasebook *Working Spanish for Teachers and Education Professionals* is jam packed with virtually every phrase and vocabulary item that an English-speaking teacher, administrator, or staff member, from day care through high school, would need in order to bridge communication gaps with Spanish-speaking students and their parents or guardians.

The topics included in the phrase book cover "pronunciation," "numbers," "time," "days, months, dates, seasons, holidays, and the weather," "classroom commands and rules," "essential phrases," "day care and pre-kindergarten," "registration," "in, around, and after school," "medical," "content areas," "expectations and consequences," "the

special-needs student,” and “planning for the future.” Each chapter has sub-sections; for example, the “Classroom Commands and Rules” chapter is divided into sections on “In the Classroom” and “On the Playground.” Each entry includes phonetic spellings and contextualized examples, so the phrase book can be used by novices in a variety of educational and social situations, including everyday situations and special ones.

The author effectively encourages those who might be intimidated to use a foreign language by emphasizing the relative ease of pronouncing Spanish for English speakers, and the general tendency of non-English-speaking students and families to be grateful for educators’ efforts at bridging the communication gap. Additionally, each chapter gradually introduces more complex language by starting with the very basics, then moving into more specifics, and ending with examples that contextualize the phrases. Educators using this book should keep in mind that some of the phrases are fairly advanced and might elicit advanced language from the listener. With practice, the educator will learn which phrases are most effective for him or her, and how to best use the book to match his or her proficiency in Spanish.

Another strength of this phrase book is that it includes basic guidelines for speaking to different people in different contexts, such as to an individual versus a group, either informally or formally. This is accomplished without the inclusion of overwhelming or confusing grammatical rules. The few grammatical rules included in the phrase book (the two rules of accentuation and stress, the single versus double *r* sounds, and how to make the singular “you” form the plural, for example) are explained in a clear, concise manner. Their inclusion enhances the usability of the phrase book while keeping the focus on talking in the language, rather than talking about the language.

One shortcoming is that the text mentions neither the varieties of Spanish pronunciation and dialect employed by the authors, nor the issue of language variety in society. A brief mention of this important issue would have better prepared the user of the phrase book for the language diversity likely to be encountered when interacting with families from various Spanish-speaking countries. It would also help the more proficient user understand why certain words were chosen over others, for example, *discutir* (instead of *hablar de*) for “to discuss,” *pasar* (instead of *aprobar*) for “to pass an exam,” and *ignorar* (instead of *no hacer caso a / no hacer caso de*) for “to ignore.”

Other minor flaws include a few typos (for example; *porciento* instead of *por ciento*, and *parar* instead of *para*) and a few other errors such as not consistently providing both the formal and informal commands or the “regularization” of an irregular verb (for example, *andó* instead of *anduvo*). Additionally, as with most books of this genre, the user has to be able to decipher the use of parentheses and brackets for the various options within a given sentence. Sentence structures such as “*No lo (la)(s) [te] entendi*” (56) can be intimidating, but once the user knows how these writing conventions function—that one structure provides various ways to say the same thing to different people—it becomes more user-friendly. Finally, the small font and virtual lack of space for notes are also inherent drawbacks of a book this size.

Overall, the various strengths of the phrase book outnumber its minor shortcomings. Most importantly, the book provides practical knowledge for effective real-life communication. For example, the phrase book includes the pronunciation of the letters and numbers, in case the educator has to write something down or spell

something out loud. It also explains potentially confusing cultural differences such as the opposing uses of the period and the comma in Spanish and the ways in which the numbers 1 and 7 are generally written in Spanish as opposed to in English.

Although the phrase book is intended for educators of children and youth, it could easily be used with adult learners of English, as well. In addition, its thorough and organized structure would ensure its usefulness in situations where there is a translator present but where the educator wants to actively participate in the conversation. Finally, the phrase book, with its highly useful vocabulary and well-chosen grammatical and cultural explanations, would be an ideal tool for the educator who wants to go beyond bridging linguistic gaps to become a proficient Spanish-English bilingual, able to discuss educational issues with ease.

Personally, as a college professor who coordinates a bilingual and multicultural service-learning collaboration between upper-division college students of Spanish and local Spanish-speaking families, I plan to adopt this phrase book as a resource for my students. They work with Spanish-speaking children and their parents and frequently need to communicate with the parents about educational issues. While they will not need to rely on the phonetic spellings or basic phrases, they will certainly be able to use the phrase book as a valuable resource when discussing very specific or advanced educational concepts. I believe the use of the phrase book will greatly increase my students' effectiveness and confidence when communicating about these concepts in Spanish.

For all of the above reasons, *Working Spanish for Teachers and Education Professionals* is an excellent tool for bridging the communication gap between English speakers and Spanish speakers, and novice-level and more proficient speakers alike will find it immensely useful.

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Morgan, Terrell A. *Sonidos en Contexto: Una introducción a la fonética del español con especial referencia a la vida real*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010. Includes a CD-ROM. ISBN: 978-0-300-14959-3.

Many phonetics texts include references to dialects and some even mix in some cultural distinctions, but *Sonidos en Contexto* by Terrell A. Morgan stands apart by making “real-life” usage central to its exposition of Spanish phonetics. This text, intended for use in intermediate- to advanced-level university courses, does an admirable job of balancing theoretical with practical aspects of the whole range of the Spanish sound system.

Sonidos organizes its content in 26 units: spelling, syllables, accent marks, vowels (7 units), consonants (13 units), dialectology, and several overview/summary units, along with appendices and a glossary of terminology. Spanish is used almost exclusively throughout the text, which is written in an engaging style that will both appeal to and challenge students at the intermediate to low-advanced levels. Morgan is careful to incorporate activities and explanations that highlight key contrasts between

English and Spanish sound systems so that students develop an awareness of the key distinctions while refining their pronunciation of Spanish.

The structure of each unit varies according to the content and objectives but always includes a combination of up to fifteen types of activities that balance theory (reading transcriptions, phonemes, distribution rules, and articulation) and practice (transcription, pronunciation, and listening exercises). A typical unit begins with a transcribed reading passage that features a single phoneme or sound group (e.g., voiceless stops). The student will quickly become familiar with the range of phonemic symbols used throughout the text. The content becomes quite a bit more challenging from the middle units onward as it introduces more advanced concepts (syllable structures, articulation points, neutralization); however, the style remains accessible throughout and the activities, communicative and creative.

The strength of each unit, and the text as a whole, is the infusion of real-life examples and applications. Morgan has developed an impressive array of activities that feature realia (photos of signs, billboards, food labels, advertisements, comics, even the periodic table of the elements), excerpts from authentic texts (poetry, lyrics, puzzles, a United Nations resolution), music, and listening activities on the accompanying CD-ROM. The text's communicative approach is evident throughout, as many exercises require students to interact in meaningful ways as they apply new concepts. Examples of pair and group activities include analysis, identification (using picture cues), and application (rapid repetition and minimal pairs exercises).

Sonidos also draws on a wealth of cultural content to accomplish twin objectives: to provide authentic contexts in which to apply phonological rules and features, and to develop an awareness and appreciation of the varieties of Spanish from around the world. Culture-based activities are not limited to mere differences in pronunciation (e.g., the /l/-/r/ differentiation in some dialects, *seseo/ceceo*) but, rather, touch on topics as varied as *leísmo*, *lleísmo*, refrains, euphemisms, formation of surnames, anglicisms, etymologies, and loan words from Portuguese, Arabic, and Náhuatl. These cultural mini-lessons offer a panorama of the richness of the varieties of Spanish as well as a historical framework of how the sound system changed over time and in different ways.

Another valuable feature of *Sonidos* is the inclusion of a research component in every unit. Students have the opportunity to work independently or in groups to complete research on music, loan words, word forms, rules (abbreviations, accents, spelling) followed or broken, and interviews with native speakers to check for dialectal variation. These mini-projects allow students to apply concepts as well as observe them at work in "real world" contexts.

Sonidos has relatively few shortcomings. The introductory unit may seem a bit daunting to students with no background in phonetics and phonology, given the range of general terms that appear in the introductory chapter. A greater concern is the lack of an answer key at the end of the book, which will limit the text's usefulness for self-study. Students with an advanced background in phonetics may find the book somewhat basic insofar as it avoids the use of close notation (e.g., it does not mark nasalization of vowels). The author, however, notes that this decision has been made deliberately so that the text might be accessible to a broader range of students of Spanish. These

minor points aside, *Sonidos* does an admirable job of covering the whole of the Spanish sound system while opting to eschew a more thorough treatment that could be overly technical and even off-putting.

Sonidos en Contexto is a solid choice of a fundamental text in Spanish phonetics and phonology for a second- or third-year university course. Its logical organization and progression, its treatment of the various phonemes and variations, its creative design of activities to practice concepts, and the inclusion of cultural elements all make it an excellent course textbook.

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SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING

Yoken, Mel B. *Breakthrough: Essays and Vignettes in Honor of John A. Rassias*. New York: Peter Lang, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8204-8190-6.

This volume draws on a wide range of sources—colleagues, former students, friends, relatives—a remarkable collection of testimony and tribute to the legendary language teacher John A. Rassias. The work includes a comprehensive curriculum vitae, an extensive (54-page) interview with Rassias, a large group of essays by faculty at the university and secondary levels, a series of short vignettes authored by former students, colleagues, and teachers who were trained in the Rassias method, and even a few photos of Rassias together with students, friends, and colleagues.

The impact of John Rassias on language teaching in the second half of the twentieth century and the extent to which he has revolutionized and energized the profession during his long career are abundantly documented in this volume. As Sol Gittleman, a friend and colleague at Tufts University, states: “He is also the individual academic in the United States who has done more to advance the cause of foreign language and culture study over the past thirty years, both to undergraduates and to adult learners” (180). The words that come up repeatedly throughout the numerous testimonials are “passion,” “energy,” and “love.” Although John Rassias is well known professionally in the language teaching community, his personal side, much less well known, comes through forcefully in the materials that Mel Yoken has diligently compiled for this volume. For example, the interview contains reflections on his childhood, his family, the Greek community in Manchester, New Hampshire, where he grew up, and his experiences as a Marine tank gunner during the Battle of Okinawa, as well as a sampling of his literary tastes and political views, and his well deserved pride in the thousands of Peace Corps volunteers to whom he has indirectly provided language training over the decades.

We all have heard the stories (or have seen videotaped demonstrations) of Rassias breaking an egg over a student’s head or ripping off his shirt in a moment of theatrical passion. The private Rassias, which many of us do not know, spends countless hours advising students during his office hours, generously offering encouragement,

guidance, or even a little good-natured scolding tempered with humor. The composite portrait that emerges from a wealth of anecdotal evidence is of a man who is totally dedicated to his vocation, and who cares deeply for the individual students who seek out his assistance and advice.

To be sure, Rassias has stirred considerable controversy over the years within the language teaching community. There are those who view the Rassias method as less of a technique and more of a theatrical attitude toward language teaching, a function of personality that cannot be taught. They would argue that the method never took root as was originally hoped, and is currently used in only a small minority of language classrooms. This particular collection, while perhaps not totally dispelling such a view, offers convincing and eloquent evidence of Rassias's energizing influence on language teaching. A number of essays bear no discernible connection to Rassias, and one wonders about the rationale for their inclusion—an eighteenth-century edition of Villon's poetry, a commentary on the difficulty of translating Rimbaud, reflections on teaching Jewish studies, to cite only a few examples. The volume could have benefited from more careful editing. On one page (205), for example, four typos occur within a space of five lines. Former students occasionally misquote Rassias, showing errors in French that he would never make (e.g., "*N'avez pas peur*" instead of "*N'ayez pas peur*" [205] and "*Encroyable*" instead of "*Incroyable*" [248]). Nevertheless, the volume presents compelling testimony of the far-reaching influence of John Rassias as teacher, performer, and caring mentor.

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Oxford, R., and J. Oxford, eds. *Second Language Teaching and Learning in the Net Generation*. Manoa, HI: National Foreign Language Resource Center at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2009. ISBN: 978-0-9800459-2-5.

Second Language Teaching and Learning in the Net Generation focuses on the impact of new technologies on foreign language instruction for "digital natives"—those students who have grown up immersed in a digital- and Internet-driven environment. The editors of this volume have compiled a diverse collection of essays on a range of interesting topics: online and hybrid courses, Second Life, podcasts, computer-assisted writing programs, real-time chat communication, blogs and film, electronic portfolios, and video-based Web-conferencing. The result is an excellent resource for K-16 foreign language instructors who wish to use these technologies to enhance language teaching and learning. Methods instructors might also find the text useful as a supplement to their courses because of the valuable contributions and insights offered.

The book consists of 14 chapters. In Chapter 1, van Compernelle and Williams provide a good historical overview of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) research and practice. The authors describe how CALL has evolved from "computer-as-tutor" (students are provided with positive or negative feedback to structural activities) to "computer-as-pupil" (students interact with the computer) and then to "computer-

as-tool” (students use the computer to gain access to authentic and varied discourse communities). The potential role of CALL in fostering interaction with native speakers of the target language, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, and attention to linguistic form is then discussed. In Chapter 2, Niño discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the most recent online technologies for foreign language instruction: Google, wikis and blogs, Skype (<http://www.skype.com>) and videoconferencing, YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>), podcasting, automatic speech recognition, social networking sites (<http://www.facebook.com>), and Second Life. The author offers helpful suggestions for using these technologies to enhance foreign language instruction. For example, Skype and video conferencing are great tools for providing students with opportunities to communicate with native speakers. Students can upload, view, and share video clips on YouTube. The Cervantes Institute has created an online virtual world to promote language and culture of Spanish-speaking countries (<http://secondlife.cervantes.es/>). Websites and references are provided to assist the reader interested in further exploring the use of these and other online tools to foster collaborative learning with native speakers and other language learners. Fuchs reports on the use of digital technologies in German secondary schools in Chapter 3. Results of her research suggest the need to better integrate CALL into teaching and into teacher education programs.

The authors of Chapters 4 and 5 discuss hybrid learning in the foreign language classroom. In Chapter 4, Goertler reviews the research on hybrid foreign language instruction and then describes the results of a survey on student attitudes and opinions regarding hybrid learning. Results suggest that college students might not be prepared for hybrid instructional formats. For successful implementation to occur, foreign language programs must invest more time in training both students and teachers about hybrid instruction. Rosen describes a hybrid model for delivering foreign language instruction to students at distinct campuses with classroom-based videoconferencing in Chapter 5. The author discusses the successful creation of a collaborative learning environment for students through the use of a course management system that was combined with Wimba voice chat, discussion boards, and other online tools.

In Chapter 6, R. Oxford investigates the effect of computer-based writing programs (*Atajo 3.0* and *Spanish Partner*) on the development of composition skills in Spanish. Student improvement on composition scores and positive attitudes regarding the program support the integration of computer writing-assistant programs in the foreign language curriculum. Results also suggest the importance of providing students with explicit instruction in how to best use these tools to enhance language learning. Bird-Soto and Rengel describe their experiences with implementing podcasts in intermediate college Spanish classrooms in Chapter 7. Their project, *Personalidades de la Cultura Hispánica*, is a series of podcast interviews of authors, artists, and other Spanish-speaking personalities designed to provide students with access to authentic listening materials. In a second project, students produced their own podcasts on topics ranging from music to artists and politics. The authors found that podcasting created a more engaging and creative learning environment. Both projects could be adapted for K-12 use.

The authors of Chapter 8, Ducate and Lomicka, discuss a podcasting project for French and German language learners. The first three podcasting assignments: “Life in your home state,” “Study abroad,” and “French news” each required students to practice speaking the target language through authentic, real-world tasks. Students perceived their speaking, listening, and pronunciation skills to have improved as a direct result of their work with these podcast assignments. The fourth podcast, “Target language podcasts,” was designed for future foreign language teachers in a methods course. The goal here was to provide pre-service teacher candidates with ideas and examples of how to incorporate podcasts into their future foreign language classes. Loza-Wilson and Lozano Espejo describe their use of blogs in intermediate and advanced Spanish courses to foster crosscultural awareness and enhance motivation in Chapter 9.

In Chapter 10, McCourt explores student use of the French second-person pronouns *tu* and *vous* during real-time chat sessions. The chat environment was not sufficient to promote accurate use of second-person address forms, suggesting the importance of developing an approach to teaching pragmatic variation that incorporates explicit instruction, observation, examination, and critical reflection on appropriate language use.

The authors of Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 describe the use of Second Life (<http://www.secondlife.com>)—an interactive virtual-world learning environment. In Chapter 11, Clark describes the use of Second Life to create an immersion experience for students in basic Spanish. In addition, the author shows how traditional Spanish 1 lessons might be adapted for use with Second Life. Cooke-Plagwitz discusses how the characteristics of Second Life’s 3D virtual environment meet the needs and interests of Net Generation students in Chapter 12.

In Chapter 13, Warren describes the advantages and disadvantages of using standards-driven, Web-based portfolios to assess the learning of culture in the foreign language curriculum. The author offers a series of recommendations for incorporating portfolio work into the foreign language classroom. Charbonneau-Gowdy discusses the role of digital technologies in contributing to greater investment in second language learning in Chapter 14.

In conclusion, Oxford and Oxford’s *Second Language Teaching and Learning in the Net Generation* is an outstanding resource for K-16 foreign language instructors who seek to meet the needs and interests of digital natives. The different studies represented in the 14 chapters offer invaluable suggestions for integrating state-of-the-art technologies into the foreign language classroom to create a more authentic, engaging, and interactive language learning environment. The editors and the contributors to this volume are careful to note, however, that the successful integration of new technologies into the classroom must depend on a systematic and planned approach to language instruction based on curricular goals and current instructional models.

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TECHNOLOGY

MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching). California State University, 1997-2010. <http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>

Created in 1997 by the California State University Center for Distributed Learning, the Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching—more commonly referred to by its wine-inspired acronym “MERLOT”—is an online community of over 83,000 members of World Languages and other academic disciplines. Although originally designed for tertiary educators and students, MERLOT is available free of charge to teachers and language learners of all ages and levels, whether meeting online or in an actual classroom. MERLOT provides its members with opportunities to network, connect with guest experts in the Virtual Speakers Bureau and peruse its vast collection of peer-reviewed educational materials pertaining to World Languages.

To gain full access to MERLOT’s resources, a user must register and create a profile, which may include his or her educational history, work experience, and other information. From MERLOT’s home page, a member is greeted with the invitation to begin “Exploring MERLOT in your discipline” and is then presented with search options customized to his or her field of interest. By clicking on “Learning Materials,” Spanish instructors and students find more than 400 peer-reviewed learning materials, including Websites, PowerPoint presentations, blogs, and other resources. These materials can be sorted by a variety of criteria, including overall rating, title, date added, and material type. “Editors’ Choice” and “MERLOT Classics” icons denote award-winning resources, while members’ comments and ratings provide additional information about various teaching and learning materials. Users can create personal collections of educational materials and may organize and name such materials by course level or other system of identification. Members may also submit materials to MERLOT, whether they are resources they have personally developed or Websites they have found useful in their own teaching or learning. MERLOT also offers members the option of copying others’ personal collections to their own.

MERLOT’s success and relevance depends on the willingness of members to regularly update the materials available on its site and serve as peer reviewers who assess the materials’ quality, effectiveness, and ease of use. MERLOT encourages members to carry out these tasks by providing training and incentives to maintain the vitality of its site. Instructors at institutions of higher learning who are interested in learning more about the peer review process may register to participate in the online GRAPE (Getting Reviewers Accustomed to the Process of Evaluation) camp. Various awards, from virtual ribbons denoting the number of materials a member has submitted to the Distinguished Service Award, motivate users to actively participate in expanding and maintaining MERLOT’s resources.

As a member and peer reviewer of MERLOT, I have employed the site’s educational materials in introductory and intermediate Spanish language classes with great success. I have found many valuable Websites by searching the member directory and browsing the personal collections of colleagues in my field. Materials posted by student users prove particularly useful in providing additional resources to my students. Serving as a peer reviewer of Websites that focus on topics as diverse as music from the United

States-Mexico border, *Cantar de mio Cid*, peninsular Spanish accents, and Business Spanish has enabled me to familiarize myself with the latest additions to MERLOT, adapt them to my courses, and refer my students to them as needed. Without MERLOT, my Internet “bookmarks” and Blackboard External Links page would contain far fewer language learning Websites, many of which my students and I consult on a regular basis.

In my use of MERLOT, however, I have found two areas in need of improvement. The first is related to the “Learning Exercises” collection for Spanish, which has only two contributions. The collection should be expanded to include more sites that focus solely on grammar and vocabulary exercises, such as the vast number of resources labeled as “drill and practice” found under “Learning Materials.” This would not only enable students to easily locate the exercises they may need for extra practice but also help to organize the wide array of sites available in the “Learning Materials” collection. Secondly, it would be beneficial to users if the search feature were refined to conduct more detailed searches of teaching materials. For example, due to the limitations of the search engine, an instructor is not able to easily encounter a site that features a “por/para” grammar exercise. In fact, a search using “*por, para*” yields one hit with the description “*ejercicios preparados para exámenes de español*” and “*sustantivos clasificados por otras formas de clasificación*” (emphasis added). None of the exercises on the corresponding site includes those specific to the differences between “*por*” and “*para*.” However, learning materials covering this grammar point abound in MERLOT. To counter this shortcoming, material descriptions should be written to include standardized key phrases that appear in searches, thereby expanding the reach of the plethora of resources collected on the site.

MERLOT is best utilized with careful preparation rather than employed hastily to fill an unexpected gap in a lesson plan. Users should browse its resources, organizing and amassing their personal collections over time, keeping their own particular needs and those of their students in mind. Despite the shortcomings related to its search feature, MERLOT is a “full-bodied” site that will tantalize language learners and teachers alike as it exposes them to new ways to experience the music, art, grammar, and literature of World Languages.

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

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