

# **NECTFL REVIEW**

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



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

**Number 57**

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## *From the Executive Director*

Dear Colleagues,

The Northeast Conference Newsletter was first published in 1977 and, for some years, was only a few pages in length. It was published by NECTFL with the promise that “Any typewritten manuscript submitted for publication will receive prompt attention” and with the qualification that “Brief news items pertaining to foreign language education, remarks about books and instructional materials, and descriptions of follow-up activities resulting from the Conference itself are most welcome.”

The Newsletter became progressively longer as more and more items were included: articles (ranging from one on strategies for making foreign languages an integral part of the “total school program,” for example, to “Poland in Drama,” “Latin is Alive and Well,” and a report on the “coming crisis” in teaching), professional news, reviews of films and software, conference information, deadlines for contests and awards guidelines, and even letters to the editor. Advertising was ubiquitous. The Newsletter was published on newsprint in an 8½ x 11 format. Covers often featured photos of the Conference Chair or of the city in which the event would be held that year.

In the spring of 1999 with issue number 45, a major change, developed by the NECTFL Publications Committee under the leadership of John Webb, was heralded by a redesigned cover and a different name—the NECTFL Review. The change was the move to a new editorial policy of refereeing articles submitted for publication by sending them out for evaluation by members of an Editorial Review Board. As I wrote in my letter to you that year, “Our primary goal is to publish articles distinguished by their excellence, their significance, and their appropriateness and utility to the Review’s audience. We seek also, however, to mentor writers, helping them to find their voice, their topic and their readers in our profession.” Under Jack Henderson and later Bob Terry (the current articles editor), the Review has become a respected and valued publication for educators at all levels of instruction.

With the current issue, yet another sea change is announced. The Review now exists in electronic format on our website. The reduced size, perfect-bound format, and new cover of the hard-copy version reflect a greater focus on the articles and the materials/services review section of the journal, which is edited by Tom Conner and which has easily quadrupled in size and range under his direction. Many items formerly appearing in the Review are more easily accessible and available for revision on our website ([www.nectfl.org](http://www.nectfl.org)).

In keeping with our commitment to a “hybrid” publication that helps to unite the full spectrum of individuals represented in the profession, we have devoted this first issue of the online era to the K-12 context, naming a guest editor, Lori Langer de Ramirez, to work with Bob Terry. It is an appropriate reflection of this year’s conference theme, “Building on Common Ground,” which explores the many facets of articulation.

Finally, inasmuch as change was in the air, we decided to move publication of our Conference Preview booklet from November to September, thus allowing prospective attendees two additional months to request travel funds and plan their conference participation. Anticipating the impact this adjustment would have on the Board’s work and that of headquarters staff, we changed the Review’s schedule from Fall to Fall/Winter and from Spring to Spring/Summer. Although these decisions and the resulting modifications to our timelines have delayed the appearance of issue number 57, future Reviews should come out in December/January and April/May, respectively. We thank you for your understanding during this transition year and hope that you will enjoy reading this issue from cover to cover!

Cordially,



Rebecca R. Kline  
Executive Director

## Introduction to the Special Issue

Teaching world languages in a K-12 classroom can be a challenging and rewarding endeavor. Professional organizations such as NECTFL, ACTFL, and the AATs provide teachers with resources, conferences, and publications that inform and inspire teachers. Often this support is aimed at language educators on all levels, K-16 and beyond. However, the needs of K-12 teachers are quite different from those of a college- or university-level professor. We have unique contexts and thus benefit from different information and suggestions. The articles in this volume are relevant to the concerns and curricula of the K-12 language teacher.

Cultural simulations are an excellent way of exposing a K-12 student to authentic communicative situations without having to travel to a foreign land. In the article entitled “*Españolandia: A Statewide Language and Culture Simulation for Spanish Students*,” by Blair Bateman and Nieves Knapp, language educators will learn about one such large-scale simulation on a state-wide level. Detailed descriptions about how to establish such an event in your own community are provided. This practical information is sure to inspire teachers to create such learning opportunities in their own schools.

As language teachers, we understand the importance of attending to our students’ affective domain as they go through the process of acquiring language. “Assessment, Emotional Scaffolding, and Technology: Powerful Allies in the K-12 World Language Classroom” details a performance assessment based on the music of Carole Fredericks and José Feliciano. Using the music of these two artists as the thematic center, Nancy Gadbois and Connie Fredericks-Malone describe a series of lessons that integrate video, language, and culture. The lessons are tied to a performance assessment that excites and motivates students while involving them in real-world tasks.

In “8th Grade *Griots*: Turning Middle School Students into Story Tellers,” a story-based curriculum unit is described and evaluated. Folktales from Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico were presented to students in a variety of media formats (video, audio, picture books, a webpage, and a hypermedia program). Students were asked to read or listen to the stories and report back with a summary of the tale and an opinion about its contents. As author, I evaluated the students’ responses in Spanish, taking into account instances of story structure and examining language use such as verb forms and vocabulary. A rationale for the value of folktales both teaching language and lowering the affective filter of the language student is also provided.

To continue with the theme of attending to a K-12 student’s emotions in the language classroom, Linda Quinn Allen, in the article “Pretending to Learn in the L2 Classroom: The Role of Imagination,” seeks to tie theory to practice. As K-12 teachers, we constantly search for innovative lesson ideas and interesting activities for our students. So often these activities involve role-playing and imagination. This excellent article provides teachers with a review of current research on this topic, while also providing illustrative examples of creative activities that involve students in pretending in the classroom.

As can be noted from the theme of these articles, K-12 teachers spend a great deal of time and effort attending to the affective needs of our students. One might ask the question: “Who attends to our affective needs?” For most K-12 teachers of language, positive feedback and recognition for a job well done come in the form of a smile from a student or a well-written observation report. However, opportunities for recognition abound. Most commonly, teachers can find award and grant offerings through their local, state and national professional

organizations. Once a teacher finds an award that is applicable, it is important to have guidance in filling out the applications and preparing a dossier. In “Putting Your Best Foot Forward: Preparing Dossiers for Applications, Awards, and Candidacies,” author Frank W. Medley, Jr., provides teachers with advice for educators who are interested in applying for or who have been nominated for awards or other educational opportunities. The clear and helpful suggestions should make the application process less threatening and more inviting for teachers.

As a K-12 teacher of language, I consider myself a member of a family of dedicated and passionate educators. We are actors, psychologists, cheerleaders, and diagnosticians. We sing, perform, assess, and assuage fears and doubts. We are motivators and catalysts in the language learning process. In this journal, you will find inspiration and motivation for your work with the children of our country. Our work is so important—but it is fun as well. The ideas in these articles are joyous and jubilant. May your teaching be the same.

Lori Langer de Ramirez  
Herricks Public Schools, NY  
Guest Editor

Just because an issue of a journal is directed toward K-12 teachers does not mean that teachers at other levels cannot profit from the wealth of information and suggestions that can be found therein. Such is the case with this special issue of the *NECTFL Review*.

In this revamped format, we are pleased to offer these articles that should have an appeal to every reader. They cover a wide range of topics—from the appeal to the learner’s emotional intelligence, to using students as *griots* (storytellers in the African tradition), to the use of cultural simulation in the classroom, to the sponsorship and production of a cultural simulation/fair. We also include a brief article that offers hints and very helpful suggestions for those who must create a portfolio/dossier for applications, awards, and candidacies, since teachers at all levels can be nominated and serve on selection committees.

None of these topics focuses specifically on any one level. It happens that the “audience” in some cases is at the middle school level, in other cases the high school level. How the activities described here are carried out can be adjusted to fit the psychological, developmental, and linguistic levels of the learners that each reader deals with. We all have used music in our language classrooms. We have all had our students act out a scene. We have all taken imaginary trips to our target language countries. We have all had our students tell in their own words what they have just read or seen. Our expectations of performance might be different but the activities are usually appropriate for all learners.

One of the special characteristics of languages teachers is their willingness to share their innovative ideas, their classroom successes, their enthusiasm for their students and their jobs. The authors of the articles in this special issue are doing just that. As Lori Langer de Ramirez, our Guest Editor, says, you will find here inspiration and motivation for your work with the foreign language learners we teach.

Robert M. Terry  
Articles Editor  
*NECTFL Review*

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## Preparing a Manuscript for the *NECTFL* Review

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

Authors are asked to follow these Guidelines in preparing manuscripts for the *NECTFL* Review:

1. Please submit your article electronically to [rterry@richmond.edu](mailto:rterry@richmond.edu). Adherence to the following steps will expedite the review and publishing process:
  - a. Use an IBM-compatible word-processing program, preferably Microsoft Word 2000.
  - b. Do not use the richtext format.
  - c. Use only 12-point Times New Roman font throughout and double-space everything.
  - d. Use italics and boldface type when necessary, but do not use underlining.
  - e. Notes are discouraged, but if necessary, they must be endnotes. Do not use automatic endnoting functions or automatic page numbering. We do encourage the use of spell check and grammar check functions.
  - f. Do not embed boxes or other macros in your text.
2. 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 focus more on 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. We do not normally require an abstract of your article.
3. Do not include the names of the author(s) of the article on any page other than the cover page of the actual text.
  - a. On the cover page of the submitted article, author(s) should provide the following information:
    - i. The title of the article
    - ii. Names and titles of the author(s)
    - iii. Preferred mailing addresses
    - iv. Home and office phone numbers
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    - vi. E-mail addresses
    - 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 immediately by the text (do not include author name[s]).
  - c. It is essential that there be no direct references to the author(s) in the manuscript you submit.
    - i. Any "giveaways" such as reference to a particular institution, when it is obvious that the institution is that of the author, should be avoided.
    - ii. Authors should refer to themselves in the third person and refer to studies or projects at "X Middle School" or "X University." If your article is accepted for publication, you will be able to make the necessary changes in the final manuscript.
    - iii. The APA Guidelines suggest ways that authors can achieve this necessary degree of anonymity. We do understand, however, that references to certain websites may unavoidably reveal the identity of the authors of certain articles.
4. Include a short biographical paragraph on a separate page at the end of your article (this bio will appear at the bottom of the first page of the article when it is in print).

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## Preparing a Manuscript for the NECTFL Review *(Continued)*

You should include the following information (no longer than 4-5 lines!):

- a. Your name
  - b. Your highest degree and what school it is from
  - c. Your title
  - d. What level(s) you have taught in your teaching career: K-12, elementary school, middle school, high school, community college, college/university, other.
  - e. Your credentials.  
For example: Charles Bovary (M.A., Home State University) is a teacher of French at Anytown High School in Anytown, Any State. He teaches... He has published... His current projects include... .
5. Please note that the length of manuscripts as submitted averages approximately 17-20 double-spaced pages, including notes, charts, and references. Slightly longer articles are not out of the question but may be evaluated more critically. Shorter articles are also possible. The length of the manuscript should be determined by the scope of the topic.
6. Please make certain that the article components you submit electronically are in the following order:
- a. The cover page with elements listed above in #4.
  - b. The text of the article (first page only will include title but no author names).
  - c. Endnotes, references, appendices.
  - d. The short, biographical paragraph.
7. We use the most recent American Psychological Association (APA) Guidelines, and not those of the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the Chicago Manual of Style. Please use the latest edition (5th ed., 2001) of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association as your guide. For models of articles and references, examine the NECTFL Review, The Modern Language Journal, or a recent issue of

Foreign Language Annals. These journals follow the APA style with minor deviations (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 websites, which give you abbreviated versions of the APA guidelines:

- a. APA Style Resources:  
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<http://www.docstyles.com/apacrib.htm>—This site by Russ Dewey at Georgia Southern University offers a summary of rules for use of the APA style.
8. Please consult the Checklist for Manuscript Publication on the NECTFL website at [www.dickinson.edu/nectfl/checklist.html](http://www.dickinson.edu/nectfl/checklist.html) before submitting your article.
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11. Any questions should be directed to Robert M. Terry, [rterry@richmond.edu](mailto:rterry@richmond.edu). We strive to provide all authors with helpful information and constructive feedback. Our submission, review, and editorial processes are distinguished by our desire to help those new to the field of academic publishing!

(The above guidelines and the checklist mentioned in #8 are based on similar documents prepared by Maurice Cherry, Editor, Dimension [a SCOLT publication, to whom NECTFL offers its thanks!]).

# 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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# ***Españolandia: A Statewide Language and Culture Simulation for Spanish Students***

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**Blair E. Bateman**, Brigham Young University

**Nieves Pérez Knapp**, Brigham Young University

## **Introduction**

Imagine your foreign language students having the opportunity to visit a locale where they must use the language to go through customs, arrange transportation, check into a hotel, make purchases, order food in a restaurant, and purchase souvenirs. Now imagine *all* of your students having this opportunity without ever leaving their home state. Such is the objective of *Españolandia*.

*Españolandia* is a large-scale simulation of a Spanish-speaking country that is conducted in conjunction with Brigham Young University's annual Foreign Language Fair in April. The Fair is an activity in which secondary school students of French, German, and Spanish from throughout the state of Utah participate in competitive events such as skits, prepared and impromptu talks, poetry reading, show and tell, and a language bowl. During the "down time" between events, students can spend time in a simulation of a Spanish-speaking country (*Españolandia*), a French-speaking country (*La Petite France*), or a German-speaking country (*Kleindeutschland*). *Españolandia* is the oldest and largest of these three simulations.

## **History of the Foreign Language Fair and *Españolandia***

The Foreign Language Fair at BYU began in the late 1950s as part of a nationwide movement encouraging language fairs and festivals, spurred on in part by the National Defense Education Act of 1958. Kaplan (1971) offers the following definition of a language fair (LF):

A LF is a large group activity, a whole school, or several schools or districts doing *things* for a day, or several hours at least, in a large area such as a gymnasium, a college campus, an athletic field, etc., with no sense of curriculum, tests, academic reality or pressure intruding. It is a fun day, yet a day with a sense of structure and purpose . . . with foreign language being the theme that runs through everything. . . . Teachers and students participate and enjoy themselves. (p. 13)

---

**Blair Bateman** (Ph.D., University of Minnesota) and **Nieves Knapp** (Ph.D., Universidad de Oviedo) are Assistant Professors in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Brigham Young University in Provo, UT. Professor Bateman has taught Spanish at the high school level as well as Portuguese and Spanish at the university level, and currently teaches foreign language methods and research classes. Professor Knapp has taught English, French, and Spanish in Spain, and currently teaches methods courses and serves as the Director of *Españolandia*.

A number of articles and research studies were published from the 1960s through the 1980s advocating foreign language fairs as a means of increasing enrollment in FL classes and motivating students to learn languages (e.g., Becker, 1973; Becker & Findlay, 1985; Hunt, 1968; Kaplan, 1971; Marshall, Novak, & Savoie, 1983; Miller, 1975; Probst, 1966). During those decades, language fairs or festivals began to be held in a number of locations throughout the U.S. at the school, district, or state levels. Although the popularity of language fairs seems to have declined somewhat in recent years, as evidenced by the dearth of literature on the subject since the mid-1980s, BYU's Foreign Language Fair has continued to thrive for nearly four decades.

The popularity of the fair at BYU grew rapidly in the years following its inception, and by the early 1960s over a thousand students were attending each year. Due to the large numbers of students attending and the distances they had to travel, an attempt was made for several years to share the responsibility for hosting fair events with other universities throughout the state. Not all universities were equally committed to the idea, however, and by the mid-1960s BYU had again resumed responsibility for hosting the fair for the entire state.

Accommodating such a large number of students and keeping them occupied for an entire morning proved to be a challenge. Although students were accompanied by their teachers, the teachers could attend only one event at a time, leaving many of their students unsupervised. It soon became obvious that an activity was needed to occupy students' time between fair events, when some students would wander the campus emptying vending machines and playing in elevators. Faculty members began searching for additional language- or culture-related activities that would involve students in meaningful ways.

Another type of activity that was being advocated in foreign language programs of the time was simulations of foreign countries and cultures (Weight, 1978). Jones (1982) explains that a simulation is an activity that requires participants to carry out actual communicative functions in an environment that imitates a real-world setting. Jones maintains that simulations are an ideal activity for promoting language development because "almost all simulations involve a substantial amount of interaction between the participants, and interaction involves language" (p. 7).

Simulations found their way into foreign language classrooms beginning in the 1950s (Jones, 1982), and by the early 1960s, large-scale simulations of foreign countries were being conducted by Concordia College in Minnesota at its Language Villages (Concordia Language Villages, n.d.). In the late 1960s, Dr. James S. Taylor of BYU attended a presentation at a professional conference about a simulation of a foreign country that had been conducted in a school gymnasium. Dr. Taylor and his colleagues decided to construct a simulated Spanish-speaking country that students could visit when they were not participating in competitive events at the Foreign Language Fair. The name they selected for the country was *Españolandia*. Since its inception in the late 1960s, *Españolandia* has been held each year and has continued to grow, both in terms of participants and in the variety of activities offered.

### **What *Españolandia* Is and How It Works**

*Españolandia* is a composite of Spanish-speaking cultures, whose "citizens" are stu-

dent volunteers who have lived abroad or are native speakers of Spanish, each of whom contributes his or her own linguistic and cultural insights. The basic premise of *Españolandia* is to provide an atmosphere in which students must use Spanish in order to accomplish simple communicative tasks similar to those that they might encounter in Spanish-speaking countries, such as checking into a hotel, mailing a letter, or purchasing souvenirs. No English is allowed, except at the information table in the center of *Españolandia*, where students may seek help with the Spanish words and expressions they need in order to carry out tasks. In order to accomplish each task, students use words and phrases that they have learned and practiced in their schools before the fair. To facilitate their preparation, *A Visitor's Guide to Españolandia*, a task-specific phrase booklet, is mailed to teachers several weeks before the Fair (available online at <http://spanport.byu.edu/hispanet/Spainfair/guia/index.html>).

Teachers are encouraged to review the phrases with their students and practice the tasks in advance. In addition to the phrase booklets, teachers are sent "passports" for their students to fill out with their personal information. These passports will serve to keep track of the communicative tasks that students accomplish as they visit the various booths in *Españolandia*. Students receive a stamp in their passport for each task they perform, and they must receive at least seven stamps during their visit. Some teachers offer extra credit to students who fill their passport with all the possible stamps.

### **Preparation and Setup**

The process of preparing, setting up, and running *Españolandia* is supervised by three faculty members from the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, with the help of a part-time secretary hired specially for this purpose. Conducting a simulation on such a large scale presents a challenge; the number of students attending the Spanish Foreign Language Fair and *Españolandia* each year ranges from 1,700 to 3,000. Both events are open to students in their second year of Spanish study or beyond, as first-year students generally do not yet have the language skills to compete in fair events or communicate effectively in *Españolandia*.

Two months before the fair, a post card is sent to all teachers directing them to a website (<http://spanport.byu.edu/hispanet/Spainfair/index.html>) where they can print a registration form and mail it along with a check for the registration fee. Registration costs \$4 per student, which covers the cost of photocopying and mailing copies of *A Visitor's Guide to Españolandia* and passports to teachers, the wages of the secretary, and other expenses. In addition, teachers are sent a number of *pases diplomáticos* (diplomatic passes) that permit parents and other visitors who do not speak Spanish to enter *Españolandia*, provided they are accompanied by a Spanish-speaking student who can serve as their interpreter.

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***“The basic premise of Españolandia is to provide an atmosphere in which students must use Spanish in order to accomplish simple communicative tasks...”***

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*“Españolandia  
consists of  
interesting places  
to visit and people  
to talk with, ...”*

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The week before the fair, volunteers to staff Españolandia are recruited from upper-division Spanish classes at the university, which typically enroll around 1,500 students. Approximately 120 of these students are needed to volunteer as customs officers, hotel clerks, store employees, and the like; many of their professors offer them extra credit for participating. Students from the methods classes for students preparing to teach Spanish are assigned to serve as the leaders at each post, and a class session is devoted to briefing them on their duties. The other volunteers are asked to attend a one-hour training meeting in which they are instructed on the procedures of Españolandia and assigned to a specific post. Volunteers are encouraged to wear articles of clothing that they may have acquired in their residence in a Spanish-speaking country.

The day before the fair, the university's custodial staff sets up the booths and tables for Españolandia in two large adjoining rooms in the student center. The first room contains tables for the customs office and the bank, as well as crowd control posts and ropes to form lines for the students waiting to enter. The second area, comprised of three large adjoining rooms with the dividing walls retracted, contains the “shops” and “businesses,” housed in booths made of metal poles hung with fabric. The front and sides of the booths are approximately 3' high, and the back is 8', similar to those used by vendors at professional conferences. Tables are set up inside each booth for displaying the items to be sold. (See Appendix A for a “Map of Españolandia” that illustrates the setup of the two rooms.)

The morning of the fair, volunteers report at 7 a.m. to transport Españolandia materials to the appropriate rooms and to set up the materials in the booths. The leader of each post supervises the setup and verifies that the volunteers understand their duties. Volunteers are issued mini-stampers (colored markers with the tip cut to form different shapes) for stamping the passports of students as they complete a communicative task at their booth. (See Appendix B for a summary of the preparation process for Españolandia.)

### **Places to Visit in Españolandia**

Españolandia consists of interesting places to visit and people to talk with, offering students ample opportunity to practice their Spanish. These include the following:

*Aduana* (Customs). As students enter Españolandia, they pass through customs, where they must present their passports and answer questions about their place of origin, the purpose and length of their visit, and the content of their backpacks. The customs officials wear old military uniforms obtained from a secondhand store, with an Españolandia patch pinned on.

*Banco de Españolandia*. The next stop is the bank, where students exchange American dollars for “pesos” of Españolandia, which are printed on colored paper in denominations of one, five, and ten, and are used for all purchases made in Españolandia. The exchange rate is ten pesos to the dollar. Although students may

exchange any amount of money they choose, they are not required to purchase anything in *Españolandia* except a subway ticket, as explained below.

*Metro* (Subway). The metro (a long storage closet) runs between the bank at the border (the first room) and *Ciudad Españolandia* (the second room). It is lined with posters showing maps of the transportation system, advertisements, and the like. Students purchase a ticket for one peso; this is the only required expense in their visit to *Españolandia*. Occasionally, students will run into a volunteer dressed as a beggar or musician soliciting money in the metro.

*Hotel Buenavista*. Upon arriving in *Españolandia* students can check into a hotel. The “government” of *Españolandia* requires guests to fill out a form listing their home country and the dates and purpose of their visit. After filling out the form, students can check in to the hotel by signing the guest registry, and are then issued an “electronic key” (printed on paper) to their room. They are also expected to ask questions regarding the daily rates, the availability of TV and air conditioning, whether breakfast is included, and similar topics.

*Farmacia* (Pharmacy). Here students have an opportunity to describe the physical symptoms that ail them (headache, nausea, rash, etc.), whereupon the pharmacists recommend various medications (small envelopes of Skittles) which are sold for a minimal price. The pharmacy is equipped with empty bottles and boxes of medications from Spanish-speaking countries, as well as a poster listing various vitamins and minerals in Spanish, to simulate the environment and decor of a real pharmacy. The pharmacists wear white smocks purchased from a secondhand store.

*Fotos* (Photo Shop). Here, for a small fee, students can have a Polaroid photo of themselves taken on the beautiful beaches of *Españolandia* (i.e., in front of a backdrop of a beach scene painted on canvas). *Sombreros*, *sarapes*, and *ponchos* are available for students to wear for the photo. Group photos are always popular.

*Panadería “La Flor de Españolandia”* (Bakery) and *frutería* (Fruit Stand). The *panadería* sells cakes and cookies that are supplied by a local Mexican baker; the *frutería* sells apples, oranges, and bananas.

*Kiosco* (Newsstand) and *Tienda “Recuerdos de Españolandia”* (Souvenir Store). The *kiosco* sells items such as travel pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers, many of which are old copies that have been discarded by the Spanish Department or the library. It also sells pens, pencils, bookmarks, and small notebooks. The souvenir store sells small piñatas, Aztec calendar pins, maraca keychains, stickers of flags from Spanish-speaking countries, *balero* toys, hand-made Guatemalan kickballs and Mayan worry dolls, and other such items, which are purchased from mail-order catalogues catering to foreign language teachers. Students are encouraged to bargain in Spanish to get the best price, although the volunteers that staff these stores are given a list of minimum prices in order to avoid selling the items at a loss.

*Emisora de radio “Radio Españolandia”* (Radio Station). At *Radio Españolandia* students can request that songs by their favorite Latin artists be played over the sound system. Shakira, Ricky Martin, Luis Miguel, Enrique Iglesias, and Maná are among the most popular. The CDs are provided by the volunteers who act as employees of the radio station. If the students wish, they can perform karaoke. The radio station also

serves as a lost and found, announcing lost passports and other articles over the sound system.

*Confecciones “La Última Moda”* (Clothing Store). Here students can ask to try on various articles of clothing (again purchased from a secondhand store). Students are encouraged to describe the color, style, and size of the clothing they wish to try on. In some years, articles of clothing are actually available for purchase, such as t-shirts or visors with *Lo pasé genial en Españolandia* (“I had a great time in Españolandia”) printed on them.

*Correos* (Post Office). At the post office students can write a postcard in Spanish to a friend, family member, or their teacher. The postcards are printed on cardstock with *Recuerdo de Españolandia* (“Souvenir of Españolandia”) printed on one side and room for the message and address on the other. Students are provided with sample phrases to use, as well as with a list of school addresses in case they want to write to their teacher. The students pay the postage, and the postcards are actually mailed following the fair (via U.S. mail, of course).

*Restaurante “El Buen Comer.”* The restaurant has always been a popular feature of Españolandia, especially as lunchtime approaches. The food consists of burritos, taquitos, chips, and salsa, which are provided and sold by employees of a local Mexican restaurant, with special permission from the university’s Dining Services. *Jarritos* soft drinks, bottled water, and other beverages are also available for students to purchase.

*Entrevistas* (Interviews). A number of citizens of Españolandia have the special responsibility to grant interviews to students, and can be identified by the *entrevistas* sign that they wear. These citizens take on the role of famous Spanish-speaking people. In any given year, the interviewees may include Pablo Neruda, Gloria Estefan, Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, or Fidel Castro. Students are encouraged to ask questions about the interviewee’s name, age, hometown, family, occupation, interests, and experiences.

*Policía / Seguridad* (Security). The responsibility of the security officers is to monitor the lines of students waiting to enter Españolandia and to make sure that everyone enters and exits by the appropriate doors. The police officers are charged with roaming Españolandia and listening for students (or citizens!) speaking English. Anyone caught speaking English is escorted to jail, which is a large storage closet with black ribbons representing jail bars that hang down over the entrance. Students can get out of jail by paying a small fine or by singing a song in Spanish. The police and security officers wear secondhand uniforms and carry toy pistols, handcuffs, and radios.

#### *Leaving Españolandia*

When students are ready to leave Españolandia, they can exchange their remaining pesos for American money at the bank (a separate bank is located near the exit). They then show their passport to a customs official, who allows them to pass provided that they have received at least seven stamps in their passport.

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***“A number of  
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### *Cleanup and Storage of Materials*

Españolandia begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends at noon. After the last students have left, the volunteers pack up the materials from each booth in file folder boxes that are appropriately labeled and help to carry the boxes back to their storage closets. The volunteers are then treated to a free meal at the *restaurante*.

The U.S. money that was exchanged is used to reimburse the caterers and others who purchased supplies, and the remainder is deposited in a special account, to be used for the next year's Españolandia as well as for the Foreign Language Fair (including trophies and certificates for event participants). Finally, faculty members sit back and heave a sigh of relief.

### **Theoretical Foundations of the Españolandia Simulation**

The Españolandia simulation finds support in several theories of language learning. The activities that students perform, such as checking into a hotel or making purchases, are what Nunan (1989) calls "real-world tasks," and are a form of task-based language learning. Long and Crookes (1993) affirm that these types of tasks "provide a vehicle for the presentation of appropriate target language samples to learners . . . and for the delivery of comprehension and production opportunities of negotiable difficulty" (p. 39). These "target language samples" are provided in written form by the sample phrases in *A Visitor's Guide to Españolandia*, as well as orally by the utterances of Españolandia volunteers who interact with students.

A second theoretical basis for Españolandia is found in Swain's (1993, 2005) Output Hypothesis. As students visiting Españolandia strive to make themselves understood in Spanish, they are "pushed" to produce "comprehensible output." According to Swain, this type of activity provides students with opportunities to test hypotheses about the target language, to receive feedback about the comprehensibility of their utterances, and to recognize what they know and do not know how to do in the language.

Another supporting theory is Long's (1981, 1996) Interaction Hypothesis, which posits that conversation is not only a vehicle for language practice, but also the means by which learning takes place (Gass, 2003). Research on the Interaction Hypothesis suggests that learning can occur as a result of the adjustments that students make in response to breakdowns in communication as they "negotiate for meaning" with a "native speaker or more competent interlocutor" (Long, 1996, p. 452). This is precisely the type of interaction that Españolandia is designed to facilitate between junior high or high school students and upper-division Spanish students at the university, the latter group consisting largely of individuals with considerable conversational experience.

The activities in Españolandia also address several goal areas of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (1999). Students' interactions with Españolandia volunteers

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***"The Cultures goal area of the Standards is addressed as students learn about products and practices of Hispanic cultures."***

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furnish ample opportunity to provide and obtain information in the target language, addressing the Communication goal area. Furthermore, students have the opportunity to use the language “beyond the school setting,” a specification of the Communities goal area.

The Cultures goal area of the *Standards* is addressed as students learn about products and practices of Hispanic cultures. Although no single “real” Hispanic culture is represented by *Españolandia*, an attempt is made to draw on cultural products that are common to many Spanish-speaking countries, such as food, magazines, and music, as well as common cultural practices such as bargaining in a street market, purchasing fruit at a stand, or going to a *farmacia* with one’s medical ailments. In the future, we hope to provide teachers with resources for discussing the perspectives that underlie these products and practices, and how they differ from students’ own cultural perspectives (addressing the Comparisons goal area). Future plans also include the development of materials to aid teachers in discussing the diversity among Spanish-speaking countries, as well as within each country, in order to help avoid the formation of cultural stereotypes (Galloway, 2001).

In addition to learning about practices that are specific to Hispanic countries, students who visit *Españolandia* are exposed to several culture-general concepts (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, & Colby, 1999). These concepts include the following:

- Other countries use their own currencies rather than the dollar.
- Other cultures actually carry on their day-to-day activities exclusively in the target language, without ever speaking English.
- Different cultures have practices, products, and perspectives that differ from students’ own culture, which are neither superior nor inferior but merely different.

These concepts may seem obvious to teachers, but they often come as a surprise to students who have never traveled outside the United States.

### **Feedback from Teachers**

In April 2005, we e-mailed an informal questionnaire soliciting feedback from the teachers whose students participated in the Foreign Language Fair. Teachers were overwhelmingly positive about the *Españolandia* simulation. Responses to the question “What did you like most about *Españolandia*?” included the following:

- Pretty much everything. I like the wide variety of shops and activities that are provided. That makes it fun for the kids. They really enjoy the food every year. They also had a lot of fun *regateando* (bargaining) for a good price. It was a great experience for them.
- The kids loved being able to barter with the vendors. They also loved being thrown in jail.
- The helpful nature of the workers. Everyone seems to want to help our students have a good time while practicing their language skills.
- I love seeing my students experience something similar to being in a foreign country and HAVING to speak Spanish to get by. This is when they really see what they know.

Another item on the questionnaire asked teachers, “What do you do to help your

students prepare for Españolandia?” We included this question because students whose teachers prepare them in advance seem to derive the greatest benefit from visiting Españolandia and enjoy the simulation the most. In response to this question, teachers listed a variety of activities including the following:

- We start studying the yellow guide book several weeks before, including quizzes on the vocabulary. The students work through the yellow book, figuring out what the phrases mean and adding phrases they personally might want to use. The week before, they study and fill out their passports.

- I have a mini Españolandia in my classroom, with ESL students manning the booths.

- Hand out the guide early and practice questions as they come in the door each day.

When asked “What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving Españolandia?” approximately half of the teachers made comments related to managing the large numbers of students who attend. A number of teachers expressed concern about the long lines at the entrance and at some of the booths, and several suggested having junior high and high school students come at different times. In response to this feedback, next year we plan to schedule the competitive Foreign Language Fair events for junior high and high school during different blocks of time so that each group can attend Españolandia separately.

## Conclusion

Although hosting Españolandia represents a significant amount of work, we believe that the payoff is worth the effort. Many teachers in the state regard the Foreign Language Fair and Españolandia as the culminating event of the year and feel that it gives students a goal to work toward. Students can earn trophies and certificates by competing in the fair, and they go home with the satisfaction of having put their Spanish to use in Españolandia, in addition to whatever souvenirs they may choose to purchase.

We also believe that the Foreign Language Fair and Españolandia represent an important outreach effort on the part of the university. These events let teachers and parents know that university faculty support what goes on in public school classrooms. The events also expose students to the university campus and faculty and encourage students to continue their foreign language study, both at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

In conclusion, we hope that this information will prove helpful to anyone thinking about hosting a foreign language simulation at any level. To those who may be considering such an undertaking, our advice is simply to give it a try! We believe that you and your students will find it well worth the effort.

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*“Many teachers in the state regard the Foreign Language Fair and Españolandia as the culminating event of the year...”*

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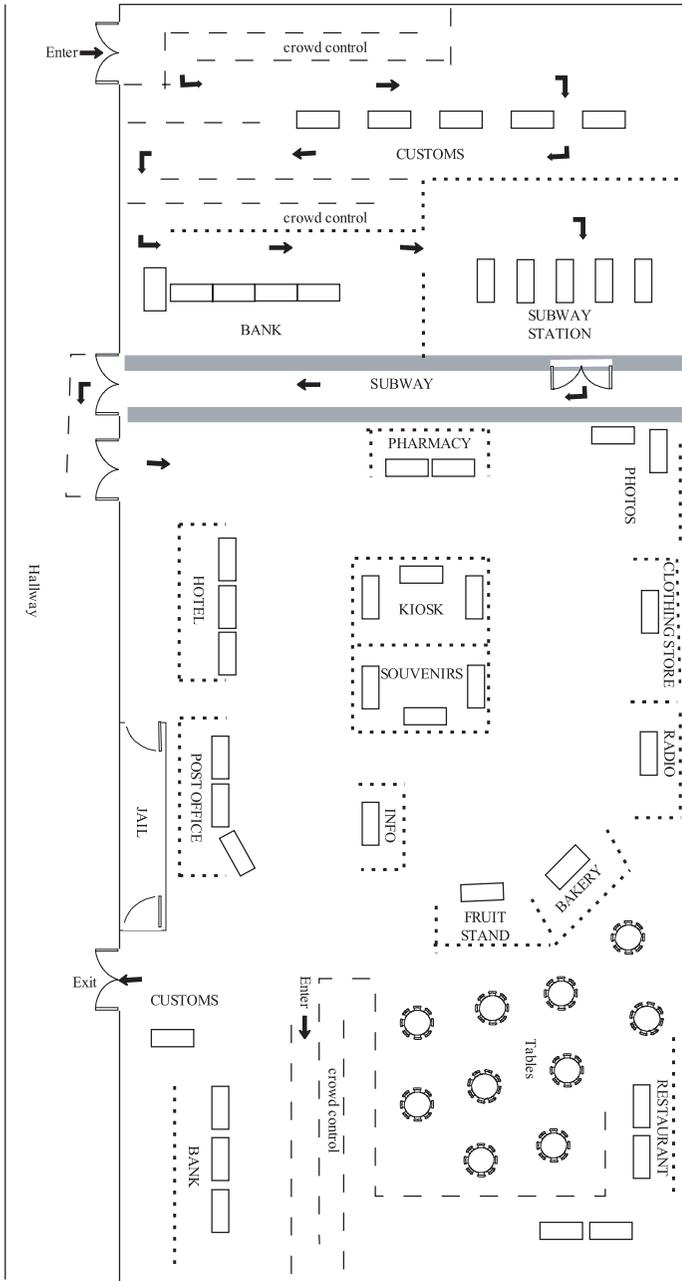
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# Appendix A.

## Map of Españolandia.



## Appendix B.

### To-Do List for Españolandia.

Two months in advance

- Send out post cards directing teachers to registration website
- Confirm rooms with Campus Scheduling
- Have visitor's guides and passports printed
- Confirm with caterers from Mexican restaurant

One month in advance

- Send packet to teachers who have registered (including information letter, visitor's guides, passports, and *pases diplomáticos*)
- Order merchandise to sell at *Kiosco*, *Tienda de Recuerdos* and *Confecciones*
- Make list of registered teachers and schools

Two weeks in advance

- Submit Españolandia floor plan to Campus Scheduling
- Reserve room for the meeting with volunteers
- Order parking passes for caterers and delivery vehicles
- Request P.A. system for *Radio Españolandia* through Media Services
- Assign methods students to be leaders of posts in Españolandia
- Send around volunteer sign-up sheets to upper-division Spanish classes
- Make copies of post cards for *Correo*, tickets for the *Metro*, and room keys for the *Hotel*
- Make copies of handout with instructions for volunteers, to be given out in the meeting

One week in advance

- Hold meeting with volunteers
- Pick up parking permits
- Withdraw \$1000 from Españolandia account; use \$800 for change from bank, and the rest to pay for fruit, film, etc.
- Print list of minimum prices for *Kiosco*, *Tienda de Recuerdos* and *Confecciones*

Three days in advance

- Buy Skittles and small envelopes for *Farmacia*
- Buy Polaroid film for *Fotos*
- Get change for *Banco*: \$100 in fives, \$150 in ones, \$250 in quarters, \$200 in dimes, \$100 in nickels
- Go through boxes of supplies for each booth to make sure everything is in order

The night before

- Check to be sure booths are being set up properly
- Purchase fruit for *Frutería* and pastries for *Panadería*
- Label booths after they are set up so that the post leaders can find them

The morning of

- Supervise volunteers in transporting materials to Españolandia rooms and setting them up



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# Assessment, Emotional Scaffolding, and Technology: Powerful Allies in the K-12 World Language Classroom<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Teachers rely on textbooks and authentic documents to render a country's people and culture accessible to their students. These documents often include press releases, commercial films, news broadcasts, and audio recordings. Authentic documents are exterior to a textbook's assessment guide and, therefore, the proper assessment of tasks involving documents of this nature can prove challenging to time-constrained teachers.

Effective teachers know which topics interest learners, and they integrate those topics into their curriculum on a regular basis. They also edit and personalize tasks to make learning more meaningful and practical. This strategic appeal to a wide range of students' interests and talents seeks to link effective teaching and learning to the dynamics of what has come to be called *emotional intelligence*.

In *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman (1994) cites research that strongly suggests a link between higher academic performance and instructional designs that engage students intellectually and emotionally. According to Goleman, "the abilities called emotional intelligence, which include self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself . . . are skills that can be taught to children" (p. xii). A more recent article, "Emotional Scaffolding: An Exploration Of The Teacher Knowledge At The Intersection Of Student Emotion And The Subject Matter" by Jerry Rosiek from

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**Nancy Gadbois** (M.A. French Literature, University of Massachusetts, Amherst) is a foreign language classroom teacher and department chair at the High School of Science and Technology, Springfield, MA. She has published reviews and articles for the *French Review* and the *AATF National Bulletin*. She recently co-authored an article for the Central States Reports, and is the author of the teacher's manual "*Tant Qu'elle Chante, Elle Vit: apprendre le français grâce à l'héritage de Carole Fredericks*." She is a frequent presenter at international, national, regional, and local foreign language conferences.

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**Connie Fredericks-Malone** has served, since May 2002, as the manager and official spokesperson for CDF Music Legacy, LLC, a family-owned company created to preserve the memory of the late Carole Fredericks. She has successfully negotiated with SONY Music/France, BMG/France, M6 Interaction and JRG Editions Musicales to bring authentic French language materials, music videos, documentaries, and recordings to the United States and Canada for educational purposes. Recently, she co-authored an article for the 2005 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Language. Ms. Fredericks-Malone is a frequent presenter at international, national, and regional foreign language conferences.

the University of Alabama (2003), builds on Goleman's premise of teaching emotional intelligence to children. The article states, "One practice that became a focus of inquiry in [Rosiek's] groups was the tailoring of pedagogical representations to influence students' emotional response to some specific aspect of the subject matter being taught. This practice was named *emotional scaffolding*" (p. 399). Inherent in the emotional scaffolding teaching practices are the elements that produce in the student an emotional connection to the subject, thereby motivating the student and enhancing the learning process. Rosiek (2003) believes "when education has happened well, we do not simply emerge knowing the world; we also come to love, resent, endure, care, and be thrilled about things in ways we did not before" (p. 399). Emotional scaffolding will facilitate a connection on a primal level between the student and the subject matter.

For the purposes of this article the authors will use the definition of emotional scaffolding in the context of education, specifically the K-12 world language classroom. Our premise is that emotional scaffolding occurs when a teacher designs a lesson plan, activity, or approach to a subject that incorporates the students' personal lives, including ethnicity, socio-economic group, history, and culture.

World language teachers have available to them sophisticated technologies that can be used in combination with emotional scaffolding to enhance language learning. Computers, the Internet, DVDs, CDs, audio recordings, and videotapes are extending traditional classroom methodologies and pedagogies. Now that learning stimuli have been identified, acquiring the materials and designing the lessons that actively involve students in their own learning are the next steps. To illustrate how contemporary personalities or pop icons, reinforced by emotional scaffolding teaching practices and technology, are used to motivate students and enhance language learning, we explore the musical works of two artists, Carole Fredericks and José Feliciano.

The critical element, which comes first in the planning, is envisioning appropriate assessment. The next step from the teacher standpoint is how to design the lesson plan or curriculum unit to ensure improved student knowledge. Before engaging students in the task, the teacher must determine what targeted understanding is expected from the students. Can the students clearly prove that the acquired knowledge is concrete and meaningful? This approach is based on *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) and is featured in the assessment strategies video of the Annenberg/CPB project, "Teaching Foreign Languages" (Annenberg/CPB, 2004).

One segment of that assessment strategies video stresses alternative assessment, under the title Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA), a tri-modal task, which

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***"...emotional scaffolding occurs when a teacher designs a lesson plan, activity, or approach to a subject that incorporates the students' personal lives, including ethnicity, socio-economic group, history, and culture."***

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emphasizes the critical feedback that students receive from their instructor after each phase of a three-tier task, including interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication. After a student completes one mode, the teacher discusses with the student what he or she did well or not so well in order to highlight areas in need of improvement and to encourage the student to perform better on the next mode. Effective feedback offers strategies including circumlocution, inference, and suggestions that reinforce prior student knowledge.

To develop her IPA, Nancy Gadbois, one of the authors of this article, selected a music video by Carole Fredericks due to a belief in the educational value of emotional intelligence. The development of learning activities based on this music video clearly demonstrates the practical use of emotional scaffolding techniques.

Carole Denise Fredericks was born in Springfield, MA, several kilometers from the High School of Science and Technology, where Nancy Gadbois teaches. An African-American from a talented musical family in Springfield, Carole was the sister of the famed bluesman Taj Mahal. She immigrated to France in the 1970's and rose to musical fame in both Europe and Africa. Ms. Fredericks' untimely death in 2001 came after performing a benefit concert in Dakar, Senegal. At the invitation of the French government, Ms. Fredericks was interred in historic Montmartre Cemetery in Paris. Montmartre's official brochure lists Ms. Fredericks' gravesite along with many French notables.

The realization that Ms. Fredericks was recognized as a major musical icon abroad, but not in her native U.S., not to mention her hometown, was of immediate interest to students. Furthermore, the class was intrigued that she had limited exposure to the French language in this country and yet was able to immerse herself in the target language at a later stage in her life, becoming fluent within a short time of her arrival in France. International students in the class were convinced that she was indeed a native speaker, and they were pleasantly surprised to learn of her local Springfield roots.

Technology played a key role in bringing this artist to life for students and thereby establishing a current persona with whom they could identify. Students experienced an emotional connection to a pop icon from their community, and they related to the text in the form of the song lyrics as well as to the subject matter within a structured

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***“...Integrated Performance Assessment (IPA), a tri-modal task, which emphasizes the critical feedback that students receive from their instructor after each phase of a three-tier task, including interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication.”***

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lesson. The Internet allowed the teacher and students to research her charitable concerts along with the details of her international tours and explore her other accomplishments. The class had access to music videos by the artist that were available in the U.S., thanks to the generosity of Jean-Jacques Goldman and the Fredericks family, including Ms. Fredericks' sister, a co-author of this article. The music videos gave students the opportunity to see Ms. Fredericks perform live both as a solo artist and as a member of a famed trio with Jean-Jacques Goldman and Michael Jones.

## Sample Lessons

The sample lessons shared here were created by teachers of world languages. Lesson #1 is from a French class of Nancy Gadbois at the High School of Science and Technology in Springfield, Massachusetts. Lesson #2 was designed by Margaret Sullivan for her Spanish classes at East Longmeadow High School in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts. Valencia Siff developed Lesson #3 for her students of French at the Collegiate School in Richmond, Virginia. These veteran world language teachers share lessons they designed as well as student comments, resources, and websites.

### Lesson #1

“A Nos Actes Manqués” (“To the Deeds We Missed”) was the video used to develop an alternative assessment for a French 4 class of an urban public high school. The lyrics in the song discuss actions not taken in everyday life or missed opportunities. The video takes place in Paris where Carole, Jean-Jacques, and Michael make their separate ways to a predetermined location. En route they each observe positive and negative human interactions, accidents, ethnically diverse families, couples, political and social events, and children at play. Upon the arrival of all three at a party, the viewer realizes that they were en route to Carole’s own birthday celebration. Friendship, sharing gifts, laughter, good music, and dancing greet the three singers at their journey’s end.

The instructional tasks were threefold, covering the interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication. For the interpretive task, the class was told that the family of the late Carole Fredericks had asked for its help in understanding the message of this particular video. Initially, the students watched the video and then answered a worksheet based on the video’s story line. No written lyrics were given to the class. The students had to rely on the sound and the visuals, including body language, to interpret the theme of the song.

After correcting their sheets and receiving feedback from the teacher, the students moved on to the next phase of the assessment: the interpersonal task. A week after interpreting the music video, students interviewed each other about their prefer-

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*“The realization that Ms. Fredericks was recognized as a major musical icon abroad, but not in her native U.S., not to mention her hometown, was of immediate interest to students.”*

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ences for or against certain types of music and activities. No rehearsals or written aids were provided to help students in this task. The teacher scored students individually and gave them feedback to improve their performance.

Two weeks later, the assessment of the presentational mode began. The high school class was asked to make a presentation introducing the artist to an elementary school French class scheduled to visit soon after they finished the lesson. These high school ambassadors, including several from Dakar, Senegal, were enthusiastic about sharing with younger students what they had learned about Carole Fredericks. Students selected the song “Kaai Djallema,” from the compact disc *Couleurs et Parfums* (Colors and Perfumes), featuring Carole singing with Nicole Amovin from Senegal. The song offered the next layer in this exercise. “Kaai Djallema” is a bilingual rendition of Cyndi Lauper’s song “Time After Time,” sung in both English and Wolof. The desired outcome was to send home a bilingual French and Wolof publication to the parents of the elementary school students. That publication was to include information about Carole Fredericks as well as proverbs in Wolof. When the students from Dakar mentioned that they could only speak but not write Wolof, the students went online to search for Wolof information and dictionaries. The project progressed quickly, thanks to the Internet resources and the invaluable presence of these heritage speakers of French and Wolof.

Thanks to publisher software in the Windows XP Microsoft package, organizing and editing a publication for the elementary students to share with their parents was relatively easy. The high school French students were assessed on both their verbal presentation to the fourth grade students and on the written handout prepared for the event.

## **Lesson #2**

José Feliciano is our second pop icon. The lesson was developed using the music video *Oye Guitarra Mía: La Vida y Música de José Feliciano* (Listen My Guitar: The Life and Music of José Feliciano). Our colleague, a teacher of Spanish in a suburban school district that has a very small population of Hispanic students, developed this lesson to encourage her students who are native speakers of Spanish. The lesson also benefited her predominantly Anglo class because it brought to their attention José Feliciano’s impact on the American music industry as well as on the Latino music industry worldwide. Because of the popular song “*Feliz Navidad*,” students already knew his voice and musical ability. In his music video *Oye Guitarra Mía*, Mr. Feliciano’s family life in Puerto Rico and the historical events that led him to become the first crossover Latino singer in the U.S. were highlighted. Thanks to interviews in his homeland during family festivals, both teacher and students are able to observe the

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*“These high school ambassadors, including several from Dakar, Senegal, were enthusiastic about sharing with younger students what they had learned about Carole Fredericks.”*

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close family ties and obvious pride that José and his family share about themselves and their island. One video segment traces the challenges that José encountered in the U.S.

What interested the educator most was the potential connection to U.S. history in the segment that featured José singing an innovative version of the national anthem at a baseball game in 1968. The furor that resulted from the artist's creative interpretation of the anthem in a country reeling from the effects of the Vietnam War era was reported in both the Spanish and the English press. Information was available at the artist's website on the Internet (<http://www.josefeliciano.com>).

The teacher designed a unit to last approximately two and one-half weeks, with part of each day's eighty-four minute instructional block designated to study Mr. Feliciano's life. The week-long introductory activity, described here, proceeded from interpretive to interpersonal and on to presentational tasks.

**Day 1 — Interpretive:** The students filled out a 5 x 8 index card with all the information they knew about José Feliciano. The card was put away for use in the assessment phase at the end of the two-week unit. Next, without a lyric sheet, students listened to Mr. Feliciano and Marc Anthony sing "Oye Guitarra Mía" twice. The goal was to have the students appreciate the song as a whole. The teacher gave the students a lyric sheet with words missing. They listened to the song a third and fourth time and were expected to fill in the missing words on the lyric page. Students were instructed to look at and analyze the sentence structure to see what kind of word was missing from the lyrics. For example, did they see the set-up for the subjunctive they had been studying? Is there a definite or indefinite article before the line, indicating they would need a noun? Analyzing sentence structure helped them make better decisions with respect to proper grammar. They were also told to check what might make more sense for the content.

**Day 2 — Interpretive to Interpersonal:** Once again students listened to the song. This time they sang along with the music video. The instructor divided the class into five groups, each group representing a stanza of the song and one group representing the chorus. They were given ten minutes to translate their section of the song into English. Students were told to use their dictionaries to look up only key words and then to write their translations in an acceptable format in English. They were advised that translating a song would require some manipulation, putting words in a format that makes sense and is appropriate in English without losing the integrity of the song.

This interpretive segment of the exercise was followed by a transition to the interpersonal phase by means of a teacher-led discussion addressing why songs and poetry are difficult to translate to another language. The discussion also addressed the poetic "license" the translator had to take sometimes in order to interpret the lyrics in the new language. The class members read their translated lyrics. Corrections were made by other students or, when necessary, by the teacher. Students were asked to think

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***“Analyzing  
sentence structure  
helped them make  
better decisions  
with respect to  
proper grammar.”***

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about their particular part of the song and its meaning as they prepared for the next day's activity.

**Day 3 — Interpersonal to Presentational:**

Students reconvened in small groups to discuss ways to illustrate their assigned section of the song. The teacher asked students to use as much imagination as possible, using very literal drawings or something that symbolized the definition of a word. All discussion was in the target language. Each group selected one student to write the lyrics on a large display board. Students placed the illustrations on the board next to the appropriate verse in order to give visual form to Feliciano's lyrics. Each group shared its illustrations with the rest of the class. The other groups were allowed to question the decisions and to inquire why a particular image was chosen. They were encouraged to be as literal or interpretive as they wished with their illustrations, but to be prepared to tell the class what their artistic interpretations meant. Students presented very literal illustrations such as a guitar with a mouth drawn representing the line "*Oye guitarra mía, tú que sabes hablar mejor*" ("Listen my guitar, you who know how to speak better than I"). Other groups were more involved in their interpretations. One group depicted the line "*la negrura de los cielos me recuerda su mirada*" ("the darkness of the skies reminds me of your countenance or look") by drawing a picture of the woman Feliciano sings about, illustrating her with dark eyes and dark skin.

**Day 4 — Interpretive:** The students were asked to write an analysis in Spanish about the song "*Oye Guitarra Mía*." Questions such as "What was the artist attempting to say in the song lyrics?" helped the teacher assess student comprehension. In this activity, students recited lines of the song lyrics to support their interpretation. They also wrote a one-page paper expressing their personal opinion about the song, making the case for why they liked or disliked it. Students were responsible for the final edited version of this paper. It was later used in the assessment at the end of the two and one-half week unit.

**Day 5 — Presentational:** Students read their interpretations and discussed them in small groups. Similarities and differences of interpretations were identified and eliminated. The students placed their work and the illustrations of the song lyrics on bulletin boards for the whole class to view. The music video was the principle element of technology. At each step of this lesson students were engaged on multiple levels. The assessment process was integrated into the unit's lessons to give immediate feedback to students as they progressed.

### Lesson #3

The final example comes from a colleague in a private suburban high school. The lesson offers additional support for the use of emotional scaffolding dynamics reinforced by a pop icon, technology, and assessment. This next lesson further illustrates how emotional scaffolding teaching practices are equally as effective with students who are not intimately associated with the pop icon by ethnicity, socio-economic circumstances, location, or direct association with the family. In this lesson

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*"...students recited  
lines of the  
song lyrics to  
support their  
interpretation."*

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the sheer power of contemporary music, the music video, and the song lyrics transcends all differences between the artist and the students to engage the students at their level of interest.

The lesson emphasizes the interpretive and interpersonal modes of communication. The presentational mode of communication is explored through the students' discussion regarding their ideas on how to make a music video about the song. Technology critical to this task included the recording "Qu'est-ce qui t'amène" (What brings you back?) from the compact disc *Couleurs et Parfums* (Colors and Perfumes), the music video "Qu'est-ce qui t'amène," and Internet resources. Small group and individual comments reveal what students discovered about the artist.

In the song "Qu'est-ce qui t'amène," the artist observes human behavior in love, life, and family. She sings in French on the platform of the train station in Fillmore, California, as an ethnically diverse cast enacts dramatic story lines within the station and around her.

The class knew very little about Carole Fredericks prior to this exercise. For the interpretive mode, the song "Qu'est-ce qui t'amène" was played twice for a junior class of French 4 honors students. Students were instructed to listen to the song and to then determine what style of music the song suggested to them. The teacher was looking for students to assign a musical idiom they were familiar with to the song and to awaken their powers of observation. It worked. One student commented, "I liked the soothing, warm quality of her voice. It was like hearing gospel music in French." Another said, "It sounds like the Backstreet Boys; I like it!"

The second time the class listened to the song, students were asked to follow along with the lyrics. The teacher then asked students what they thought the song was about. Students wrote a variety of summaries. "I think Carole wants to show how love lasts forever, surviving breakups and obstacles." "I think Carole believed in second chances and that we should be open to someone's return." "She wanted to show that love brings you back even if there are obstacles." "It shows that people experience mixed feelings and strong emotions when dealing with love."

This interpretive mode exercise was followed by an interpersonal activity that resulted in discussion. For the presentational mode the teacher placed students into small groups. In each group students discussed, using the target language, how they would make a music video to convey the messages they understood from the lyrics. The objective was to have students apply their imagination in combination with their interpretation of the music and lyrics to produce a presentational component. The discussion produced a variety of responses. One group wrote, "There should be rain, a person walking in rain or snow sadly looking for the guy of her dreams whom she finds and then asks the question *Qu'est-ce qui t'amène?*" An individual student offered, "I imagined a sadder video in a large city like New York. I saw Carole singing in the

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***"One student commented, 'I liked the soothing, warm quality of her voice. It was like hearing gospel music in French.' "***

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street while all kinds of people passed by. They all [the people] have experienced the feelings Carole expresses in the song.” Another said, “I imagined grey and two people fighting, then the singer in a lonely field while it is raining. Then her guy comes back in slow motion and the colors become bright again.”

The homework assignment was to visit the pop icon’s website (<http://www.carolefredericks.net>) and to read her biography. Students were asked to find the section on “*Qu’est-ce qui t’amène*” and to view photos from the making of the music video. The homework assignment was followed the next day with a teacher-led discussion. To determine the students’ level of comprehension subsequent to reading a biography of Carole Fredericks in French, the teacher asked, “After reading the artist’s biography, what impressed you, touched you, or shocked you?”

Students unanimously agreed they were impressed with the artist’s courage to move to a foreign country where she did not speak the language in order to follow a dream. The teacher also asked, “Now that you have seen the video, what impressed you, struck you, or disappointed you? Did the clip communicate her message as you imagined the song to mean? How many examples did you see in the video that illustrate her message and asked the same question?” Lively conversation ensued. One of the instructor’s favorite comments from a junior summed up the point of view of most students:

I loved the video and I think it conveys the message well. Love is not always perfect; the couples weren’t all extremely beautiful people who walk off into the sunset. The power of the message is that despite fights or age or long periods of absence, love still brings you back to each other. Not even handcuffs and two heavily armed policemen could keep the man from his love.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher used the song “*Qu’est-ce qui t’amène*” as a lead-in for the distinction between the interrogative words *qu’est-ce qui* vs. *quel* and *qu’est-ce que*. In other lessons this instructor used the song “*Respire*,” from the *Couleurs et Parfums* CD, to reinforce the ‘l’ and ‘r’ sounds in French. Often the students gently teased their teacher, commenting, “Ah, Madame, you can find a grammar lesson in anything.”

## Conclusion

As Daniel Goleman (1997) suggests, and the authors of this article concur, there is a strong link between instructional design that engages students both intellectually and emotionally and higher academic performance. Jerry Rosiek’s (2003) emotional scaffolding dynamics — the tailoring of pedagogical representations that influence a students’ emotional response to some specific aspect of the subject matter — are teaching practices that are accessible to every classroom teacher regardless of the

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***“The challenge is to find an artist whose music and biography are readily available, and, more importantly, are appropriate for the classroom.”***

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subject matter. The goal of this article is to illustrate these theories with examples of their practical application in the K-12 world language classroom.

Pop icons can serve as a conduit for the students' emotional connection within the target language. If the artist is dedicated to improving the lives of others or presents a compelling life story, interest grows within the minds of both teacher and students. The challenge is to find an artist whose music and biography are readily available, and, more importantly, are appropriate for the classroom. The use of a contemporary pop icon can be a powerful ally in the classroom when lessons are designed to include assessment, emotional scaffolding dynamics, and technology.

It is the classroom teacher who is closest to the pulse of world language education and student learning dynamics. Therefore, it is the classroom teacher who has the most accurate contextual knowledge of what motivates students to learn within and outside of the classroom. Teachers' powers of observation and experience are invaluable tools. Knowing what students gravitate to in their personal lives can be the key to unlocking self-motivation, thereby enhancing the learning process. This article was written to acknowledge the continued commitment and innovation of K-12 world language teachers and to encourage and, yes, inspire others to do the same.

## Note:

1. This article is reprinted with permission of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages: Gadbois, N., & Fredericks-Malone, C. (2005). "Assessment, emotional scaffolding and technology: Powerful allies in the K-12 world language classroom." In P. Boyles & P. Sandrock (Eds.), *2005 Report of the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Language. The year of languages: Challenges, changes and choices* (pp. 197-206). Eau Claire, WI: Crown Prints.

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# ***Eighth-Grade Griots: Turning Middle School Students into Storytellers***

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**Lori Langer de Ramirez**, *Herricks Public Schools, New York*

## **Introduction**

It is a challenge to teach a beginning student of language. Teachers are charged with the task of designing activities that are at once pedagogically sound, grade- and level-appropriate, and also interesting. When dealing with the limited proficiency of beginning students, it can be difficult to find material that meets all of these requirements. While no one method can be said to be the perfect solution to this problem, utilizing stories from the target culture as a thematic center for lessons or units of study can provide teachers with a means of integrating “language, culture and content” (Curtain and Dahlberg, 2003, p. xiv) in the beginning language curriculum.

In traditional West African culture, *griots*, professional storytellers, travel from town to town, telling stories. They are the living embodiment of a long and rich oral tradition that includes folktales, historical information, and cultural practices. In their sharing of this information, they share history and culture in a direct and entertaining way. As the stories in this curriculum unit come from oral traditions from three Spanish-speaking countries, evoking the spirit of the *griots* seems a fitting parallel. In this unit, the students’ role was, in effect, to disseminate these stories in their own unique way, as a means of sharing language, culture, and content with their classmates.

## **Folktales for Language Learning**

In the existing body of literature on stories, there is much information about the use of stories for elementary school children (Barton & Booth, 1990; Egan, 1986; Eisenberg, 1997; Khare, 1992; Kiefer, 1995; Meringoff, 1982; Peng & Levin, 1978; and Stein, 1986), and even some studies about adults’ use of stories (Goh, 1996; Liskin-Gasparro, 1996). However, there is a need for more information on the use of stories with adolescents. This study seeks to add to the literature information about the potential stories have for middle school students.

It is hoped that this study will add more specific documentation about the actual language use that students can achieve when working with both visual and written texts. A further goal is not to advocate for the use of stories as the sole base for a foreign language curriculum, but as a much-needed supplement to the traditional

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textbook. While teachers are able to purchase any number of pre-packaged curriculum units in a dizzying array of formats — CD-ROM, video, DVD, audiotapes, print materials, computer software — many of these materials are not suited for beginning students due to the students' limited proficiency and the materials' linguistic difficulty level. Since teachers know their students' abilities better than any publisher, in the classroom it is almost always preferable to use teacher-created materials that are tailored to the students' needs and the context of each school. For this reason, it is hoped that teachers become inspired and tap into their own potential for creating materials themselves which are at once culturally rich and relevant to their own individual classroom situations.

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***“In traditional  
West African  
culture, griots,  
professional  
storytellers, travel  
from town to town,  
telling stories.”***

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## **The Study**

A thematic unit was designed consisting of folktales from Argentina, Colombia, and Mexico, which I had collected in these three countries. The stories were used with one second-year class of thirty eighth-grade students of Spanish. The stories were presented to the students in a variety of media formats: picture books, audiotapes, videotapes, a hypermedia program, and a webpage. As an overarching theme, students were told that these stories were entries in a storytelling contest and that they (the students) had been chosen as preliminary judges. In their role as judges, students were asked to access the stories and to make reports back to the chief panel of judges. Their reports were to consist of a story summary and an evaluation of the merit of each story's content and illustrations.

After being involved for over a month in reading and listening to other people's stories, the students were given the chance to create their own in Spanish. They were invited to submit their original stories in any format they wished, but most students created picture book stories (with text and drawn or computer-generated images).

Of the thirty students who participated in this study, the work of six students is analyzed in the present article. The six were chosen to represent a range of proficiency levels. Two could be described as functioning at a low proficiency level, two as middle proficiency level students, and two as high proficiency level students (these designations were based on a combination of previous testing and grades in Spanish class). In the group of six students, there were two boys and four girls. In order to maintain anonymity, the students' names have been changed; they will be referred to as:

- |                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| (1) low proficiency:    | Jason and Nina    |
| (2) middle proficiency: | Veronica and Tony |
| (3) high proficiency:   | Mia and Catherine |

The study of this curriculum unit was designed to evaluate exactly which elements of story structure students would replicate in their original story productions. It also

examined the language structures present in student stories, including vocabulary, past tense verb forms, and oral features (such as repetition and quoted speech). Finally, both the students and the teacher were interviewed about their feelings after participating in the story unit study.

Story structure elements such as setting, initiating event, internal response, attempt/outcome, and reaction — well known to students in their native language — provide sufficient context for the students and serve as a scaffold, or starting place, from which to produce language. Since students are familiar with the structure from their first language, it was anticipated that by being exposed to it in Spanish, they would be able to comprehend vocabulary to which they had not been formally introduced. This contextualized support would enable students to successfully create stories on a proficiency level somewhat higher than those that the eighth-grade curriculum actually offered. It was further speculated that these elements of story and language structure would carry through to original stories that students would write after reading and listening to a series of folktales in Spanish. It was hoped that this group of teenaged language learners would be transformed by the stories into storytellers in their own right — *griots*, as in the West African tradition — known for their skill at spinning yarns and capturing the imagination of all those who listen to them.

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***“The study of this curriculum unit was designed to evaluate exactly which elements of story structure students would replicate in their original story productions.”***

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## **Students as Storytellers**

### **Story Structure**

Students’ stories varied in length and complexity, but all contained most of the elements of story structure. Table 1 shows the presence of the various elements of story structure in the students’ stories. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to label elements of story structure according to the model laid out by Stein and Glenn (1977): setting (where the story takes place and the characters), initiating event (the statement and elaboration of a problem), internal response (some contemplation and/or action on the initiating event), attempt/outcome (some action and/or resolution with regard to the initiating event), and reaction (a coda or afterthought).

### **Table 1**

#### **Story Structure in Original Stories**

In analyzing the completeness of the original student stories, it is interesting to note that all three groups of students produced fairly complete stories containing all story structure elements. The high proficiency students’ language tended to be more complex than that in the middle and low proficiency students’ stories.

<b>Student/Proficiency level</b> X = present — = not present	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Initiating Event</b>	<b>Internal Response</b>	<b>Attempt/ Outcome</b>	<b>Reaction</b>
Catherine (high proficiency)	X	X	X	X	X
Mia (high proficiency)	X	X	X	X	X
Tony (middle proficiency)	X	X	X	X	X
Veronica (middle proficiency)	X	X	X	X	X
Jason (low proficiency)	X	X	X	X	—
Laura (low proficiency)	X	X	X	—	X

### High Proficiency Students

The students in the high proficiency category submitted stories that were very much in keeping with traditional folktales. Both stories analyzed are cautionary tales that deal with man's ignorance and the wisdom and power of nature. Both Catherine and Mia's stories contain all the elements of story structure.

Following are tables that present Catherine's (Table 2) and Mia's (Table 3) stories categorized into story structure elements. It should be noted that each Spanish story text is reproduced just as it was written by the student.

**Table 2**

#### Catherine's story — untitled

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Story text (Spanish)</b>	<b>Story text (English)</b>
setting	<i>La ciudad de Brosco esta en una colina vecina. El hombre viejo vive solo en la ciudad. Todos trabajan y no hablan al hombre viejo.</i>	The city of Brosco is on an old hill. The old man lives alone in the city. Everyone works and [they] don't speak to the old man.
initiating event	<i>Un dia el hombre dice a todos "La colina va explotar! La colina va explotar!"</i>	One day the man says to everyone, "The hill is going to explode! The hill is going to explode!"
internal response	<i>Todos reirse de algo porque el hombre viejo siempre dice cosas necias. El hombre continuamente avisan todos "La colina va explotar! La colina va explotar!"</i>	Everyone [to] laugh about something because the old man always says silly things. The man continually warn everyone "The hill is going to explode! The hill is going to explode!"

**Table 2** (Continued)

Elements	Story text (Spanish)	Story text (English)
attempt/ outcome	<i>De repente la tierra tremblan. Todos las casas en Brosco tremblan. Entonces escuchan rudio alto. La cumbre de la colina rompe. Una nube de polvo y humo y gases salen de colina. Todos gritan. El cielo se hace oscuro y una nube de polvo y humo y gases cubre la ciudad. Los guijarros pequenos cubre a todos de Brosco.</i>	All of a sudden the earth tremble. All the houses in Brosco tremble. Then they listen a loud noise. The top of the hill breaks. A cloud of dust and smoke and gasses come out of the hill. Everyone screams. The sky becomes dark and a cloud of dust and smoke and gasses covers the city. The small pebbles covers everyone from Brosco.
reaction	<i>Todas estar cogen debajo de las cenizas. Las cenizas forman otra colina. Cuando el viento silba por las colinas; escucha la voz del hombre viejo, “La colina va explotar! La colina va explotar!”</i>	Everyone to be catch under the ashes. The ashes form another hill. When the wind whistles through the hills; one hears the voice of the old man, “The hill is going to explode! The hill is going to explode!”

**Table 3****Mia’s story — El hombre codicioso (The Greedy Man)**

Elements	Story text (Spanish)	Story text (English)
setting	<i>(cuentos de Estados Unidos) Hay una isla. Se conoce per su piedra preciosa. Muchas personas regresan de la isla con piedra preciosa. El señor vive en la tierra firme. El señor poseedor de piedra preciosa tiende. El señor es codicioso.</i>	(stories from United States) There is an island. It is known for its precious stone. Many people return from the island with precious stone. The man lives on the mainland. The man owner of precious stone store. The man is greedy.
initiating event	<i>El señor quiere todo los piedras preciosas.</i>	The man wants all the precious stones.
internal response	<i>El señor dice, “¡Yo tengo todas las piedras preciosas!” El señor fue a la isla aun laudo de bote.</i>	The man says, “I have all the precious stones!” The man went to the island [further? still? by?] boat.
attempt/ outcome	<i>El señor nunca regrese.</i>	The man never return.
reaction	<i>Los personas viaja a la isla y vieron el estatuto de piedras preciosas.</i>	The people travels to the island and saw a statue of precious stones.

Both stories contain all of the elements of story structure. Catherine’s story contains more details to support each element of story structure than Mia’s quick and to-the-point style.

### Middle Proficiency Students

The stories from the middle proficiency students, while containing more grammatical and lexical errors, contained all story structure elements and were quite detailed. Tables 4 and 5 are the stories from the middle proficiency students, with each element labeled.

**Table 4**

#### Tony’s story — El muchacho mal y una fiesta (The Bad Boy and a Party)

Elements	Story text (Spanish)	Story text (English)
setting	<i>Había una vez un muchacho y muchos amigos. El muchacho tiene no hermanos, pero tiene muchos amigos.</i>	Once upon a time there was a boy and many friends. The boy doesn’t have no brothers, but he has lots of friends.
initiating event	<i>La madre y el padre se iban de viaje. La madre y el padre decir a muchacho “¡No tienes una fiesta!”</i>	The mother and the father were going on vacation. The mother and father to say to the boy, “Don’t have a party!”
internal response	<i>Pero el muchacho es muy mal. El muchacho hable con amigos y deci amigos una fiesta en su casa. Su casa es muy grande y es cerca la playa. En fiesta de muchacho, muchos amigos beben vino, escuchar musica y bailan. Tambien, madre y padre telefonan la casa, pero muchacho no hablar. Madre y padre son muy inquietos. Ellos salen rapido.</i>	But the boy is very bad. The boy speak with friends and says friends a party in his house. His house is very big and it is nearby the beach. At boy’s party, many friends drink wine, to listen to music and dance. Also, mother and father call home, but the boy doesn’t to talk. Mother and father are very worried. They leave quickly.
attempt/outcome	<i>Madre y padre van la casa y ven cinco coches en entrada de coches. Madre y padre son muy inflamados. Un amigo Ron, ve madre y padre. Ron es muy grande. Ron deci amigos “¡Madre y Padre es en casa!” Amigos van la playa y Ron recoleccion los amigos y tira la playa. Madre y Padre ven Ron y muchacho Julio, cuatro amigos y muchos vino. Julio hablar “¡Hola Mamma!” Mamma y Pappa no responden.</i>	Mother and father go home and see five cars in car entrance. Mother and father are very angry. A friend Ron, sees mother and father. Ron is very big. Ron say friends “Mother and Father is at home!” Friends go the beach and Ron collection the friends and [throws them on? aims for?] the beach. Mother and father see Ron and boy Julio, four friends and many wine. Julio talk, “Hi Mom!” Mom and Dad don’t answer.

**Table 4** (Continued)

Elements	Story text (Spanish)	Story text (English)
reaction	<i>Julio, Ron y amigos son desgracia. Ron va su casa, y Julio dorme. Tambien, ¡treinta amigos en la playa!</i>	Julio, Ron and friends are disgrace. Ron goes his home, and Julio sleep. Also, thirty friends on the beach!

**Table 5**

**Veronica’s story — Mal encanta (Lovesick)**

Elements	Story text (Spanish)	Story text (English)
setting	<i>Hay un hombre. Su nombre es Miguel. El es feo y sucio.</i>	There is a man. His name is Miguel. He is ugly and dirty.
initiating event	<i>Miguel esta encanta con una muchacha. Su nombre es Selena.</i>	Miguel is enchants [in love?] with a girl. Her name is Selena.
internal response	<i>Selena rechaza su encanta. Ella luego vuelta enferma y recibe la flor de Miguel.</i>	Selena rejects his [love]. She then return sick and receives the flower from Miguel.
attempt/ outcome	<i>¡Selena arroja los flores por la ventana! Ellos golpean en su cabeza.</i>	Selena throws the flowers through the window. They hit in his head.
reaction	<i>Miguel grito como un bebe.</i>	Miguel cried like a baby.

Both middle proficiency students’ stories are fairly lengthy and detailed. Tony’s story is ten pages long and full of details. He makes good use of suspense by building up the story of the party until the parents come home to break things up. He uses humor in the reaction by showing the reader that the friends who had been part of the “illegal” party were still waiting on the beach while the boys had gone home and had gone to sleep. Veronica’s story, while short, also contains some humor. At the end she tells the reader that the main character “cried like a baby.” Despite a number of errors in both stories, they remain comprehensible.

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***“Tony’s story is ten pages long and full of details. He makes good use of suspense...”***

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**Low Proficiency Students**

The low proficiency students produced stories that were, for the most part, complete. Tables 6 and 7 display the story structure elements present in the two stories by low proficiency students.

**Table 6****Jason’s story — El perro malo (The Bad Dog)**

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Story text (Spanish)</b>	<b>Story text (English)</b>
setting	<i>Un día el perro encima de la pabellon. El perro es malo.</i>	One day the dog on top of the pavilion [summer house?]. The dog is bad.
initiating event	<i>El perro desaparcer el pescado y golpe guapo muchacho.</i>	The dog to disappear [drop? hide?] the fish and hit handsome boy.
internal response	<i>El perro correr va a la casa de perro.</i>	The dog to run goes to the dog-house.
attempt/ outcome	<i>Cuando el perro fue la casa, el perro fue dormir.</i>	When the dog went the house, the dog went to sleep.
reaction	—	—

**Table 7****Laura’s story — El niño y el conejito (The Boy and the Rabbit)**

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Story text (Spanish)</b>	<b>Story text (English)</b>
setting	<i>En la ciudad de Buenos Aires, un niño Jon, le encantaba conejos.</i>	In the city of Buenos Aires, a boy Jon love rabbits.
initiating event	<i>Un día el niño ve un blanco conejo. Jon el conejo a su casa.</i>	One day the boy sees a rabbit white. Jon the rabbit to his house.
internal response	<i>Pon conejo triste. El conejo perdio el familia.</i>	The rabbit get sad. The rabbit lost the family.
attempt/ outcome	<i>El niño la encantaba el conejo conoce es tiene el conejo empuje. El niño triste el conejo a veces replica Hola! (?)</i>	The boy loved the rabbit knows he is he has the rabbit push [The boy is delighted that the rabbit knows??]. The sad boy the rabbit sometimes replies [replicates? reproduces?][.?] Hi!
reaction	<i>El niño es alegre! El conejo es alegre con su familia. Ellos son alegre!</i>	The boy is happy! The rabbit is happy with his family. They are happy!

There are some incoherent elements in both low proficiency students' stories. At one point in Jason's story, there is difficulty in connecting some of the story elements. He also left out the reaction in his story. Meanwhile, Laura, due to language that is largely incomprehensible, did not succeed in providing an attempt/outcome. Despite some problems, however, the stories contain most of the elements of story structure necessary to tell a complete story.

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***“The two high proficiency students did not misuse any vocabulary...”***

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### Language Structure

Three elements of language structure present in the students' original stories were examined. These elements are unfamiliar vocabulary, past tense verb forms, and oral features (repetition and quoted speech).

### Unfamiliar Vocabulary

Since the students created these stories at home, they made use of their access to a dictionary. Their stories thus contain examples of the misuse of words taken from a dictionary or the glossary in their textbook. The two high proficiency students did not misuse any vocabulary in their original stories and so are not represented here. Table 8 lists examples of misused vocabulary from the original stories of the middle and low proficiency students. The first word represents the student's error, while the phrase in parenthesis is the meaning he or she most likely intended.

**Table 8**

#### Unfamiliar vocabulary in the original story

Student/proficiency	Errors
Tony (middle proficiency)	<i>recoleccion</i> (gather together)
Veronica (middle proficiency)	<i>está encanta</i> (to be in love); <i>vuelta enferma</i> (to get sick)
Jason (low proficiency)	<i>desparcer</i> (to drop)
Laura (low proficiency)	<i>empuje</i> (???)

The errors in vocabulary usage in the original stories fall under the category of the misuse of verbs. For example, in Tony's story, there is a scene in which the main characters are trying to gather together their friends to hide them from their parents. Tony writes: *Amigos van la playa y Ron recoleccion los amigos y tira la playa* (Friends go to the beach and Ron collection the friends and throws [them on] the beach). While *recolectar* can be used to express the idea “to collect,” it cannot be used for people, only for objects. Since the verb *recolectar* is not one with which Tony is likely familiar, it is fair to say that he looked this word up in the dictionary and that he did not know about the limited meaning of this verb.

Veronica uses the word *encanta* incorrectly throughout her story — even in the title. *Encanta* (he/she loves) is the third person singular form of the verb *encantar* (to

delight) and is used in conjunction with the indirect object pronouns to mean the action of loving. However, Veronica uses *encanta* as a noun. Despite this fact, the meaning of Veronica’s story is clear, especially when looking at the accompanying visual imagery.

Jason and Laura both misuse verbs in much the same way as did Tony. Jason uses *desparcer* (to disperse, to disappear) for *dejar caer* (to let fall, to drop). Laura finds *empuje* (literally, push) and uses it in a sentence where it is difficult to know what she intends.

These students, like many beginning foreign language students, use the dictionary to translate their stories from English into the foreign language. While most teachers encourage students to start thinking in the foreign language as soon as possible, it is often difficult to do so, and translation remains their sole means of communicating thoughts. Judging by the errors made by the students across proficiency levels, a few classes in proper dictionary use might help them make better use of this tool, at least until they feel more comfortable thinking in the foreign language.

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***“Despite the fact that these students had not yet been formally introduced to the past tense in Spanish, the majority of the stories in the curriculum unit contain past tense verbs...”***

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**Past Tense Verb Forms**

Despite the fact that these students had not yet been formally introduced to the past tense in Spanish, the majority of the stories in the curriculum unit contain past tense verbs — preterit or imperfect. It is thus interesting to examine to what degree past tenses appeared in their original stories. What follows in Table 9 are the data from the students’ original stories regarding the presence of past tense verbs.

**Table 9**

**Past tense forms in the original story**

Name	Preterit	Imperfect
Tony (middle proficiency)	—	<i>Había, iban</i> (there were, they went)
Jason (low proficiency)	<i>fui</i> (I went) <i>perdió</i> (he/she lost)	<i>encantaba</i> (he/she loved)

None of the high proficiency students used either of the two past tenses in their original stories. It is possible that their concern for accuracy in working on this creative project kept them from experimenting with these new tenses.

Tony’s story begins with a formulaic opening that incorporates the imperfect tense — *Había una vez* (Once upon a time). He uses the imperfect again when stating that the main character’s parents are going on vacation: *La madre y el padre se iban de viaje*

(The mother and the father were going on vacation). While the use of the imperfect in the opening line can be attributed to a formula that Tony used verbatim, this second use of the imperfect does not seem to come from any of the curriculum unit stories or from a preconstructed formula. It is possible that he heard the structure used in past activities in class and somehow retained it and was able to incorporate it into his original story.

Jason uses one example of the preterit twice in his short story: *Cuando el perro fui la casa. El perro fui dormir* (When the dog [!] went home. The dog [!] went to sleep). Even though he makes a subject error (he uses the first person singular — *fui* — instead of third person singular — *fue*), it is a good attempt at the use of this new tense in his original writing.

Laura successfully uses both past tenses in her original story. The preterit appears in the internal response of her story: *El conejo perdió la familia* (The rabbit lost the family). She repeats the word *encantaba* (he loved) twice in the course of the story. It is interesting to note that one middle proficiency student and both low proficiency students experimented with the past tense in their original stories. The high proficiency students, however, used only the more familiar present tense in their stories. Again, it is possible that the high proficiency students were more concerned with precision than with using these new tenses and thus avoided the use of the past tense in the hopes of getting a better grade. Since in the school where this study took place, teachers take points off for each individual error rather than grading student work holistically, it is a fair assumption that students understand that accuracy is more valued than experimentation.

**Oral Features**

In the students’ creative stories, where there was no original from which to cull oral elements, it was interesting to observe if the students recycled any oral features. Table 10 displays the presence of repetition and quoted speech in the students’ own stories.

**Table 10**

**Oral features in the original stories**

Student/proficiency	Repetition	Quoted speech
Catherine (high proficiency)	X	X
Mia (high proficiency)	X	X
Tony (middle proficiency)	—	X
Veronica (middle proficiency)	—	—
Jason (low proficiency)	—	—
Laura (low proficiency)	—	X

**High proficiency students — inclusion of repetition.** The high proficiency students were the only ones to include repetition in their original stories. Catherine made extensive use of repetition in her story about an old man and his warnings. The phrase *La colina va explotar!* (The hill is going to explode! [literally, to exploit]) is repeated six times during the story.

Mia also makes use of repetition in her story, but to far less an extent than Catherine did. She repeats one phrase, *todas las piedras preciosas* (all the precious stones) in two consecutive sentences, possibly to highlight the movement from desire to accomplished fact:

*El señor quiere todas las piedras preciosas. El señor dice, “¡Yo tengo todas las piedras preciosas!”* (The man wants all the precious stones. The man says, “I have all the precious stones!”). While the repetition is brief, it provides a nice rhythm to her story.

**High proficiency students — inclusion of quoted speech.** Both high proficiency students included some quoted speech in their original stories. The quoted speech in Catherine’s story was mentioned in the discussion of repetition (*¡La colina va explotar!*). In fact, this was the only quoted speech present in her story and, as such, it becomes a particularly dynamic way of telling this cautionary tale. The tale itself is an allegory that seems to be praising the wisdom of elders. It is similar to “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” in which a boy, after lying too many times to his neighbors, is not believed when he finally tells the truth. In Catherine’s untitled story, the townspeople are distrustful of an old man’s warnings because he has been known to say silly things (*cosas necias*) in the past. Catherine highlights the oral nature of the man’s warnings by presenting them in quoted speech and by using narration throughout the rest of the story.

Mia’s story, *El hombre codicioso* (The greedy man), contains only one instance of quoted speech. It is the only time during the story in which the main character speaks. His line is enclosed within exclamation marks and is the expression of the man’s desire to have all the precious stones. *¡Yo tengo todas las piedras preciosas!* (I have all the precious stones!). Although Mia mistakenly left out a portion of the phrase “have to have” (it should read *tengo que tener todas las piedras preciosas*), the sentence is comprehensible, given the context of the previous sentence.

**Middle/Low proficiency students — inclusion of repetition.** As mentioned previously, none of the middle/low proficiency students included repetition in any of their stories. It is possible that they were focusing more on moving their stories forward and perhaps did not want to waste space on repeated phrases.

**Middle/Low proficiency students — inclusion of quoted speech.** One of the middle proficiency and one of the low proficiency students included quoted speech in their original stories. Tony’s story, *El muchacho mal y una fiesta* (The bad boy and a party) contains several examples of quoted speech. It is interesting to note that all three examples are, in some way, related to the parents (e.g., the parents are speaking, a boy is speaking about the parents, or the main character is speaking directly to the parents).

The first example of speech appears on the second page of Tony’s story. It comes in the form of an imperative command from the parents to the main character, their

son Julio: ¡No tienes una fiesta! (Don't have a party!). Since at Tony's level of Spanish, students do not yet know how to form the imperatives, Tony uses the second person singular *tienes* (you have) as if making a declarative statement. The meaning is understood, however, in the context of the story.

Later in the story, Ron, Julio's friend, sees the parents arrive home early from their trip and warns the party-goers: ¡Madre y Padre es en casa! (Mother and father is home!). Here Tony makes a very common error for Spanish students. He confuses the verbs *ser* and *estar*, both which mean "to be." *Ser* is used to describe a permanent state of being and *estar*, in this case, is used to convey physical location. He also uses the singular form of the verb — perhaps mistakenly referring back only to the subject closest to the verb, *padre* — instead of the plural.

Despite some errors, the quoted speech in Tony's story sets the stage for the tension in the outcome. When Julio's parents arrive home to discover their son with several friends and a lot of wine (*mucho vino*), Julio greets his mother: ¡Hola Mamma! (Hi Mom!). Julio's parents do not respond to the greeting. To add to the comic nature of the scene, this instance of quoted speech is repeated in the accompanying illustration in a cartoon bubble.

Tony's ethnocultural heritage comes through in his use of quoted speech. He mistakenly doubles the "m" in *mamma*, as in Italian, a language which is occasionally spoken in Tony's home. Indeed, many Italian-American students seemed to make use of their knowledge of Italian, however limited, to comprehend the stories in the curriculum unit.

Laura's short story about a boy and a rabbit (*El niño y el conejito*), includes one instance of quoted speech: *El conejo a veces replica "¡Hola!"* (The rabbit sometimes replies "Hi!"). Since Laura's original story broke down at one point (there were segments which were incomprehensible, especially to a native speaker of Spanish), it is difficult to tell what she wanted to convey with this quoted speech. It seems to be the turning point in the story at which point the rabbit is reunited with its family.

It is obvious that Laura used a dictionary to help her in constructing this sentence. It is likely that Laura was looking for the word "replied" and found the verb *replicar*, but other possibilities can be imagined. While the students in this study were encouraged to avoid overuse of the dictionary, it was difficult to control such use, since the original story was written as homework.

## Conclusions

The stories that students read and listened to in this curriculum unit contained many elements of story structure that are common to stories in all languages. It seems that the nature of story structure helped scaffold language for students and

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***“...nature of story structure helped scaffold language for students and enabled them to both comprehend the stories in the unit and later to write their own tales.”***

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enabled them to both comprehend the stories in the unit and later to write their own tales. While some students used chunks of language taken from the stories in order to build their own stories, others internalized the forms and were more creative in this endeavor. Elements that were present in the oral stories in the unit, such as repetition, quoted speech, and past tense verbs, came through in student writings.

Folktales from the target culture gave students a familiar context through which to expand their understanding of new vocabulary, syntax, and grammar in the target language. They provided students with a comfortable medium for exploring new cultures and ideas. They turned these eighth-grade students of second-year Spanish into adolescent troubadours, or eighth-grade *griots*.

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# Pretending to Learn in the L2 Classroom: The Role of Imagination

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Elaine Perry,<sup>1</sup> French teacher at Harrison High School, takes two rag dolls from the shelves on the side of the room and places them on a chair facing the students. The boy doll, Mme Perry tells the students, is named Pierre; the girl is Marie. Mme Perry then asks her students to imagine Pierre's and Marie's weekend. Students practice the past tense as they suggest possible activities. In another L2 classroom, Frau Gardner is giving directions for a project for which her students will create an imaginary city. As they design their cities, students apply their knowledge of the targeted vocabulary. The students in Señor Emerson's room are dressed in costumes and acting out original fairy tales that they have written. In writing their fairy tales, the students contrast the preterit and the imperfect tenses. During second hour at Greenville Middle School, the French, German, and Spanish students are involved in a cultural simulation during which they pretend to be from imaginary cultures that have conflicting values and customs. Through this activity, students gain experiential knowledge of interacting with individuals from other cultures. In the situations described above, the teachers are drawing upon students' imaginations to learn a second language (L2) and to appreciate the perspectives of other cultures. It is not an uncommon practice for L2 teachers to ask their students to use their imaginations. One teacher rationalized that, "Imagination lends itself to [an L2] class because you want kids to talk, and if they're kind of playing with their imagination that will bring about more play with their speech."<sup>2</sup> Intuitively, we generally accept that imagination is a good thing in education. But is there any theoretical support for engaging students' imaginations? Understanding the theories that underlie the role of imagination in learning may help us utilize imagination more effectively in the classroom and discover implications of imagination in L2 learning.

The goal of this article is to explore the role of imagination in L2 classroom learning. After providing an operational definition of imagination, I develop a theoretical framework based on whole-brain learning and learners' affective states. I then suggest

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*"...is there any theoretical support for engaging students' imaginations?"*

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five principles of imagination in L2 learning and offer practical suggestions for L2 teachers who want to engage and stimulate their students' imaginations.

## Defining Imagination

Imagination is the capacity to think of things as possibly being so; it is an intentional act of mind; it is the source of invention, novelty, and generativity; it is not implicated in all perception and in the construction of all meaning; it is not distinct from rationality but is rather a capacity that greatly enriches rational thinking (Egan, 1992, p. 43).

Many researchers believe, as the above quotation suggests, that imagination enhances reason. Jensen (1998), for example, posits that reason sets goals, but imagination and emotion generate the passion needed to act upon the goals. Without imagination, there would be no language (Asher, 1993). Learners of an L2 must be able to imagine that the unfamiliar sounds, words, and discourse can and do have meaning. In order for L2 learners to go beyond knowing just the facts about the language and cultures, they must be able to imagine conditions with which they are not accustomed. Imagination provides students with the capacity to think beyond conventional ideas and the means to become autonomous thinkers (Egan, 1992).

## Theoretical Framework

### Whole-brain learning

Neuroscience has established that the human brain is composed of two hemispheres, commonly referred to as the left and the right. Each hemisphere differs in the manner in which it processes stimuli. The left hemisphere analyzes the component parts of patterns that occur in stimuli in a step-by-step, objective manner. The right hemisphere synthesizes information in a subjective manner and specializes in simultaneous processing by seeking patterns and gestalts.<sup>3</sup> Left hemispheric processing is temporal and concerned with literal meaning. Right hemispheric processing is spatial and relational and is concerned with metaphorical and emotional meaning. It is in the right hemisphere that emotions, movement, imagination, and creative activities are processed (Danesi, 2003; Herr, 1981). When learners work on tasks that activate both cerebral modes, they are engaged in whole-brain learning (Waldspurger, 1995).

Although it had been assumed that the left hemisphere controls language comprehension and production, it is now believed that both hemispheres play a role in encoding and decoding language (Waldspurger, 1995). The left hemisphere's temporal processing is important because speech sounds are generated in sequence. In order to distinguish between words such as *pat* and *tap*, for example, and to understand the meaning of a series of words, there must be an awareness of the order in which sounds and words occur (Williams, 1983). The left hemisphere's analytic processing is needed for understanding grammar, pronunciation, morphology, and phonology (Danesi, 2003).

Because the right hemisphere perceives patterns, it allows one to recognize whole words by their spatial and acoustic patterns and to identify intonational contours. Waldspurger (1995) cites research that points to

the possibility that there are certain linguistic faculties which are processed, at least in part, by the right hemisphere. These abilities include linguistic and emotional prosody such as stress, rhythm, and intonation; the processing of letters and word patterns necessary for efficient reading skills; contextual cues that provide cohesion and coherence in discourse; and certain aspects of lexical semantics, especially the processing of concrete words that create strong images and formulaic, emotional, high-frequency language such as swear words or the days of the week. (p. 90)

“While each hemisphere is specialized to handle a certain specific type of function, it does so in tandem with complementary or parallel processing patterns taking place in the other hemisphere (and in other parts of the brain)” (Danesi, 2003, p. 48). It is this complementary functioning that gives the mind its power and flexibility (Williams, 1983). Danesi maintains that “Any instructional system that privileges one or the other mode is bound to fail sooner or later” (p. 49). His *bimodal theory* of L2 learning posits that both right and left hemispheric processing, working in tandem, are required for developing proficiency. Gross (1992) recognizes the role of imagination in whole-brain learning:

Insights into the ways in which our brains function have generated tremendous excitement in scientific and educational circles over the past decade. It is now apparent that learning can be enlivened and strengthened by activating more of the brain’s potential. We can accelerate and enrich our learning by engaging the senses, emotions, and imagination (p. 139; cited in Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 8).

The situations described in the beginning of this article engage learners in whole-brain learning. The right hemisphere is stimulated by the teachers’ appeal to the imagination while the left hemisphere is busy with verbal, analytic, and structural processing.

### **Affect in learning**

Arnold and Brown (1999) define affect as “aspects of emotion, feeling, mood, or attitude that condition behavior” (p. 1). In the L2 classroom, research suggests that affect is one of the three main factors that influence the attainment of high levels of proficiency (Danesi, 2003).

There is a close connection between affect and the imagination. “The minute the imagination is engaged, the affective domain is involved” (Herr, 1981, p. 3). Content

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*“The right hemisphere is stimulated by the teachers’ appeal to the imagination while the left hemisphere is busy with verbal, analytic, and structural processing.”*

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that engages learners' affective states stimulate their imaginations. "The connection is... reflected in the wisdom of earliest times: oral cultures tied their lore to vivid images and wrapped it in stories that could organize affective responses to it" (Egan, 1992, p. 70).

Combining affect with cognition makes learning more effective. In fact, Egan (1992) suggests, "Cognitive activity that lacks imagination and affective components is desiccated and inadequate" (p. 107). Affective feedback, either external (derived from another person) or internal (from the learner himself or herself) impacts the learning process (Stevick, 1999). When L2 learners perceive that the listeners' verbal or nonverbal feedback is positive, their willingness to communicate is enhanced. When the learners' own evaluation of their language production is favorable, motivation to continue to communicate is stronger. Affect and learning are also connected through voluntary or involuntary playback. Stevick defines playback as, "bits of language that get played over in [learners'] minds" (p. 54). Playback is perceived as an additional way to receive comprehensible input. Learners who are motivated by purpose and emotion tend to replay language between the opportunities they have for exposure to the language.

## **Principles of Imagination in L2 Learning and Suggestions for Teachers**

### **Principle I: Imagination is crucial in beginning L2 learning.**

In the early stages of L2 learning, learners rely on all available linguistic and extra linguistic cues, such as intonation, formulaic language, gestures, situational context, and other chunking techniques, in their attempts to understand the language. Because these cues are processed holistically (i.e., by seeking patterns and gestalts) the right hemisphere's involvement is greater than that of the left at this stage. It is not until language processing becomes more automatic or routinized that the left hemisphere takes over (Waldspurger, 1995). Danesi (2003) concurs that the right hemisphere is a crucial point of departure for novel tasks because the right hemisphere is better able to connect with other neuronal pathways of the brain and thus is a better distributor of information.

It is my contention that, because it is processed in the right hemisphere, imagination plays an important role in beginning L2 learners' attempts to create meaning. Egan (1992) maintains that imagination is, "*a way in which the mind functions when actively involved in meaning-making*" (p. 29).

When something new is learned, it mixes in with the complex of shifting emotions, memories, intentions, and so on that constitute our mental lives. The more energetic and lively the imagination, the more are facts constantly finding themselves in new combinations and taking on new emotional colouring as we use them to think of possibilities, of possible worlds (Egan, p. 50).

Teachers who are intent upon stimulating learners' imaginations in the early stages of L2 learning may do well to follow Danesi's suggestion of using experiential techniques such as observation, induction, simulation, role-playing, and other orientation

tasks that provide learners with opportunities to experience patterns and to approach the subject more holistically. Experiential techniques allow students to get a feel for the whole before approaching the topic analytically.

Several methods that ascribe great salience to right hemispheric processing may also be a source of direction for involving the imagination. The Silent Way (Gattegno, 1972) uses recordings, colored Cuisenaire rods, pictures, word charts, and films to appeal to the right hemisphere's capacity to process patterns and gestalts. These materials build associations between the colors, the rods, the sounds, and the words of a language. Learners involved in Suggestopedia (Lozanov, 1979) draw on their imaginations to create new identities. Asher's Total Physical Response (1977, 1996) stimulates right hemispheric processing through kinesthetic input. The Natural Approach (Terrell, 1977) asks learners to grasp the meaning of the instructor's L2 input in a gestalt-like manner. They may demonstrate their understanding through body movements or other nonlinguistic signals. Nord's (1981) three-phase model for developing listening fluency and Winitz and Reeds' (1975) self-instructional program, *The Learnables*, draw on the right hemisphere's capacity to process patterns. Learners listen to L2 oral stimuli and respond by selecting the image from a series of pictures that corresponds to the utterance.<sup>4</sup>

### **Principle II: Imagination provides a meaningful context in which to present and practice the L2.**

Valette (1997) maintains that, "The best way to build linguistic proficiency is by presenting all activities in meaningful contexts and by encouraging students to express their personal ideas in the [L2]" (p. 20). Contextualizing new information facilitates the brain's process of extracting or creating patterns and activating students' background knowledge (Jensen, 1998). Language that is contextualized is easier to understand, recall, and reproduce because context links form with meaning and helps learners to form connections (Egan, 1992; Omaggio Hadley, 2001).

The following quotations from L2 teachers illustrate ways in which imagination can be used to contextualize L2 learning.

- Imagination plays a big role in language learning. In my room, we use imagination to create a context for conversation. Imagine that you are in a French café with a French friend and talk over three current topics as you order a meal.
- Something we struggle with in language teaching is context. You know, it is a foreign language classroom, and... if we say imagine, imagine a French kid is in the room, it suddenly just... it elevates things just a bit... It makes the lesson seem a little more real.
- One reason that I often say to students *Imaginez* is to give them a situation where they would use [the L2] in a real-life situation... We talk about being in a train station... and that's a cultural thing. In France you go to the train station. *Vous allez à la gare*. We don't have a train station here... [but] that's what French people do. They go to the train station. They buy a... *un billet, aller-retour* and *aller simple* [a ticket, round-trip and one-way]. You know, these are things that French people do.
- A reason to "imagine" is to have them use language creatively. Some activities are to practice and learn memorized phrases. However, students need opportunities to give original answers and this would be an opportunity for that.

Teachers might use any of the eight contextualizations Danesi (2003) identifies for providing a meaningful context that engages students' imaginations while practicing the L2. The first one, *culture-focused contexts*, allows students to use the L2 in ways that require attention to cultural conventions. Examples include making a deposit at a bank, shopping in a clothing store, bargaining with vendors, and making hotel reservations. Danesi's second suggestion, *situational contexts*, provides opportunities for students to practice targeted grammatical forms in meaningful situations. Students may, for example, explain to a partner the places he/she hopes to visit during future vacations or offer advice to a new student on ways to succeed in the L2 classroom. Teachers may create an *identification context* by asking students to describe an imaginary person from another planet. Or, in groups of three or four, one student may think of a famous person and the other group members have to guess who the person is by asking questions about the person's accomplishments. In *function-related contexts*, students relate grammatical forms to speech functions such as giving commands or persuading someone to do something. For example, students may create a dialogue in which they try to convince reluctant classmates to go to the movies or a sporting event. Danesi's *personalized contexts* involve students in expressing their own points of view in a controlled manner. While studying the subjunctive, for example, students might identify a social cause that they consider worthwhile and explain why it is important to them. *Information-giving contexts* and *information-getting contexts* engage students in question-and-answer conversations about some aspect of the L2 culture. Examples include describing housing in the target culture, demonstrating and asking questions about typical gestures, and explaining why a given advertisement would appeal to speakers of the L2. Danesi's final suggested contextualization is *cultural identification contexts*. This particular context involves students in recognizing certain aspects of the L2 culture. A sample activity is based on the television game show "\$25,000 Pyramid". Students prepare lists of names or things that relate to a specific topic in the L2 cultures such as things one would buy in an open-air market. While working in pairs, one student reads the items on the list and the second student has to make a connection among the items and identify the category in which the items belong.

In the examples cited above, contextualization encourages students to draw on their imaginations as a way of thinking and as a powerful tool for learning substantive material. The activities engage them in whole-brain learning, which Gross (1992), Danesi (2003), and Waldspurger (1995), among others, maintain is crucial to the development of proficiency. The activities require students to imagine conditions beyond those with which they are accustomed and to think beyond conventional ideas. They are utilizing the capacity of their imagination to think of things as possibly being so.

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***“...contextualization encourages students to draw on their imaginations as a way of thinking and as a powerful tool for learning substantive material.”***

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### **Principle III: Imagination motivates learning and enhances memory.**

Most teachers would agree that when students enjoy what they are doing, they are more motivated to learn. "Motivation, after all, is better guided by a move toward pleasure" (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 2). It is generally accepted in education that students enjoy drawing upon their imaginations during the learning process. Students learn more on their own and take more responsibility for their learning when their imaginations are stimulated (Sadow, 1994).

Jensen (1998) refers to research that links engaging the emotions (i.e., imagination, feelings, moods, and attitudes) during and immediately after learning with greater recall and accuracy. He states that attention, meaning, and memory are driven by the emotions. "The things that [teachers] orchestrate to engage emotions will do 'triple duty' to capture all three" (p. 94). Egan (1992) explains how emotions impact the learning and retaining of new information:

The human mind does not simply store facts discretely when it learns... we do not simply lodge these as discrete data in our brains. When learned, they mix in with the complex of shifting emotions, memories, intentions, and so on that constitute our mental lives... Whether and *how* we learn and retain these particular facts is affected by the complex of meaning-making structures we already have in place, which in turn are affected by our emotions, intentions, and so on. (p. 50)

Additional support for the notion that the imagination enhances memory can be found in Stevick (1999). Memory networks encode emotions, such as those evoked by imagination, along with visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory data. The emotions provide additional semantic information, thus making the stimulus more elaborate. As a result, more nodes are activated during processing, and, consequently, when recall is attempted, there are more pathways to the nodes in the memory network.

There are many means by which teachers can motivate student learning and enhance memory by appealing to the imagination. One way is through role-plays and simulations. Although these techniques are similar in many ways, there are some fundamental differences between the two. In role-playing, students take the part of people from the L2 cultures and try to act as those people would in a given situation. Using what they know about the L2 culture, students must imagine how the people they are pretending to be would feel and behave. Role-playing is especially valuable when it promotes positive identification with authentic speakers of the L2 in contexts that students perceive as real and in which they could imagine themselves participating. The activities given earlier of asking students to imagine being in a French café or at a train station engage students in role-plays. Simulation, on the other hand, does not require students to become someone else.

[In simulation], the teacher designs a situation which is analogous in significant ways to the phenomenon being taught and assigns students roles. Rules are established which allow students to experience the constraints inherent in the situation and to gain insight into the subject... In simulation the students do not become someone else. The roles they play in the simulation are determined by their own

reactions to the constraints and opportunities the situation offers. They do not imagine how some other person would respond as they would in role-playing (Williams, 1983, pp. 175-6).

The introduction to this article mentioned a cultural simulation that took place in Greenville Middle School. The simulation (created by the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education, 1991) began by assigning students to one of three imaginary cultural groups — the Holkia, the Hevay, or the Heelotia — and directing them to their respective rooms. In each room, one of the teachers explained the unique values and mores of her particular cultural group and distributed tokens — little plastic disks whose color differed for each group. The Heelotia, for example, were given purple tokens which, for them, have little value. They are given out when someone in their culture breaks a rule. The Heelotia have a peculiar sense of privacy. They never give out vital statistics if more than one person is present. They also consider numbers to be private. In the Heelotia culture, men must never approach a woman without permission from the group's leader; the High Heelo. Eye contact is taboo in their culture; they speak to each other with their heads turned to the side. Each group's mores and values conflict with those of the other two groups. For example, whereas the Heelotia never touch anyone, the Holkia welcome physical contact. In contrast to the Heelotia, when the Hevay talk to each other, they always look each other directly in the eye.

The simulation was divided into several time segments. Each time a bell rang, the students were allowed to go to other cultures (i.e., one of the three classrooms) to visit. During each segment, some students did not go out; they stayed in their own culture to interact with their visitors. At the conclusion of the simulation, the students told what they had observed of the other cultures and discussed how they had felt during the interactions. Students from the Hevay and Holkia cultures, for example, thought the Heelotia were generous because they gave away their purple tokens freely. However, some students said the Heelotia made them feel unwanted because they would not look at them. In simulations, students talk about their own personal reactions rather than imagining how someone else would feel, as they would do in role-playing.

Other means by which teachers can motivate student learning and enhance memory by appealing to the imagination can be found in Jensen's (1998) suggestions that are listed below.

- Ensure that the learning engages emotions through role-play, theater, drama, mime, art, and simulations. (Also use music, playing instruments, singing, cheers, shouting, debates, personal stories, improvisation, dance, quiz-show games, exercises, stretching, play, field trips, and student or guest speakers.)

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***“In simulations,  
students talk  
about their own  
personal  
reactions rather  
than imagining  
how someone else  
would feel, as  
they would do in  
role-playing.”***

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- Make choice a key ingredient as well as fun.<sup>5</sup>
- Make novelty relevant, social, and fun. Create immersion environments where the room has been redesigned or decorated as a city, new place, or foreign country.
- Develop greater peer collaboration, make projects cooperative, use partners, long-standing teams, or temporary groups for specialized activities.

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*“Authentic  
assessment requires  
students to create  
an oral, written, or  
visual product.”*

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**Principle IV: Imagination is a requisite for authentic assessment.**

Authentic assessment is a measure of student performance that is contextualized to simulate a real-life situation. Wiggins (1998) identified the following characteristics of authentic assessment. It is realistic in that it describes a situation that could actually occur in real life. Completion of the assessment requires judgment and innovation on the part of the student. It requires students to do the subject rather than following a set routine or plugging in knowledge. The context of the assessment involves a specific situation that has particular constraints, purposes, and audience. It represents the students’ ability to use their repertoire of knowledge of the subject. In addition, Wiggins suggests that authentic assessments should allow appropriate opportunities to rehearse, practice, consult resources, and get feedback on and refine performances and products.

Authentic assessment requires students to create an oral, written, or visual product. Some possibilities include an advice column, a billboard, a campaign speech, a debate, a fable, a game, an interview, a journal, a magazine cover, a commercial, and a slide show. The wide range of possibilities is bounded only by the teacher’s and the students’ imaginations.

The students in Professor Headke’s first semester German class were given the following authentic assessment:

The editors of the German newspaper *Die Zeit* are inviting first year college-level students of German to submit an application for an all-expense-paid trip to the FIFA World Cup to be held in Germany in June 2006. One of the requirements of the contest is that applicants design their own personal coat of arms and give a three-minute videotaped presentation of it. The editors are looking for

- a visually attractive coat of arms,
- a minimum of four personal interests represented by pictures and text,
- a personal motto that represents the applicant’s philosophy of life,
- correct use of grammar and vocabulary,
- good presentation skills (i.e., enthusiasm, audibility, good pronunciation).

The three sample authentic assessments below, which included specific constraints and criteria when distributed to the students, are ones that I have used in my L2 classroom.

1. Imagine that you have earned your degree and that you are working for an advertising agency. Your boss, who knows you speak French, has asked you to work with a client who wants to sell his American product in France. Create an ad that would entice the French to buy the product.
2. Tourism is a major source of revenue in European cities. Imagine that you and a group of your classmates are on the council of a city in France and you are concerned about promoting tourism. Your group has been delegated the responsibility of preparing a brochure to attract tourists to your city.
3. Imagine that you are on the Student Union Board of the university. The members of the board must decide on two or three activities to sponsor during the semester. The problem is that everyone on the board has a different idea. It has been decided that at the next meeting, any board member who so desires may have eight to ten minutes to talk about an activity they want the board to sponsor and why. Choose an activity that you enjoy and prepare a presentation that would convince the board to choose to sponsor it.

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*“Techniques that engage learners in visual thinking involve pattern recognition...”*

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### **Principle V: Imagination enables and sustains visual thinking.**

Visual thinking is a way of obtaining and processing information through the means of graphic representations. It involves the ability to derive meaning from the graphic itself or from the graphic in conjunction with oral or written communication. Graphic representations may be tangible such as wooden blocks of various shapes and sizes, or they may be depicted on a surface such as a blackboard or a computer screen. They include diagrams, charts, graphs, maps, and drawings, as well as a wide assortment of other visual aids. In addition, dance, paintings, statues, gestures, and facial expressions may be used as graphic representations. Imagination is integral to the students' ability to think visually.

In the L2 classroom, visual thinking facilitates the development of linguistic, communicative, and conceptual competence (Danesi, 2003). Techniques that engage learners in visual thinking involve pattern recognition and thus stimulate right hemispheric processing. When used in tandem with explanations, exercises, or activities that engage the left cerebral hemisphere, visual techniques can be powerful pedagogical tools.

Many L2 teachers regularly use some sort of graphic representation to engage learners in visual thinking. Graphic organizers, defined by Wincour (1985) as “visual constructs or diagrams as a communication aid for systematically mapping the organization of ideas and guiding internal dialogues” (p. 88), are perhaps the most commonly used stimulus for visual thinking.<sup>6</sup> A Venn diagram, for example, facilitates the comparison and contrast of cultures. Characteristics of the target culture are written in one of two overlapping circles. The other circle contains characteristics of

the home culture. Those characteristics that are shared by both cultures are written in the area where the two circles overlap.

A boot is a common graphic representation for teaching stem-changing verbs. The forms whose stems are the same as the infinitive are inside the boot. Those whose stems change are outside the boot. (See Figure 1.) Mme Perry related the boot graphic to the fable “There was an old lady who lived in a shoe.” She said that the verbs on the left (i.e., the verbs that do not change stems) are like a three-story building. To follow her analogy, students would first have to imagine that the whole boot was a building in which someone lived and that that one section of the building was made up of three floors.

Señor Emerson used a comic strip as a visual context. His students created an original dialogue and wrote it in the blank dialogue bubbles on the comic strip. In this activity, they had a visual stimulus that appealed to the right hemisphere’s ability to process patterns. The written dialogue appealed to the left hemisphere’s analytical processing. Another graphic representation familiar to most French teachers is The House of *être*. The sixteen most common verbs that require the use of the verb *être* in the compound past are superimposed on a house diagram. Finally, Williams (1983) suggests that mandalas be used to create meaning within a circular pattern. Series of images are arranged in a circle, or a circle divided into halves, quarters or pie-shaped sections. Concentric circles in which each circle graphically represents different levels of an idea may also be used. (See Figure 2.)

## Conclusion

Intuitively, L2 teachers generally accept the notion that imagination has an important role in L2 learning. This article provides support for that intuition by presenting a theoretical framework based on whole-brain learning and learners’ affective states. When students draw on their imaginations while attending to instruction or while working on verbal or analytical tasks, they are engaged in whole-brain or bimodal learning. Asking students to imagine involves the affective domain in the learning process. Both whole-brain learning and learners’ affective states influence learning by drawing attention, creating meaning, and enhancing memory. Whole-brain learning and positive learner affect are essential for the attainment of L2 proficiency (Danesi, 2003; Jensen, 1998).

This article suggests five principles that are based on the theoretical framework developed here. Each principle identifies a specific role for imagination in the L2 classroom and is followed by practical suggestions for implementing it in L2 instruction. Throughout the article, I include quotations from experienced teachers and vignettes taken from my own observations of actual L2 classrooms. They demonstrate the fact that imagination has been and will most likely continue to be a powerful resource for L2 learning. Attention to the imagination in the L2 classroom can make learning more effective, enable students to reach higher levels of L2 proficiency, and lead to a more holistic development of the students.

## Notes

1. Pseudonyms are used for all teachers and schools mentioned in this article.
2. This quotation and the quotations included in the discussion of Principle II, which appears later in this article, were solicited for the purpose of this article from foreign language teachers whose teaching experienced ranged from 16 to 29 years. The teachers were told that their comments would remain anonymous.
3. *Gestalt* is defined by the *Oxford American Dictionary* as “an organized whole that is perceived as more than the sum of its parts” (1999, p. 329).
4. It is not being suggested that contemporary L2 instruction adopt the methods described here. However, many of the strategies used in the methods may be applied to the beginning stages of L2 learning in today’s classrooms.
5. Bear in mind Egan’s (1992) caveat: “Things educational can often be entertaining, but things entertaining are not always educational” (p. 163).
6. Bellanca (1992) offers a wide variety of graphic organizers that can be adapted to the L2 classroom. Others can be found on the website <http://www.graphic.org>.

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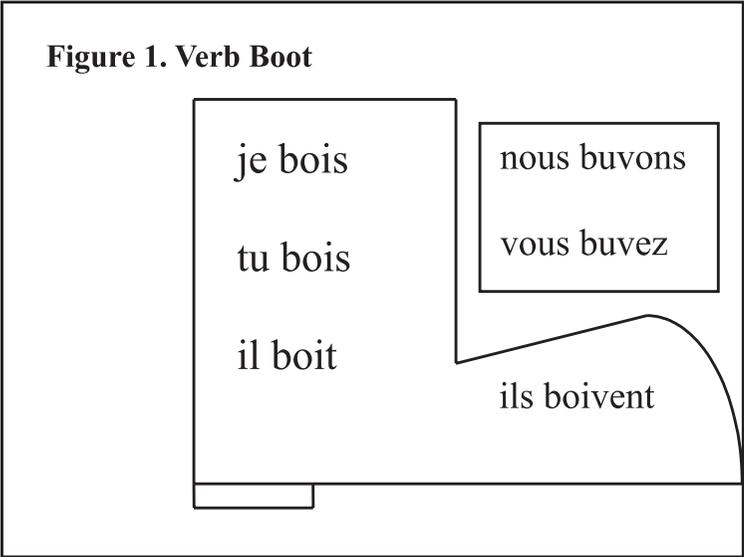
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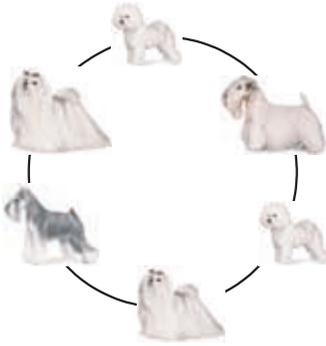
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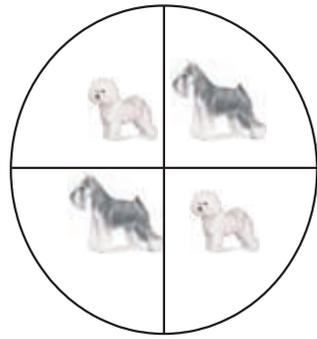
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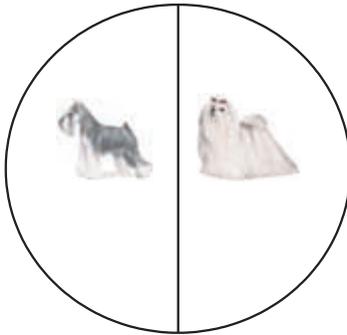
**Figure 2. Sample Mandalas**



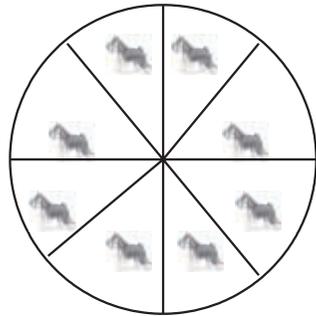
Series of Images Arranged  
in a Circle



Series of Images Arranged  
in Quarters



Series of Images Arranged  
in Halves



Series of Images Arranged  
in Pie-Shape

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# Putting Your Best Foot Forward: Preparing Dossiers for Applications, Awards, and Candidacies

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Frank W. Medley, Jr.

## Introduction

In the teaching profession there are numerous professional awards, promotions, and recognitions made each year to publicize, reward, and honor excellence in the classroom and service to the profession. In many instances, a peer review committee studies the applications and nominations and selects or recommends the recipient of the award. The author of this article has served on these committees at the regional and national levels, and has also been the recipient of awards and honors at both levels. It should be noted that this is not intended to be an empirically based scholarly article. Instead, the author draws on his experience to describe and discuss some of the points that one should consider when preparing a dossier for submission to a professional organization or other group that uses a selection procedure to determine the recipient of the honor or award.

In order to add breadth and depth to the discussion, a brief description of four different awards — three regional and one national — is first presented, and the criteria are then discussed in more general terms as the article progresses. The awards that serve as the basis for discussion are the Central States Conference Founders Award, the Teacher of Excellence Award sponsored by the Southern Conference on Language Teaching, the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Southwest Conference on Language Teaching, and the Teacher of the Year Award sponsored by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

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## Reviewing the Award Criteria

Since different awards usually have different criteria, the applicant should prepare his or her dossier with careful attention to what the selection committee expects to find in the portfolio. Thus, the first task of the applicant is to become informed about the criteria for the award and details of the application process. Oftentimes, this

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*“...the first task of the applicant is to become informed about the criteria for the award...”*

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**Frank W. Medley, Jr.** (Ph.D., Purdue University) is Professor Emeritus and former Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of South Carolina and at West Virginia University. He is the recipient of state, regional, and national awards for leadership in foreign language education, and has served on numerous selection committees at these levels. Medley has taught at the junior high, high school, and university levels. He is now retired, although still professionally active, and resides in Florida.

information can be found on the official Website of the organization sponsoring the award, or is available upon request. Most regional foreign language professional organizations sponsor awards for which teachers can apply or submit nominations. The Central States Conference (CSC) [<http://www.centralstates.cc/>] sponsors the Simon Award and a Founders Award. The Northeast Conference (NECTFL) [<http://www.nectfl.org>] sponsors the Brooks Award, the Dodge Award, the Freeman Award, The Northeast Conference Service Award, and the Mead Fellowships. The Pacific Northwest Conference for Languages (PNCFL) [<http://babel.uoregon.edu/pncfl/>] has no details regarding awards or honors other than some funding for state associations to invite speakers to their meetings. The Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) [<http://www.valdosta.edu/scolt/>] sponsors a Friend of Foreign Languages Award and Teacher of Excellence Awards, as well as a Founders Award. The Southwest Conference on Language Teaching (SWCOLT) [<http://www.swcolt.org>] sponsors a Teacher of the Year Award, Excellence in Teaching Awards, and a Friend of the Profession Award, in addition to numerous language-specific scholarships.

At the national level, the language-specific associations also sponsor awards, grants, and scholarships. As examples, the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) [<http://www.frenchteachers.org/>] lists five grants and awards on its Website, the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) [<http://www.aatg.org>] lists five awards in addition to grants and scholarships the organization administers, and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) [<http://www.aatsp.org>] has six awards listed on its Website. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) [<http://www.actfl.org>] sponsors or co-sponsors nine different awards, including the newly established ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year Award.

*The Central States Conference Founders Award* is conferred at the discretion of the Conference on an individual or group from within the language teaching profession who exemplify the following qualifications:

- excellence in the promotion of language learning and international studies;
- leadership in the language teaching profession as exemplified by the founders of the Central States Conference;
- strong ties with one or more of the seventeen Central States;
- professional dedication and enthusiasm.

Although either a group or an individual can be a recipient of this award, this discussion will focus only on the individual nomination in order to maintain consistency for purposes of comparison across award criteria. According to the organization's Website:

Nominations of an individual should include the candidate's present position and role in the foreign language profession, the ways in which the candidate meets the specific criteria for the award, the capacity in which the nominator has known the candidate, the candidate's current *curriculum vitae*, and support documentation that bears direct relevance to the nomination. (<http://www.centralstates.cc/FA2003.html>)

Nominations for the award must be submitted by members of the Central States Conference Advisory Council, and support documentation should not exceed ten pages. The Conference apparently does not require a specific cover sheet, nor are there any other details on the Website regarding the content or organization of the dossier.

*The Teacher of Excellence Award* sponsored by the Southern Conference on Language Teaching has specific requirements for eligible applicants, as well as for the nomination packet. The dossier to be submitted must include the following:

- a cover sheet, which can be downloaded from the SCOLT website;
- a letter of nomination that is to include the nominee's name, address, position, role in the foreign language profession and in SCOLT conferences, the capacity in which the nominator has known the candidate, and detailed evidence of the ways in which the candidate meets the criteria for the award (not to exceed two pages);
- a statement from the nominee of acceptance of the nomination and willingness, if selected, to accept the award in person as the guest of the Conference at the Awards Luncheon during the annual meeting (not to exceed one page);
- a c.v./résumé that includes the nominee's educational background, employment, professional memberships/activities (especially in SCOLT), and selected honors; (not to exceed five pages);
- three letters of support of the nomination in any combination from principal or dean, local or state supervisor; a department chair, colleagues, or students/former students is acceptable.
  - on letterhead stationery when applicable,
  - must be originals: cannot be faxed, photocopied, or e-mailed,
  - are not to exceed one page each.

Finally, the instructions stipulate that there is to be only one typed original copy of all documentation, only paper-clipped together, no staples, no plastic covers, submitted in a sealed envelope. There is also a date by which the packet must be postmarked.

*The Excellence in Teaching Award* from the Southwest Conference on Language Teaching is designed to recognize outstanding teachers of Languages Other Than English. One individual each may be recognized at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. Candidate eligibility and procedures for nominating a recipient are published on the organization's Website.

As with some other regional awards, only members of the SWCOLT Advisory Council may make nominations, and new Council members may join at the time the nomination is made. The nominating dossier should contain the following:

- an awards cover sheet;
- a nominating cover letter that addresses the listed criteria and clearly explains the rationale for the nomination;
- a brief *curriculum vitae* of the candidate (from one to three pages maximum) summarizing educational background, teaching experience, membership in language organizations, service to the profession, recent conference presentations, publications, awards, and other teaching achievements;

- two additional letters supporting the nomination — one from an administrator and another from a student;
- the nominating dossier, including cover sheet, not to exceed seven pages;
- membership in SWCOLT or joining at the time of the application.

An original and three copies of the nomination dossier are to be submitted by the deadline established by the Conference.

*The Teacher of the Year Award*, co-sponsored by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and McDougal Littell, a division of Houghton Mifflin Company, “is intended to elevate the status of our profession at the state, regional, and national levels by creating opportunities for recognizing the most accomplished members of our profession” (<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3500>).

This award emerged from the New Visions in Action initiative of the National K-12 Foreign Language Resource Center at Iowa State University [<http://nflrc.iastate.edu/homepage.html>]. Procedures for selection were piloted at the annual meeting of the Southwest Conference on Language Teaching in 2004. Nominations for the 2005 award have been submitted, and nominations for the 2006 award were due from the regional associations by January 9, 2006. Procedurally, all nominations must come from one of the five regional foreign language conferences in the nation: the Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (CSC); the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL); the Pacific Northwest Council for Languages (PNCFL); the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT); and the Southwest Conference on Language Teaching (SWCOLT).

In response to recommendations from the regional associations, ACTFL has revised the criteria and guidelines for 2006, and they are now available online at <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3500>. The process has been designed so that state, regional, and national professional organizations can be involved in publicizing and promoting the activities of world language teachers. Nominations can be submitted by state language organizations to the regional association for that state. In the event a state is included in two regional organizations, only one nomination can be submitted. Once the regional organization has determined a deadline for submission and that deadline has arrived, all portfolios will be reviewed and one may be selected for submission to ACTFL.

In order to be nominated for the Teacher of the Year Award, the nominee and/or her or his shepherd must assemble a portfolio of no more than 50 pages. The document is to include the following elements:

- a cover page, including the nomination form, which an officer of the state foreign language association’s Board of Directors, or other person designated by the sponsoring state organization, must complete and sign;
- letters of recommendation: one submitted by each of the following individuals:
  - a. a letter of nomination and recommendation from a representative of the state foreign language association or sponsoring organization;
  - b. a letter of recommendation from a professional colleague;
  - c. a letter of recommendation from a supervisor;

d. a letter of recommendation from a parent of a student in the teacher's program or from a student;

- *Curriculum Vitae*: a comprehensive *curriculum vitae* of no more than five pages in length;
- lesson plan demonstrating classroom competency: a detailed lesson plan and a videotape or DVD showing a teaching sample of no more than 20 continuous instructional minutes from that lesson plan demonstrating target language communication in the classroom and a variety of instructional strategies; in addition, a description and reflection on the candidate's teaching in response to the topics outlined in the section on classroom competency;
- demonstration of skill in communication: a 500-word first-person statement on the value of learning language and culture;
- Public Relations Contact Information: a one-page contact information sheet indicating the names and addresses of administrators, local press, professional affiliations, etc., who may be contacted by the committee to publicize the candidate's accomplishments;
- agreement to serve as an ACTFL-sponsored *Ambassador for Foreign Languages*: a statement indicating the candidate's willingness to act as an ambassador for foreign languages over the course of the year.

As the preceding examples illustrate, each of these professional honors and awards has its own established criteria and, in many instances, specific guidelines for just how the application or nomination is to be organized. Because the criteria and selection process of the ACTFL Teacher of the Year Award is the most detailed and comprehensive, and because it subsumes all of the criteria listed in the other awards, it is used here to illustrate the topics discussed.

## **Assembling a Professional Portfolio**

With the awards and many other forms of professional recognition that use a nomination and review process, there are a number of ways that applicants can strengthen their portfolios. Regardless of whether a candidate is selected by a professional group or is self-nominated, the candidate is instrumental in helping prepare the dossier (e.g., providing an up-to-date c.v., suggesting reviewers who know his or her work), and it is usually the responsibility of the candidate to prepare the dossier to be submitted. Some regional associations assign a shepherd to aid in the preparation of the dossier, while in other groups it may be the sole responsibility of the nominee. Assuming that you are a nominee at some point, or that you nominate someone, the following guidelines will help in the preparation of the nomination materials. Again, while the Teacher of the Year criteria are used here, much of what is

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***“...each of these professional honors and awards has its own established criteria and, in many instances, specific guidelines for just how the application or nomination is to be organized.”***

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recommended applies equally to other applications and nominations.

*Organization.* Organize your portfolio or application packet in the same sequence as the requirements for the award are listed. When the panel is reviewing dossiers, they should not have to search for the information requested. In some instances, the panel will use a scoring rubric that includes specific weighting for each criterion. If the expected information is not in the proper sequence it may be overlooked or missed, and fewer points may be assigned.

*Letters of Recommendation.* When you ask someone to write a recommendation letter, give the writer as specific an idea as possible of what reviewers will be looking for. Although your referees may know you quite well, they may not know the criteria that the selection panel considers important, thus they will not know what aspects of your performance need to be emphasized in their letters. By including a copy of the selection criteria with your request for a letter, you make it much easier for your referee to prepare a letter that will highlight the things that the panel considers most important. As an illustration, a person requesting a letter of recommendation for the ACTFL Teacher of the Year award might point out to referees that the selection committee will be looking for (among other things) evidence of your performance in the following areas:

- Target language communication in the classroom
- Instructional strategies used in the classroom
- Student cultural exposure
- Connecting to the community
- Evidence of professional growth
- Active involvement in professional organizations
- Variety of professional leadership experience

Nominees for other awards would draw from the criteria of the award for which they are being nominated in order to apprise their reviewers of the information necessary to tailor their letters to the specific interests of the selection committee.

In addition, give the reviewers a deadline and do not hesitate to send them gentle reminders of these dates. Be sure to include a copy of the candidate's up-to-date c.v. and let the reviewer know if he or she is to write a general letter about the candidate or concentrate on a particular area (service to the profession, teaching, etc.). It is also useful to let the letter writer know to whom the letter should be addressed (e.g., the person shepherding the nomination or the chair of the committee).

*Narrative Statements.* When you are asked to prepare a narrative statement, it is critically important that this statement be written in such a way that the various components of the application packet are connected. For example, for the ACTFL award, your narrative should establish a clear relationship between the National Standards, your lesson plan, the videotape, and your reflection statement, all of which you are

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***“When the panel is reviewing dossiers, they should not have to search for the information requested.”***

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expected to provide as a part of the portfolio. Although you undoubtedly have a clear idea of how everything comes together to form a cohesive learning experience for your students, this may not be so obvious to the evaluators. So, describe the components of the lesson, and point out, for example, how the videotape illustrates what you include in your lesson plan and how your reflection will result in your decision to make changes or otherwise modify the lesson for future classes. In particular, your reflection statement should show that you have learned something yourself from the teaching experience.

In your written narrative, choose your words carefully and correctly (e.g., *visual aid* — not *visual aide*). As language professionals, we are intensely aware of the importance of using vocabulary that is both correct and precise, and of correct spelling and punctuation. However, even someone who knows better can let errors slip. Most spell-checking programs do not search for correct usage of words such as *to*, *too*, *two*. If the word is spelled correctly it is accepted, whether it is the correct word or not. For this reason, it is advisable to ask a colleague or other individual to proofread to make sure that the document says what you want it to say! Only careful proofreading will catch those kinds of errors, and they should be caught before the final draft of your application is submitted.

*Lesson Plans.* In some instances, such as for the ACTFL award, you must include a *detailed* lesson plan and a videotape or DVD. The videotape/DVD should show 20 *continuous* instructional minutes (rather than unconnected segments totaling 20 minutes). That being the case, it is important to include a short discussion or narrative on the plan and guidelines about its preparation. This would include items like the goal of the lesson, the standards that the lesson illustrates, clearly explained activities (indicating whether they are individual, small group, large group, or entire class), and a short summary of the lesson that precedes and the lesson that follows the one being illustrated so that committee members get a sense of sequencing, topics and vocabulary covered, the appropriateness of the textbook and ancillary materials and realia used, etc.

Do not include photocopies of copyrighted materials in your lesson plans unless you have permission from the publisher to do so. If, for example, your sample lesson is based on a reading selection, you should contact the copyright holder and request permission to use the material. Most publishers are quick to give permission, since this amounts to free publicity for their products, and you can usually obtain the permission with nothing more than an e-mail.

*Specified Requirements and Limitations.* Adhere strictly to the limitations and requirements stipulated in the application. For the ACTFL award, for example,

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***“By including a copy of the selection criteria with your request for a letter, you make it much easier for your referee...”***

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***“...choose your words carefully and correctly...”***

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that means that the complete application is to be no more than 50 pages, total. Some of the other awards described above do not place limitations on the full dossier, but do specify numbers of pages for various components of the submission. The ACTFL award also asks for a 500-word first-person statement. To avoid having to compromise the quality of your application because you are rushed for time, begin the preparation of your portfolio early and plan to submit it early to allow for unexpected delays.

While criteria for retention, promotion, and tenure dossiers do not generally have page limitations imposed, care should be taken to assure that all materials are pertinent to the purpose of the file, and will not be perceived as extraneous “padding” by the reviewers.

*Preparation of a Video Component.* If a video component is required as a part of the application process, plan carefully before you make the recording. Can a tripod be used? Where should the camera be located? Who will operate it? Limit panning (moving the video recorder horizontally to provide a panoramic view of the entire class) and zooming (changing the camera focus toward or away from a subject) unless these techniques are essential to illustrate what is going on in the activity. When students shoot videotapes, the focus may be more on their friends than on the kinds of things that you want to be illustrated. Let the camera operator know what should be included, and emphasize that too much panning and zooming can be distracting to the viewer. You will need to have footage of what you are doing as the teacher, as well as of what the students are doing.

Do a dry run of a different class session and critique it with the videographer. Let the person running the camera know what you want, and then tape another class. Do this until the person running the camera has a clear idea of what to do (and what not to do) during the filming process. Again, this should be done before you videotape the class for inclusion in the video so that the real-time segment will give you the desired results.

As mentioned above, placement of the camera is very important. In a number of videos that this author has reviewed, there have been too many views of teachers’ backsides and not enough sustained focus on group interactions. The goal is for the video to show a fair representation of the entire class, not just a selected few students. This can only be done if the camera is placed so that the entire room can be included in the shots.

Since the video may also have an audio component, you should attend to the quality of the audio. This may necessitate the use of multiple microphones or movement of the camera so that it is close enough to pick up the voices of the speakers. In this respect, the quality of the equipment used to make the video becomes a factor. If your

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***“...begin the preparation of your portfolio early and plan to submit it early to allow for unexpected delays.”***

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school does not have the quality equipment needed, perhaps another school in the district would have some that would do a better job of recording both the video and audio components.

*Curriculum Vitae.* Seven items are required for the portfolio that accompanies the ACTFL nomination: Cover page; Letters of recommendation; *Curriculum vitae*; Classroom competency; Communication skills; Public relations contact information; and Agreement to serve as an ACTFL-sponsored Ambassador for Foreign Languages. Of these, the category that many teachers find most problematic is the preparation of the *curriculum vitae* (c.v.), or academic résumé.

A *curriculum vitae* should be well organized and illustrative of your professional preparation, growth, participation, and leadership experience. As you prepare it, keep in mind that it should encapsulate your professional career succinctly yet completely. Depending on your years of experience, you may prefer to limit inclusion in some categories to the past ten years or so. One mistake that is often made by teachers is to attempt to follow a business model in preparing the c.v. Unfortunately, some of the recommendations found in handbooks that address the business résumé do not work well in an academic context. As an illustration, many business guides encourage you to limit your document to one or two pages, which is certainly not the case for academic *curriculum vitae*.

There are a number of different formats that one can use to prepare an academic résumé, and the decision of which is best depends upon the honor or award for which the document is being prepared. Below is one format that would be appropriate for the ACTFL Teacher of the Year award. As a suggestion, if you have no entry for a particular category, it is better not to include that category at all. Similarly, if there is a category that you need to add, do not hesitate to do so. Again, the purpose of the c.v. is to give the reader a clear idea of your professional preparation and accomplishments.

**Your Name:** This should appear at the top of your dossier, and many people prefer to center it. It is up to you how you format your document. Do not clutter the document with a variety of fonts or with information that is extraneous to your purposes.

**Contact Address:** Your contact address should include mailing, e-mail, and telephone. You may, or may not, want to include your home address. It is most important to include it as a contact address when school is not in session. If you will be out of the country for an extended period during the time you are a nominee, you should provide an e-mail address or other way in which you can be reached, should the selection committee need to do so.

**Education:** List from most recent. Specify degrees earned and major areas of study, as well as institutions awarding the degrees and the dates the degrees were awarded.

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***“One mistake that is often made by teachers is to attempt to follow a business model in preparing the c.v.”***

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Teacher Certification/Licensure: List here the certificates/licenses you hold, and whether they are permanent or provisional, if applicable.

Teaching Experience: Again, begin with current (or most recent) employment. There should be no unexplained breaks in employment between the date of graduation and the current job.

Professional Development: This section gives you a place to include significant professional development seminars or workshops that have enhanced your skills or expanded your knowledge base. You may want to include categories for major conferences attended (with year) and any presentations you have made, as well as study abroad experience, both as a participant and as a director.

Professional Affiliations: The emphasis here is on “professional.” Being a member of the Board of Directors of a food cooperative or a homeowners association, for example, is usually not pertinent to your professional development. If it is (for example, if you had budgeting and finance responsibilities that required special skills), explain the connection to your teaching or other area of expertise. If you have held office or served as a delegate to a professional assembly, these activities should be noted either here or in another section.

Publications: When the c.v. is being developed for a college or university-level award, it is important to set aside a separate section for publications. Depending on your productivity, this category may be organized into several sub-sections: Books, Refereed Articles and Chapters, Invited Articles and Chapters, Book Reviews, Electronic Publications, Dictionary and Encyclopedic Entries, and so on.

Another section for a postsecondary c.v. might be Professional Presentations, Seminars, Workshops, and Consultancies. In determining the best way to organize and format this part of your résumé, keep in mind that your purpose is to make it easier for the reviewer to develop a clear and complete idea of your professional activities.

Other Professional Activities: If you do not include a Publications section, you can list any publications you might have here. In addition, you will want to include your service on visitation or accreditation teams, local, state, regional, and national committee work, etc. The decision of what to include here is again determined by the quantity and scope of your professional activities. In particular, it is important to include enough information on the activities to let the reader know what you have done. Often it is not enough simply to report the name of a committee, since the name may not reflect the nature and extent of your involvement. Provide a brief description of your activities with the group.

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*“Techniques that  
engage learners  
in visual thinking  
involve pattern  
recognition...”*

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Grants, Honors and Awards: These may be internal or external to the institution in which you work, and may be local, state, national, and international in scope. Provide a brief description of what the awards or honors are for if the name of the award does not make it clear.

Community Service: This section could include service related to the professional expertise of the candidate: volunteer translator, bilingual volunteer at a neighborhood clinic, conversation partner, etc.

### Summary and Conclusion

The manner in which you present your credentials in the portfolio that you submit for an honor or award has considerable influence on the selection committee. There should be a feeling on the part of the reviewers that they have a clear picture of your performance and accomplishments, and that you have not padded the document with extraneous information. It should be easy for the reviewers to follow the rubrics for evaluating your dossier, and they should not have to search for information that is not in the right order. Reference letters should be to the point, and should focus on the criteria for which the recipient is to be evaluated. If a video is required, it should be carefully prepared and there should be a clear connection between the video component and other parts of your dossier. Vocabulary, grammar, and spelling should be precise and accurate, and should convey the message intended. In other words, in preparing a dossier for professional recognition, your first step is to put your best foot forward.

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***“There should be a feeling on the part of the reviewers that they have a clear picture of your performance and accomplishments, and that you have not padded the document with extraneous information.”***

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# Reviews



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Edited by Thomas S. Conner, St. Norbert College

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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.

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We will accept reviews of:

- Software
  - Videos and films
  - Textbooks, instructional packages, and ancillaries
  - Programs of study, both abroad and in this country, targeting both educators and students
  - Websites
  - Grant opportunities
  - Reference materials
  - Other
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## **Frangieh, Bassam K.** *An Anthology of Arabic Literature, Culture, and Thought from Pre-Islamic Times to the Present.*

New Haven and London:  
Yale University Press, 2005.  
ISBN 0-300-10493-6.

This comprehensive reader is a carefully thought-out and well-organized collection of the best of Arabic writing, the first of its kind created with the student in mind, which will deliver an in-depth understanding of Arabic writings from the earliest days until the present. It was published at the urging

of the author's students, who, until now, had little prospect of expanding their knowledge to better understand the main themes of Arabic literature and to situate them in their historical and thematic context. The author admits to deliberately choosing difficult texts with the aim of providing the student with both an in-depth grasp of the Arabic cultural tradition and a deliberate, calculated challenge to truly appreciate Arabic authors, their works, and the language they used. By his own admission, the texts themselves can be uncompromising; however, by providing glossaries of idioms and phrases, he enables the reader to navigate many difficulties. Frangieh asserts, and rightly so, that this book is the first of its kind to be published in the United States and to comprehensively present the major features of Arabic literary history from pre-Islamic times to the present. This text should serve the teacher well by offering a basic knowledge of Arabic literature, a unique accomplishment which should not go unappreciated by students, whose task of learning is greatly facilitated by the structure of this text and the ample aids provided for comprehending every aspect of the selections.

To facilitate comprehension, the author has organized the material in reverse chronological order, to avoid placing the difficult texts at the begin-

ning. The selections include thirty-four classical texts and thirty-six modern ones, beginning with the easier selections from modern times, in keeping with the evolution of literary genres into the simpler, more direct mode of expression. Teachers, however, are not obligated to follow the order in which the material is placed. Most likely they would not have to — or even be able to use all the texts included in this 567-page anthology.

To facilitate understanding of the selections, the author has included some 1800 vocabulary items, along with their English equivalents. For the student's convenience two detailed glossaries also are included. The first glossary is arranged in Arabic alphabetical order, as words appear in conventional Arabic dictionaries. In the second glossary, each of the approximately seven hundred terms, idioms, and phrases is keyed to the lesson in which it appears. The accompanying CD-ROM provides readings of modern poems by popular poets like Nizar Qabbani, Mahmoud Darwish, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, and one of the most famous (but not easily understood) of all historical Arab poets, al-Mutanabbi, who lived in the tenth century. Given the difficulty of Arabic grammar, the Persian Sibawayh composed his famous *al-Kitâb* (literally "the book"); devised for non-Arabs who had converted to Islam and become integrated in Arabic culture but who still needed to perfect their language skills, it is only fitting that an excerpt from it should be included in this reader.

This is a well-rounded and balanced work, with selections from all areas of Arabic literature. The Modern Era, first of all, offers selections from modern poetry (5) [described above], the modern novel (11), drama (1),

Arab-American literature (3), literary criticism (5), women's literature (3), autobiography (2), letters (3), essays on Arabic culture (3), and writing about political movements in modern times (5). All selections represent the most popular and current trends.

The next category is the Pre-Modern Era, which includes selections on: the philosophy of history and social evolution, featuring an excerpt from Ibn Khaldun's *al-Muqaddimab*; the return to the origins of Islamic faith, represented by an excerpt from Ibn Taymiyyah, the promoter of the fundamentalist approach to Islam; two texts from Andalusia, al-Khatib's "May the rain be bountiful" and Ibn Hazm's "Dove's Necklace"; and two pieces of folkloric tradition, one from the *Arabian Nights* and a biographical piece on an Arabic hero, Antarah Ibn Shaddad.

The third part of the anthology examines the Golden Age of Islamic Civilization, including selections on Islamic mysticism (3), Islamic philosophy (2), the *Assemblies (Maqamat)* of al-Hariri and al-Hamadhani (2), the concept of inimitability in the *Qur'an* (I 'jâz) by al-Jurjani, poetic theory (Qudama's Criticism), classical poetry of the 'Abbasid period (4), Arabic linguistic tradition (2), classical culture and literature (2), classical prose of the 'Abbasids (2), and Arabic grammar (Sibawayh's *al-Kitâb*).

The fourth part, The Umayyads, consists of only one selection from 'Udhri poetry: *Layla's Mad Lover*. The fifth relates to the Islamic Period, beginning with the rise of Islam, and featuring selections from the biography of the Prophet, of Caliph 'Ali's *Nabj al-Balaghah* (Eloquence), the *Sayings of the Prophet* (his last sermon), and a

chapter relating to Mary (the mother of Jesus) in the Koran. For the Pre-Islamic period there are brief selections from prose and poetry, for example, al-Mu'allaqat, and the most notorious of all poets of pre-Islamic Arabia: Imru' al-Qays. Finally, the anthology includes various supplements and appendices, including glossaries, notes, an outline of the literary history of the Arabs, a bibliography, and, lastly, abbreviations.

In conclusion, I can only say that I wish I had been able to use this text when I was teaching Arabic literature, for it is a wonderful resource which greatly facilitates the assignment of readings in Arabic literature. This anthology is a welcome addition to the Arabic curriculum and is long overdue.

Caesar E. Farah, Ph.D.  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN

#### **Publisher's Response:**

Yale University Press would like to thank Professor Farah for his thorough and insightful review of Bassam Frangieh's *Anthology of Arabic Literature, Culture, and Thought from Pre-Islamic Times to the Present*. We are very proud of this text, which features an accompanying audio CD, and we know it will fill a void in the available literature for advanced Arabic courses. This book is part of a growing list of Near Eastern language titles from Yale University Press, a list that includes *Modern Persian, Spoken and Written*, as well as the forthcoming intermediate Arabic text from Mahdi Alish, *Ablan wa Sablan: Functional Modern Standard Arabic for Intermediate Learners*, scheduled for release in June 2005.

Mary Jane Peluso Publisher,  
Languages  
Yale University Press  
yalebooks.com/languages

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### **Singerman, Alan.** *Apprentissage du cinéma français.* *Livre de l'étudiant.*

**Newburyport, MA:  
Focus Publishing, 2004.  
ISBN 9-781585-101047. Pp. 388.**

I have used film successfully at every level of the French curriculum, but I have almost always had to rely on my own teaching materials. For some unfathomable reason the foreign language textbook market is overflowing with largely identical first-year language programs but desperately lacking in such fields as civilization, cinema, and French literature. The need is especially severe in cinema studies. Cursing the powers that be, I have had to assemble my own course packets, including introductory texts on the medium itself or on famous actors and directors, along with study questions, group projects, cultural modules, etc. Not any more. To say that Alan Singerman's book fills a void in the market is the understatement of the year; it is the single most valuable contribution to the field in years and is destined to have a profound impact on the way film is taught in the college classroom. Fortunately, his publisher, Focus Publishing in Newburyport, Massachusetts, is going even further by bringing out various works in cinema studies. One outstanding example is *Cinema for French Conversation* by Anne Christine Rice, which comes with an excellent Teacher's Manual.

The same publisher also has plans to make available a great number of booklets, each on a different film, for French language courses; the first volumes in these series (*Ciné-Modules* and *Cinéphile*) have already appeared.

As the term “apprentissage” in Singerman’s title suggests, this text is an initiation into the cinematographic medium by way of more than one dozen case studies of French film classics by iconic directors: Jean Vigo’s *Zéro de conduite*, Jean Renoir’s *Partie de campagne* and *La grande illusion*, Marcel Carné’s *Le jour se lève* and *Les enfants du paradis*, Jean Cocteau’s *La belle et la bête*, René Clément’s *Jeux interdits*, Jacques Tati’s *Les vacances de M. Hulot*, Robert Bresson’s *Un condamné à mort s’est échappé*, François Truffaut’s *Les 400 coups* and *Jules et Jim*, Alain Resnais’s *Hiroshima mon amour*, Jean-Luc Godard’s *A bout de souffle*, Eric Rohmer’s *Ma nuit chez Maud*, and Agnès Varda’s *Sans toit ni loi*. Most, if not all, of these films are bound to startle students of today’s generation, as much with their content as with their artistic style. How many of our students have ever seen a foreign film, much less what people in my generation euphemistically used to call “fine films”? The only French films that students today are likely to have seen are box office hits in France such as *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des sources* that finally made it to our shores, where they received critical accolades and enjoyed a brief moment of commercial success; a surprising number of my language students have seen both of the films just mentioned, thanks to the tireless efforts of my colleagues at the secondary level. Therefore, I am wondering if it would not have been wise to include a chapter on the appreciation of fine films, since the ones studied in this text — all

of them “fine films” to the nth degree — are bound to have an alienating effect on a contemporary American audience, which needs to understand that a “good” movie does not necessarily have to contain graphic violence and extravagant special effects that deflect from character development and ideas, not to mention “poetry.” Until recently, at least, French films (and European cinema in general) have been fundamentally different from much of American film production, which unfortunately caters to the lowest common denominator.

Singerman does not assume that the reader knows anything at all about French cinema or, for that matter, about the medium, period, other than a few common-sensical insights and facts that virtually anyone growing up in today’s visually-dominated, image-oriented society would have. His approach is practical and pedagogical almost to a fault. There is more material than any instructor can hope to use in a single course, even a course just on French cinema, so instructors will have to pick and choose what they find most useful for their purposes. As Singerman himself says, quoting the Abbaye de Thélème: “fais ce que voudras.”

The text proper opens with a most useful list of technical vocabulary, which includes definitions, in French, of many of the most commonly used terms that students are likely to encounter in film criticism and which they need in order to speak critically about a film. Singerman expands upon the definitions given, providing a plethora of examples and illustrations in a short primer that follows in a later chapter: *La lecture du film* (27-44). Curiously, a number of common terms such as “court” and “long” “métrage” are

not included in the *Lexique technique du cinéma*. Perhaps an English-language translation of the most commonly used terms would have been appropriate to help students quickly assimilate useful vocabulary and more readily understand the seventeen case studies of cinematic masterpieces that make up the bulk of the text. Many students would probably also welcome a list of useful vocabulary to speak about characters, plot, point of view, and style, or at least a “lexique” at the end of the text including all the terms Singerman has used. My own students are fairly typical in this regard, and I for one still struggle to make them understand cognates and remember the difference between “caractère” and “personnage” or between “intrigue” and “action.” But these are minor points and no doubt irrelevant in an upper-level course, in which students have already mastered the basics of discourse about narratives. And, of course, a bilingual vocabulary list would have altered the French-only character of the book, which is precisely what sets it apart from other, considerably more basic texts on the same subject. There is a spate of single-film study guides on the market today, but with the exception of the new *Ciné-Module* and *Cinéphile* series published by Focus (which do not yet include any of the films studied by Singerman), many of these are of a rather rudimentary kind, putting the burden on the instructor to develop anything more complex than comprehension questions, vocabulary, and cultural tidbits. Let’s face it: Singerman’s book is a highly sophisticated educational tool that caters to advanced-level undergraduate and graduate students. In fact, it is rather like the English-language text I once used in a film appreciation course

taught in the General Education program in college—except that it is in French.

The first two chapters (*Histoire du cinéma: les débuts*, and *Histoire du cinéma I: les années vingt*) outline the various technological innovations that made the new medium possible and provide an accessible historical overview of the early decades of cinema, reminding the reader of the important place that France has always held in the history of what the French call the *septième* art. Important names appear in boldface and help the neophyte navigate the murky waters of early French cinema. From the time of the Lumière brothers and Georges Méliès, who quickly realized the import of technological advances in photography that led to the first movie camera and soon began producing a series of *courts métrages*, France has played an important role in the production and distribution of film. Many of these early films showed scenes from everyday life, for example, *Arrivée d’un train en gare de La Ciotat*; and Louis Lumière created the first movie house in 1895, when he charged a group of thirty-five guests one franc each to watch a series of ten shorts in the basement of the Grand Café in Paris. It would not be long before this new medium lent itself to the creation of fiction. Méliès’ sixteen-minute *Voyage dans la lune* (1902) possibly is the best-known early example of a feature film and an ancestor of the modern science fiction adventure. Moreover, Méliès is arguably the first *metteur en scène* because he imposed his imprimatur on every aspect of his work, technical and narrative. He also is commonly regarded as the inventor of special effects. However, the French cannot lay claim to the invention of modern cinema, and Singerman duti-

fully includes all the major contributions to the new medium by innovators in America, England, Germany, and Russia. The only notable omission is Scandinavia, whose contributions in all domains of movie production were considerable.

The bulk of the text consists of seventeen case studies of famous French films. They are divided into two main sections: *Le réalisme poétique* and *La nouvelle vague*. These terms refer to the historical genres of the films under study, and both are discussed in an excellent introductory essay. Most teachers of French are probably familiar with the great majority of the films selected. They are all classics and, in many cases, huge box office hits. To give the reader a sense of how each chapter is organized, I decided to select a film I am familiar with and then examine Singerman's pedagogical approach in detail. The film I finally decided on is François Truffaut's 1962 masterpiece *Jules et Jim*, which I taught in the Yale second-year language sequence for many years (where its technique, style, and poetry unfortunately were entirely overlooked in favor of the study of language) and which I have occasionally used since (with varying degrees of success, I may add). Each case study consists of approximately twenty dense pages of text and follows a similar format divided into three parts. Part I contains a variety of information about the film: an exhaustive plot summary (*synopsis*); a discussion of the film's reception by the public and by critics (*reception*); the idea behind the film or its gestation (*La genèse et l'adaptation*) [*Jules et Jim* is based on a little-known novel by Henri-Pierre Roché that attracted little attention when it was published in 1953]; the actors (*La distribution*); the making of

the film (*Le tournage*); its style (*Le montage et le style*); its structure (*La structure*); and its themes (*thèmes*).

Part II, *Fiche pédagogique*, provides a variety of discussion topics based on the film, including quotes from the actors, particular scenes, and ten or so general discussion topics (such as "les rapports entre Jules et Jim," "le rôle du feu et de l'eau dans le film," or "le ménage à trois" [298]). This is perhaps the weakest part of the text: topics are too general to provide much structure for a student discussion in French; and, after all, how is a beginning film student to know how to critique a scene? The instructor will have to be prepared to step in and offer more specific guidelines. Moreover, the *Fiche pédagogique* would be as good a place as any in the text to include cultural and historical analysis, thus enhancing students' understanding of the film under study. We cannot assume that students know enough about the *résistance*, for example, to appreciate the subtlety of a film like Alain Resnais's *Hiroshima mon amour*.

Part III, *Dossier critique*, offers a broad array of quotes from famous critics, directors, actors, et al., on various aspects of the film (its adaptation to the screen, the image of women, morality, poetry) and contains some of the most insightful observations that have ever been made about the film. But again, I wonder if significant passages could not have been highlighted or accompanied by a few short questions or comments. It is awfully hard to expect an undergraduate to immediately pick up on all the subtleties of French film criticism or to possess an adequate degree of cultural sensitivity to understand the issues under discussion.

I like this text immensely and have already decided to use portions of it in an intermediate level language course in which I show three or four feature films. I know that I will have to create a few complementary activities to compensate for certain weaknesses in my students' preparation. Specifically, I will need to produce exercises focused on language, since Singerman does not provide for acquisition and practice of intermediate or advanced French. Students using his text may naturally improve their French, but its primary place obviously is not in the language classroom. Still, all the extra work on my part will be worth it because the critical apparatus provided by Singerman as a whole is nothing short of spectacular. By way of conclusion I would nevertheless like to suggest publishing an accompanying teacher's manual, which would point out the difficulties hampering students' appreciation of "fine films."

Unfortunately, there is no room in the curriculum at many small schools like my own that do not even have a foreign language requirement for a course devoted entirely to film (sadly, most colleges these days are cutting, not adding, courses, so the prospects for the future are grim), and it is at times like these that I especially miss being at an institution which values foreign language study enough to be able to offer a broad spectrum of courses. I am left to meditate on Jules and Jim's lady friend Catherine's (Jeanne Moreau) song *Le tourbillon de la vie*: "tous deux on est reparti dans le tourbillon de la vie. On a continué à tourner, Tous les deux enlacés, Tous les deux enlacés." May the instruction of foreign languages in the United States prosper, so that Singerman's wonderfully refreshing and intelligent

book finds its rightful place in our classrooms.

Tom Conner  
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### **Publisher's Response:**

I deeply appreciate the reception this and our other foreign language books dealing with cinema have received from the teaching community and from this journal in particular. As a small publisher, we have chosen as our "niche" innovative and fresh approaches to language instruction. It is rewarding to find our efforts recognized. We owe all of our success to wonderful authors and to our series advisor, Anne Christine Rice. Some of the many welcome suggestions in Tom Conner's review are being addressed in materials currently being developed, including new modules, texts, and a website that will provide scene study, as well as books about cinema for a range of other commonly taught foreign languages.

Ron Pullins  
Focus Publishing [www.pullins.com](http://www.pullins.com)  
Telephone: 978/462-7288

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**Balme, Maurice, and  
Gilbert Lawall.**  
*Athenaze: An  
Introduction to  
Ancient Greece.*  
**2 vols.**  
**Second edition.**

**New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. ISBN 0-19-514956-4 (Book I) and 0-19-514957-2 (Book II). Teacher's Handbook and Student Workbook available for each volume.**

Beginning Greek and Latin texts follow one of two approaches. In traditional deductive texts, students are first taught topics of grammar, then given sentences or readings that illustrate that topic. In the more modern inductive texts, students are given readings first, from which they are to infer forms and syntax *in situ*. Grammar then follows the reading passages. Active proponents of the second approach, Balme and Lawall have now produced a second revised edition of their popular *Athenaze* text. I used the first edition for four years at the college level, and am now two-thirds of the way through my first year using the second edition. For my money, it remains the gold standard of inductive texts. Here, I will first briefly summarize the organization of the text. Then I will discuss the changes made from the first to the second edition. Finally, I will evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the current edition.

The entire two-volume course consists of 30 chapters (16 in Book I, 14 in Book II). The Greek narrative running throughout the two volumes tells the story of a Greek farmer and his family living in Attica in the years 432-31 B.C., at the height of Athens' Periclean glory and the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. In Book I, the readings introduce the student to typical Attic farm and domestic life, retelling well-known popular myths (Theseus and the Minotaur, Odysseus and the Cyclops). In Chapter 8, the family visits Athens for the Panathenaea festival, during which an accident befalls the

son, which necessitates a voyage to Epidaurus in quest for a cure. During this voyage, an old sailor recounts some of the great battles of the Persian Wars (Thermopylae and Salamis). Book II continues the narrative, with the family's return to Athens and events surrounding the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. The later narratives follow the family's son as he attends school in Athens, where the schoolmaster relates important episodes adapted from Herodotus' history. The final chapter consists of an extensive reading from Aristophanes' *Acharnians*.

Each chapter is organized in the same way and contains:

1. a list of new vocabulary,
2. a narrative (varying from 15 to 45 lines long) that illustrates the new grammar and syntax of the chapter,
3. a short Word Study section, designed to increase student appreciation of English derivatives and the basic principles of Greek word building,
4. grammar, formally presented, with exercises,
5. an essay in English, two to three pages long, covering Greek historical and cultural background of the events described in the narratives,
6. lastly, a second vocabulary list, narrative, Word Study, grammar and exercise sequence, culminating in a final reading that is largely unadapted (but heavily glossed) Greek from a primary source (most often Herodotus or, in later chapters, Thucydides).

To give some idea of the *pace* and *order* of the grammar, the following benchmarks may be useful to note. In the 30 chapters that make up the two

volumes, the following elements are introduced in the chapters listed:

- the middle voice and deponents in Chapter 6
- participles in Chapter 8
- the future tense in Chapter 10
- the aorist tense in Chapter 11
- the imperfect tense in Chapter 13
- the passive voice in Chapter 16
- -mi verbs in Chapter 18
- the subjunctive mood in Chapter 21
- the optative mood in Chapter 25
- the perfect tense in Chapter 27

Note that for the first nine chapters, the student is responsible for only one principal part of the verb. Some instructors may find this too gradual an introduction to the complexities of the Greek verb. I have found, on the other hand, that it is easier for students to master the various noun, pronoun, and adjective declensions and basic syntax when they do not have to worry about verb forms beyond the present tense. Once the additional principal parts are introduced, students have already reached a comfort level with the other components of the language, allowing them to concentrate on and master the new verb forms with relative ease. But the trade-off here is that a student who takes just one semester of Greek will leave knowing only the present (and maybe the future) tense of Greek verbs.

The second edition has added about 80 pages to each volume. The result is that the entire course has been expanded by about 25%. This leaves the instructor with some important pedagogical decisions, which I will discuss below. The additions consist of new unadapted (and heavily glossed) readings, as well as many more student exercises. The new readings include a

classical Greek selection in every chapter (e.g., Callimachus, Menander, Anacreon, Sophocles, Sappho, Theognis, Solon, Simonides, Hesiod), a New Testament Greek selection from a Gospel (St. Luke in Book I, St. John in Book II), and a pithy saying from one of the ancient Greek philosophers or sages.

Each volume has appendices explaining the syntax and grammatical forms introduced. Also included are Greek-to-English and English-to-Greek glossaries, as well as a General Index and List of Maps.

Let me now mention the advantages and disadvantages I have found in the new edition. First, let me say that the additions in the second edition are all valuable. Students now have regular exposure to Greek philosophical and Christian writings. As a philosopher by training, I appreciate these new readings, not just for their grammatical variety but also for their content. In the first edition, the texts were heavily weighted toward the Greek historical writers. For students with an interest in philosophy or theology, the added readings are a great bonus. However, if the instructor is to incorporate these readings into the syllabus, she/he must be prepared to slow down his/her progress through the course. At my college, when I taught the first edition, I was able to cover most of both volumes in three semesters. That allowed me to offer a reading course in Plato in the fourth semester, with students fully prepared to tackle all the grammar and syntax of an early Socratic dialogue. This year, however, using the second edition, I am moving at a slower pace and will complete just half of Book II by the end of the third semester. My current students will complete their third semester without having had

conditional sentences (Chapter 26) or the perfect tense system (Chapters 27-28). This is not a serious problem for us, since we offer only an academic minor in classical studies. Any further course work must be done on an independent study basis, which would allow me to continue with Book II before tackling any primary texts. But if your curriculum is designed to prepare students in three semesters to read unglossed primary texts, you will probably not have time to cover in the classroom many of the textual riches found in the new edition.

Furthermore, the teacher will also have to make judicious choices of which exercises to assign. In the first edition, I was able to assign almost all of them. In the new edition, I am only assigning about two-thirds. Again, the additional exercises are all valuable, but the instructor will have to omit various readings and exercises depending on the goals of the course. Teachers will not want to omit the two narrative readings in each chapter, as they present a continuous story; they will, therefore, have to sacrifice a goodly number of the unadapted texts. The need to cut readings and exercises becomes even more urgent if Greek grammar is to be covered in its entirety in just two semesters or one year. It would take an extraordinarily strict taskmaster (and some very gifted and ambitious students) to reach the perfect tense chapters within a single year.

Available with the new edition are very helpful Teacher's Handbooks for each volume. Balme and Lawall clearly have devoted as much effort to these Handbooks as they have to the student textbooks — and it shows. These are more than the typical answer manuals and translations. They are comprehensive pedagogical commentaries which

offer the teacher an enrichment course all on their own.

The new edition of Book I is wonderfully clean (no typographical errors) and (almost) free of that bane of Greek texts: omitted or misplaced accents. I am expecting the same attention to detail in Book II. Still, in the Teacher's Handbook for Book I, I found a few typesetting errors in some of the Greek translations from English sentences. These will be apparent to teachers and are not serious flaws. There is one grave historical error in the Chapter 11 background essay, where a position of Anaximenes is wrongly attributed to Thales.

Also available are two Student Workbooks (Book I: ISBN 0-19-514954-8; Book II: ISBN 0-19-514955-6). These resources provide yet more exercises and readings for each chapter, and include answer keys. I used some of the material in the early chapters of Book I as additional practice exercises for struggling students, and as extra credit exercises for the regular students. I found that by mid-semester, students did not need this additional work, but the workbooks can be useful sources for instructors in the construction of quizzes and exams.

In the six years I have used *Athenaze*, student feedback has been uniformly enthusiastic. Students enjoy the continuous narrative, to the extent that sometimes they admit to reading ahead to find out what happens next. I have even eavesdropped on students talking among themselves about the narrative outside of class. Furthermore, the physical appearance of each component of *Athenaze* (compared to other inductive texts) is extremely appealing. Each volume is handsomely organized, with a slightly larger Greek

type font for the two narrative readings of each chapter. When students are struggling to master a new alphabet, having an easy-to-read font is a significant blessing. Furthermore, unlike the J.A.C.T. Cambridge series (for example), all the readings, grammar, exercises, and appendices are bound in a single volume. I suppose this amounts to a matter of taste, but I prefer to have all the grammatical aids at hand in one book, rather than having to juggle one book of readings, another book of grammar, a separate lexicon, etc. It is also easier for students, who have a tendency to misplace or lose track of the smaller-sized volumes of the J.A.C.T. series.

The second edition of *Athenaze* is a masterful text using an inductive approach to Greek. It offers more readings and exercises than any teacher could possibly use, thereby allowing one to adjust course speed to the needs of students or to curricular objectives. I look forward to using the second edition of *Athenaze* for many years to come.

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**Muyskens, Judith A.,  
Jean-François Brière,  
Larissa G. Dugas,  
Linda L. Harlow,  
Janet L. Solberg, and  
Michèle Vialet.**  
***Bravo!* 5th Edition.**

**Boston: Thomson/Heinle, 2005.  
ISBN 1-4130-0138-4. Materials**

**include: annotated Instructor's Edition, test bank on CD-ROM, student CD, lab CDs, Workbook/Lab Manual (print or online), Video (VHS or DVD), text-specific website, online tutor.**

The latest edition of this excellent intermediate French textbook provides a rich array of authentic materials, supported by useful and up-to-date technological resources. The grammar review, listening comprehension exercises, and oral and writing components are exemplary. Reading components are somewhat weaker, and the video/DVD that accompanies the text does not match the standards of the rest of the program. The electronic test bank incorporates audio exercises, and instructors are encouraged to test students regularly for oral proficiency with useful lists of questions and role-play scenarios.

In each of the ten chapters, grammar review is divided into two parts. First, students self-assess by studying the "*grammaire à réviser*" section and completing workbook exercises and online quizzes. Later in the chapter, the "*grammaire à apprendre*" section introduces more advanced structures to which students are less likely to have been exposed in previous years. Separating grammar into self-directed exercises and material to be covered in class is original and efficient, providing a potentially effective way of addressing the problem of diverse levels of proficiency that plagues every college intermediate language class.

Audio CDs packaged with each copy of the textbook contain the dialogues that are printed in each chapter and that serve as a basis for teaching contextualized vocabulary and strategies for oral communication. The dia-

logues are repeated in the separate lab CDs that are coordinated with a fairly traditional workbook (which can be purchased in print or online format) and focus on phonetics, oral reinforcement of grammatical structures, dictations, and listening comprehension exercises. The text-specific web page provides additional grammar quizzes (thankfully, a self-correcting function has been added since the last edition) and web-surfing exercises. The web page is not significantly different from what many other textbooks provide, but the materials are well conceived and give the instructor the opportunity to vary the assignments that students can complete on their own time.

The strong oral emphasis of this text shows itself also in the number of discussion topics and role-play activities. The authors have succeeded in making it easy for instructors to conduct a learner-centered classroom, with ample opportunity for students to produce real language in communicative contexts. Almost all the vocabulary is geared towards oral communication. A similar focus on output can be seen with the composition exercises. Instead of giving a few essay topics at the end of each chapter, this textbook places writing at the very center of the second-year curriculum, encouraging students to accumulate a portfolio over the course of the year. Each writing exercise is divided into three stages: pre-writing, first draft, and final draft. A “correction code” that instructors may want to use to direct students to self-correct between the first and second draft is conveniently provided as an appendix. Students are encouraged to make use of the “*Système-D*” writing program, available separately, as they work on their portfolios.

The technology component is one of the new edition’s strong points. The online edition of the workbook will alleviate some of the tedium of completing the exercises, and much of the tedium of correcting and tallying them, since these functions can in part be performed automatically. The lab CDs contain many exercises that require students to speak. It is unfortunate that the option of recording one’s voice and comparing it to that of a native speaker is not available: this is an aspect of “traditional” language lab technology that the web could provide, but rarely does. On the other hand, students can consult a free “online tutor” (which I did not have the opportunity to test), and faculty at institutions that have already adopted the online course management tools WebCT or Blackboard can integrate their course websites with content from the *Bravo!* website using a program called “WebTutor,” which seems like an efficient means of delivering much of the rich content that is available there.

The focus on oral proficiency and online resources comes at a cost. Some instructors will find the literary readings at the end of each chapter insufficient. The texts are interesting enough and well chosen, with a good mix of recent or contemporary French and Francophone authors. However, those who wish to inculcate some basics of literary analysis, both for its own sake and as a means of recruiting majors into their program, will have to rely on supplementary texts. In order to increase the already rich cultural content of the course, students can subscribe to “*Cette Semaine*,” a weekly online newsletter on current French topics with interactive exercises and translations of vocabulary. It is an

option worth considering, though one wonders how it could be smoothly integrated into the rest of the class. Instructors will have to guard against the danger of overwhelming students with too much disparate material.

The accompanying video is uneven. It features Elodie, a young music student in Paris, her boyfriend Julien, her best friend Claire-Anse, and a few other characters in a series of ten vignettes, one for each chapter of the textbook. The performers speak clearly and naturally, some of them with (mild) regional or ethnic accents. While some of the loosely-scripted conversations are engaging and instructive (such as a discussion of immigration, a debate over personal finances, a search for a new apartment, or simply details of the daily life of a student in Paris), others will strike students as pointless or silly. The DVD version of the video has a very useful French subtitle function that can be turned on or off (the VHS version does not have subtitles). At the end of the video, there are brief interviews of some of the actors from the vignettes, as well as of some other people encountered on the street (mostly centered on two questions: the air quality in Paris, and the importance of taking a vacation). Even though these interviews (which are not mentioned in the textbook) seem like an afterthought, they are more interesting, authentic, and spontaneous than the rest of the video. Unfortunately, the subtitle function of the DVD does not cover the interviews. One hopes that in a future edition, more effort will be put into producing the video, integrating it more with the other course materials, and perhaps even adapting it into an interactive CD-ROM or a more developed website than the one currently available.

Instructors who choose this textbook will have a huge number of pedagogical tools at their disposal. There is greater flexibility in teaching grammar, allowing students to review on their own time rather than spend the class on material that only a minority needs to learn. The emphasis on oral communication and writing is stronger than in most comparable texts. While the large quantity of material, combined with the need for students to take a more active role in their learning, will present challenges even to the most experienced instructors, the extra effort is likely to pay dividends in greater student confidence and proficiency.

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## **Amon, Evelyn with Caroline Nash. *C'est la vie. A French Reader.***

**New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.  
ISBN 0-07-282412-3. Pp. 159.**

Students are “totally” going to love this college-level collection of four short stories: not only will they understand the French, they will also identify with the characters and situations. Proust et al. being less than accessible to the neophyte, I have always been skeptical of introducing “literature” into my first-year French language sequence; however, about halfway through the first story in this reader (about a young couple of students who go off to Guadeloupe after final exams, ostensibly to cement their romantic relationship), I was frantically calling our bookstore to see if it was too late to place an order for the fall semester.

After a week in paradise, the guy in the story returns with someone else, while his girlfriend plans to get together with the windsurf instructor in their hotel (once he, too, returns to Paris). It is the sort of thing or, dare I say, fling that a classroom of undergraduates will totally “get into.” They stand a good chance of learning a considerable amount of French in the process as well, because the text is admirably conceived and well written. Whoever composed these stories should consider a career in creative writing, if life in the ivory tower becomes too drab. Just joking... the stories are written with what the French call an “*arrière pensée*”: to teach Americans French language and culture by offering up a slice of life in the Francophone world. Students will learn French as it is spoken by people their own age and discover that daily life around the Francophone world is not really all that different nor as “scary” as they might have imagined, and that anyone really can go to Paris or Montreal tomorrow (after having digested this reader, *bien sûr*) and fit right in. This practical approach creates an excitement and a magic, by which I mean a bond between reader and text, which almost certainly will inspire students to continue French.

Let me now provide some details to take you through this wonderful book. The four stories introduce readers to the experiences of students and young professionals in France, Guadeloupe, Belgium, and Canada. In “*Porte ouverte*”, Carole Tradin, an incoming student at the Faculté de Droit in Paris, is looking for an apartment and the perfect roommate. How does one go about doing that? Readers will learn the do’s and don’t’s of searching for an apartment. But to begin with, they will learn about the *baccalauréat* and how

students who successfully pass this *concours* (competitive examination) at the end of *lycée* can go straight on to the *faculté* of their choice to prepare for a professional degree. It is the perfect story to accompany any course that has a component on the French educational system (and therefore it is not limited to a beginning or intermediate language class). The characters are warm and down-to-earth and remind me of *Le petit Nicolas* and all his friends. The text is annotated and provides a lot of vocabulary and cultural notes at the bottom of each page for easy use.

The second story, “*Tu dances*”, follows the travails of the couple mentioned above. Antoine and Magali, tempted by a last-minute Internet deal, decide to spend their vacation on the beautiful island of Guadeloupe. I can see using this story in my French 102 class, where we learn how to surf *le web en français*. The presentation on Guadeloupe is a bit on the “touristy” side but serves its purpose well, i.e., to get us talking about this *département d’outre-mer*, which is very much a part of France, in much the same way that Hawaii and Alaska are American states.

In “*Voilà*”, Mathieu Gerberon, a successful Belgian architect, tells his family an extraordinary story about his college roommate, Louis Seigneux, a graduate student and avid book collector, and the dilemma he faces because of his friend’s “hobby.” Dear Louis loved old manuscripts so much that he took them home with him, building a collection of his own that could rival any library’s. He is found out, of course, and must face the consequences. He comes out okay in the end, however, because he is not a bad sort of chap and eventually becomes (what else!) an evalua-

tor of old manuscripts whose wealthy clients come to Bruxelles from around the world to consult his expertise.

The fourth and last story, “C’est moi”, features Lucette Godon, an illustrator of children’s books who lives in Nice, and Raphael Joubert, a computer geek from Montréal. They develop a transatlantic relationship over the ‘net and eventually decide to phone each other. What ultimately happens is never revealed, which probably is the sort of thing that is going to drive everyone in class absolutely crazy. In other words, I can see this particular story generating a lot of so-called student interest. Not that I would go so far as to have students experiment with Internet chatrooms, though. School administrators and parents would not be amused.

At the end of each story, co-author Caroline Nash has pulled together a wealth of exercises and activities that further enhance the appreciation of French culture and language. These sections feature comprehension questions and vocabulary, including slang (I learned a few “cool” expressions here myself), as well as some fairly advanced grammar items (e.g., affirmative and negative adverbs and the present subjunctive). Another prominent component of the *appareil critique* of each story is culture. Caroline Nash has assembled an impressive number of activities that enable students to explore the Francophone world through the web, for example, and enrich their understanding of cultural differences.

As stated above, I predict that this reader will quickly become very successful at the advanced beginner’s and early intermediate level. I plan to use it in my second-semester French lan-

guage class as a supplement already in the fall. This type of class typically enrolls a number of *faux débutants*, who should have no trouble at all understanding the readings. Absolute beginners might initially feel overwhelmed; however, thanks to the pedagogical expertise demonstrated throughout the volume by the authors, they will quickly become avid readers whose only question will be “what do you think will happen next?”

Tom Conner  
Professor of Modern Foreign  
Languages  
St. Norbert College  
De Pere, WI

### **Publisher’s Response**

We are delighted to respond to Professor Conner’s glowing review of *C’est la vie*, a new French reader recently published by McGraw-Hill. As noted by Professor Conner, this reader was written expressly for students studying French and is an ideal supplement for beginning and intermediate courses.

In our conversations with instructors of French from around the country, we have learned that there is a strong desire to introduce more reading opportunities into the language learning experience. In particular, instructors (and students!) want to read engaging stories that serve multiple functions: to broaden students’ exposure to and understanding of French and Francophone cultures, to enrich language acquisition, to further develop reading skills, and to provide interesting topics for classroom conversation. We believe that *C’est la vie* accomplishes these objectives.

As described so aptly by Professor Conner, the four entertaining stories in

*C'est la vie* take place in different locales throughout the French-speaking world. Characters of different professions, backgrounds, and ages ensure that students will see a broad representation of people in the stories. In addition, student activities and suggestions for instructors at the back of the reader provide rich pedagogical support.

Again, we would like to thank Professor Conner for his very enthusiastic review of *C'est la vie* and for sharing it with the readership of the *NECTFL Review*. McGraw-Hill World Languages is delighted to publish this unique reader for beginning and intermediate French courses.

William R. Glass, Ph.D.  
McGraw-Hill

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**Moeller, Jack,  
Winnifred R. Adolph,  
Gisela Hoecherl-Alden,  
Simone Berger, and  
John F. Lalande II.**  
*Deutsch heute. 8th  
Edition. Boston and  
New York: Houghton  
Mifflin, 2005.*

ISBN 0-618-33829-2. Accompanied by a Workbook/Lab Manual/Video Workbook (*Arbeitsheft*), Multimedia CD-ROM, *Unterwegs!* An Introductory German Video, Instructor's Resource CD-ROM, and supporting materials on the *Deutsch heute* website.

The new edition of *Deutsch heute* builds on the strengths of a comprehensive introductory German program

and refines those strengths beyond all expectations. The text is geared toward college-age students and appeals to that target group through its choice of topics (in the *Einführung* and in the twelve chapters that follow), recurring characters, and supporting material. Each chapter is accompanied by a variety of meaningful exercises, thankfully contained in just one *Arbeitsheft*. The interactive CD-ROM further reinforces the logical presentation and practice of grammar in a variety of contexts, with ample games such as vocabulary matching and crossword puzzles. The CD-ROM with its Instructor Resources facilitates preparation. Another bonus is access to online resources, including everything from proficiency cards to audio transcripts.

*Deutsch heute* targets listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Moreover, the text is realistic about teaching culture, which is presented for the most part in English. Much material has been updated since the previous edition, and there is more coordination among the various components of the program. The authors have added new listening activities and a poem in the *Leserunde* section of each chapter. The short poems are especially compelling — accessible to adult learners yet challenging in the target language. Each chapter is divided into sections (with corresponding exercises integrated into the supporting material): *Bausteine für Gespräche, Erweiterung des Wortschatzes, Lesestück, Grammatik und Übungen, Wiederholung, Grammatik: Zusammenfassung, Land und Leute, Leserunde*, with some variation within individual chapters. The pages are full of charming visuals, realia, and symbols to guide students through the various activities.

I particularly appreciate the consistent use of two sections on vocabulary within chapters, a division which allows students to learn the vocabulary in context and use it actively. Other strengths of *Deutsch heute* include the review section *Wiederholung*, in which role-play and partner work are emphasized. Translation is widely used, which makes teaching this text with a strictly communicative approach somewhat difficult, but the grammar presentation and exercises are placed after students have been exposed to their content in the beginning of the respective chapters. The chapters close with a *Grammatik: Zusammenfassung*, a clear and concise summary of the material that has just been covered.

The *Land und Leute* sections, readings in English about the history and contemporary culture of German-speaking countries, offer a range of pertinent topics with great historical and geographic breadth. *Deutsch heute* includes chapters on Switzerland and Austria, provides readings about the organization of government and public life, and gives students a welcome overview of political parties in the Federal Republic. One chapter provides insight into the structure of the German educational system, while another presents various German cities. Everyday life in Germany is not neglected, either. For example, the importance of bread in the German diet is discussed at some length in one chapter. Each *Land und Leute* text is accompanied by a *Diskussion* section with further activities, which I did not always find useful, but there is so much material in this program that I could omit an exercise in English with a clear conscience.

The timing of the grammar presentation is fortuitous. This edition moves the introduction of the future tense to the chapter preceding the introduction of the passive voice (chapters 11 and 12). It seems a bit late to introduce the future tense at the end of the text, in my opinion. I also had some trouble with the deferred introduction of the present perfect in Chapter 6. The advantage of this order is that students learn the simple past well, but I have always found that students are relieved when they can talk about things in the conversational past. These are preferences I admit are in part conditioned by the structure of other programs.

The *Arbeitsheft* consists of the workbook, lab manual, self-corrected tests (with answer keys), and a video workbook. Full of function-based activities, this part of the program is a great asset. It also contains good visuals: photographs, realia, and clear graphics. The exercises on the CD-ROM do not merely repeat those in the workbook: they offer a wide range of matching exercises, crossword puzzles, etc. The correct answer is rewarded with a very satisfying sound! In general, the CD-ROM exercises seemed fun — the more ways to reinforce the material without seeming repetitive, the better.

The video program *Unterwegs* follows three young people in Tübingen: Sabine, a student at the university; her friend Julian, also a student; and her cousin Lisa, who is visiting from Hamburg and thinking about studying at the university. The video is divided into 12 *Szenen* that correspond to each chapter (the scenes are interspersed with several interviews with people about their professions — they are all related somehow in the end). There are supplemental exercises to

accompany the video on the student CD-ROM. At first, I thought the video threw a lot of language at the students, but the exercises target quite specific active responses. I find this method preferable to the artificially slow pace of some programs. The student actors on the video speak quite naturally, interrupt each other, and sometimes talk at the same time. However, this program provides “training wheels” for the natural context. The CD-ROM has the option of inserting subtitles (in German) during the video. This technique has proven quite reliable in teaching listening comprehension, and it is a feature of the program I cherish. The video was made in 1995, and it strikes students as a bit dated, but it still enhances the program immensely. In general, *Deutsch heute* achieves its learning outcomes with an appeal to different types of learners.

The online resources round out a full and innovative introductory German packet. The lab audio scripts, translation answers, a sample syllabus, the video script of *Unterwegs*, and the student audio CD script are all available on the web. In addition, proficiency cards can be printed from files in various formats. They are extremely useful in facilitating student conversation and discussion. The cards’ activities are divided into warm-up (such as a group narrative exercise), directed activity (dialogue on specific topics), and a *Kaffeestunde*, a more general discussion of a topic. The activities include grammar and German prompts where necessary, as well as specific instructions about when to use the cards, how many students are involved, etc. There is much to do! A comprehensive program for beginning German, *Deutsch heute* in its new edition can justifiably claim to be a “classic” among introductory texts.

Patricia Anne Simpson, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of German  
Montana State University  
Bozeman, MT

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## Maxwell, Wendy.

### *Histoires en Action! #1.*

Bowen Island, BC: AIM Language Learning Inc., 2004. *Program Guide*: 137 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-3-4. *Les trois petits cochons: Teacher’s Unit Guide*: 345 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-0-X. *Les trois petits cochons: Cahier d’épreuves: Blackline Masters*: 56 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-4-2. *Les trois petits cochons: Grand livre*: 11 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-4-5. *Comment y aller: Teacher’s Unit Guide*: 289 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-18. *Comment y aller: Cahier d’élève: Blackline Masters*: 50 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-5-0. *Comment y aller: Grand Livre*: 11 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-5-3. *L’arbre ungali: Teacher’s Unit Guide*: 299 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-2-6. *L’arbre ungali: Cahier d’élève: Blackline Masters*: 55 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-6-9. *L’arbre ungali: Grand Livre*: 11 pp. ISBN 0-9735225-3-7. Teacher DVD/Video. Teacher CD-ROM. CD with original music by popular singer Matt Maxwell, Ph.D. Also included are twenty-five vocabulary posters, sixteen image cards, one organizational chart, an *anglais* card on 8.5 x 11 card stock, a *français* card on 8.5 x 11 card stock, a *grammaire* card on 8.5 x 11 card stock, an *orthographe* card on 8.5 x 11 card stock, and a Gesture Association PKL Word List. Total Package Price: \$625.00 Canadian (approximately \$509.37 USD). Shipping and handling: 10%, making for an approximate total

of \$559.90 (USD). When ordering, please indicate preference for Teacher DVD or Teacher Video. Student DVD (\$15.00 Canadian, approximately \$12.15 USD) or Video (\$20.00 Canadian, approximately \$16.20 USD) is ordered separately for use at home. There is no additional shipping and handling charge on orders for the Student DVD/Video. For orders and information please contact the publisher: Matt Maxwell, AIM Language Learning, Inc., RR#1, E-43, 273 David Road, Bowen Island, BC V0N 1G0 Canada. Tel: (800) 668-6288 Fax: (604) 947-9630 E-mail: [mattga@aimlanguagelearning.com](mailto:mattga@aimlanguagelearning.com) Website: [www.aimlanguagelearning.com](http://www.aimlanguagelearning.com)

*Histoires en Action! #1* is the first part of a three-year French as a Second Language (FSL) program. Created by Canadian FSL pioneer and award-winning teacher Wendy Maxwell, *Histoires en Action! #1* is unique because of its systematic gesture approach. In a nutshell, this approach teaches a French word through a corresponding gesture, a practical approach involving storytelling, song, and dance, and culminating in immersion-level proficiency in French.

As an experienced foreign language professor at the college level, I have always incorporated gestures into my teaching. I know that my use of gestures in the classroom stems from my experience as a teenager when I learned American Sign Language to be able to communicate with a deaf girl in my neighborhood. Like Maxwell, I use signs from American Sign Language that are readily understandable to a person who can hear. However, I do

not use signs on a daily basis in my classes. I use them only for clarification and to avoid using English in the classroom, as well as to promote natural recall by students.

Knowing the success I have enjoyed by using only a few signs in my classes, I was very much intrigued when I began to examine *Histoires en Action! #1*. Building upon acquired gestures inspired by American Sign Language but adapted and modified to suit the FSL classroom, the program utilizes plays, music, and dance in a holistic yet content-based manner to promote the rapid acquisition of French by elementary school children in core programs. According to Maxwell, in Canada, a core French class is one that is taught thirty to forty minutes a day, five days a week. Having taught in immersion programs, Maxwell was dissatisfied with the educational materials provided. More importantly, she was frustrated by her students' lack of progress, despite their efforts. With the support of her school, Bishop Strachan School, and bearing in mind differences in student learning styles (i.e., Bloom's Taxonomy and multiple intelligences), Maxwell developed a systematic gesture approach that evolved into *Histoires en Action! #1*. The program has proven so successful that her core program students perform at the same level as students enrolled in immersion programs.

*Histoires en Action! #1* consists of three units: *Les trois petits cochons*, *Comment y aller*, and *L'arbre ungali*. Maxwell recommends that instructors plan a minimum of twelve weeks per unit if they are working with students thirty to forty minutes per day, five days a week. If the class does not meet that often, the instructor will need to plan accordingly. What I particularly

like about these three different units is that the first one is an adaptation of a children's classic (fostering easy story-line recognition), the second a simple yet highly creative story by Maxwell that gently increases in difficulty, and the third a narrative based on an African legend.

Each individual unit includes a teacher's manual, a student activity manual/blackline masters, and a lengthy storybook in order to facilitate classroom activities. Each teacher's manual provides detailed and easily followed instructions for the program and a "Questions et Réponses" game. The student activity manual/blackline masters have the transcript of each story, the lyrics of the accompanying songs by Matt Maxwell (available on the CD), character cutouts, vocabulary lists (arranged in the order in which characters appear), and comprehension exercises. In addition, the teacher's DVD/Video shows how to do the gestures for each of the three units, and the teacher's CD-ROM contains PDF and Word files of the contents of the appendices in the three teacher's manuals (activities, evaluation forms, schedules, and games), as well as sample letters to parents about the *Histoires en Action! #1* program. The three units are supplemented and greatly enhanced by the overall program guide, twenty-five vocabulary posters, sixteen image cards, one organizational chart, an *anglais* card on 8.5 x 11 card stock, a *français* card on 8.5 x 11 card stock, a *grammaire* card on 8.5 x 11 card stock, an *orthographe* card on 8.5 x 11 card stock, and a Gesture Association PKL Word List.

To use *Histoires en Action! #1* in the most effective manner possible, the instructor must be prepared to review

the gestures on a continual basis with students. Although Wendy Maxwell clearly demonstrates the gestures on the teacher's DVD/Video (it is a delight to watch her students in action on the same DVD/Video), I was curious about the middle stages of the process. I therefore contacted AIM Language Learning, expressing my wish to see students become involved in the spontaneous use of French and Maxwell's gesture system. They graciously sent me a video copy of her interview with Vicki Gabereau (a popular daytime talk show host in Vancouver, British Columbia). In this interview, I was able to see Maxwell's students effortlessly speaking French and thoroughly enjoying their ability to demonstrate the gestures. Moreover, it was readily apparent that students were speaking idiomatic French in a relaxed and natural manner. Indeed, Gabereau correctly stated that the students were lucky to have such a dedicated and gifted teacher.

*Histoires en Action! #1* is an engaging and well-conceived program. Maxwell has developed a well-researched and effective method to reach out to young learners.

Eileen M. Angelini, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of French  
Philadelphia University  
Philadelphia, PA

### **Publisher's Response**

I appreciate the review by Dr. Angelini. She clearly seems to understand the overall philosophy and intentions of the *Histoires en Action* program! She touches on the main components of the program, relating it to her previous experience as a language teacher. In her review, Dr. Angelini states that each unit is twelve weeks; however, since the third unit is an optional one, in most cases each

unit will last four to five months (or one-half a school year). This is important because the in-depth work with stories is key to the effectiveness of the program. I appreciate that she mentioned at the end that she looked for the transfer to spontaneous fluency and saw evidence of this on the Vicki Gabereau show interview. She may wish to also emphasize that this is accomplished, for the most part, through an in-process approach used by the teachers to ensure that spontaneous communication occurs on a daily basis in the classroom. Work with stories in a creative manner becomes an ever-increasing focus of the program from unit two on and is another activity through which students have successfully developed not only higher levels of fluency than typically seen in FSL classrooms, but also creative thinking skills in the second language. Thank you for your interest in the program.

Wendy Maxwell  
AIM Language Learning, Inc.

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## ***Italian Through Film: A Text for Italian Courses.* Antonello Borra and Cristina Pausini.**

**New Haven and London:  
Yale University Press, 2004.**

*Italian Through Film* is a compact, well-conceived college text that aims in a most original and innovative way to build vocabulary, promote conversation practice, and review grammar through the viewing and study of Italian films. Although this volume could certainly be the main text in one-semester courses, such as advanced

Italian or conversational Italian, its design and focus lend themselves quite readily to its use as a companion text in any number of Italian language courses, ranging from first-semester intermediate to advanced and beyond.

The text is divided into ten self-contained chapters focusing on one of the following contemporary Italian films: *Cinema Paradiso*, *Storia di ragazzi e ragazze*, *Johnny Stecchino*, *Mediterraneo*, *Caro diario*, *Lamerica*, *Il postino*, *La vita è bella*, *Pane e tulipani*, and *La stanza del figlio*. Since the films, all easily available for rental or purchase on video and/or DVD, are arranged in chronological order, it is possible for the instructor to choose only those that will correspond to the level of comprehension and interest of students. Each chapter begins with a brief biography of the director (*il regista*), a summary of the film's plot (*la trama*), and a cultural blurb related to the film to be studied (*nota culturale*). The content of each chapter is organized around four main sections: *Prima della visione*, *Durante e dopo la visione*, *Dopo la visione*, and *Aspetto grammaticale*.

The purpose of *Prima della visione* is to put the student in the mood. This section is composed of conversation questions, vocabulary, and various other exercises to be completed before viewing the film. The vocabulary is particularly useful since it provides the words and expressions required for an accurate understanding and an informed discussion of each film. Cinematographic terminology introduced is especially valuable because it adds another dimension to the student's vocabulary not normally provided in language texts. *Durante e dopo la visione* focuses on the actual content of the film. The student's com-

prehension and attention to detail is evaluated through a series of true/false questions, multiple-choice selections, and questions that require complete-sentence responses. *Dopo la visione* concentrates on using the film for conversation and composition practice. Typical questions ask students to categorize the film and then justify their choice in a group or general class discussion. Other questions deal with descriptions and comparisons of characters. In-depth discussion questions require the analysis of dialogue, plot, character, and themes related to each film. Some of the material for discussion in *Dopo la visione* is cleverly centered on insightful personal questions directly related to the films. For example, in the chapter on *Il postino*, students are questioned about their rapport with poetry; in the *La vita è bella* chapter, students are asked to talk about the games they used to play as children; and again, in discussing *La stanza del figlio*, students are asked whether they ever experienced personal guilt about a friend's misfortune. Composition practice requires the student to elaborate on a particular theme relevant to the film. Each chapter presents a selection of interesting and well-thought-out topics ranging in difficulty and length, which can be tailored to the level of the student. The *Dopo la visione* section also incorporates research and technology into the study of the Italian language through film by requiring the use of the internet to obtain information on the cultural background of the film, the historical and social period in which it takes place, the setting, the director, and the actors. The internet assignments are created to provide a broader learning experience about a subject that is related to the cultural context of the film, rather than its actual content. A case in point is the question con-

cerning *La vita è bella*, which asks for information on Jacques Offenbach, whose music plays a significant role in certain key scenes of the film. In the chapter on *Johnny Stecchino*, a film set primarily in Sicily, one Internet research topic involves obtaining information on Palermo to create a travel itinerary. While exploring *Il postino*, students are asked to use the Internet to research the islands in the Gulf of Naples.

Although *Italian Through Film* is not intended to serve as a grammar text, its review of grammar, *Aspetto grammaticale*, includes exercises on the grammatical structures most likely to cause students problems. Topics include simple and contracted prepositions, relative pronouns, the comparison of adjectives, the use of the formal and informal, the gerund, double object pronouns, the imperative, and constructions using the infinitive and the subjunctive. One appealing aspect of the *Aspetto grammaticale* section is that exercises, whether they are fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, or matching column, all tie in with the films studied. Characters, situations, and, in some instances, actual dialogue from the films are used to create examples for the exercises. This format enables students to learn the language without losing sight of the film, which is the aim of this text, as its title suggests.

*Italian Through Film* successfully achieves its goals of enhancing vocabulary, teaching culture, and reviewing grammar through film. Instructors and students alike will appreciate the wealth of learning possibilities packed into this well-structured, inventive, and accessible text.

Dr. Sarafina DeGregorio  
Fordham University  
New York City

## Publisher's Response

Yale University Press wishes to thank Professor DeGregorio for her insightful and extremely positive review of *Italian Through Film: A Text for Italian Courses*. As Professor DeGregorio states, this text is highly original and versatile, and could be used in a variety of Italian courses as either a main text or as a supplement. Much like another of Yale's Italian texts, *L'italiano con l'opera*, this book offers teachers an innovative and engaging approach to teaching Italian.

Mary Jane Peluso  
Publisher, Languages  
Yale University Press  
yalebooks.com/languages

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## **Bernabe, Marc.** *Japanese in Mangaland: Basic Japanese Culture Using Manga.*

Tokyo: Japan Publications, 2004.  
ISBN 4-88996-115-1. Pp. 269. \$24.  
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Many American students today discover Japanese through *manga* and animation, which have made Japanese popular culture a worldwide phenomenon and inspired followers everywhere in a variety of media. Witness the huge success of the Hollywood film *Kill Bill*, which pays homage to

Japanese pop art in clever but not always so subtle ways. The term *manga* literally means “spontaneous and meaningless drawings” (8) and is used in Japan to refer to comic books and cartoon strips. In the rest of the world, however, it is synonymous with Japanese comic books, which, believe it or not, make up a whopping 38.2% of all the books and magazines published annually in Japan. Moreover, *manga* are not only for children, as some Westerners might think. There are *manga* for just about everyone, from teenagers to businessmen and housewives. And *manga* come in a variety of styles. The heroes of *manga* are not all slender people with huge and shiny eyes, and all *manga* do not OD in violent fantasies and science fiction.

This book by professional translator and interpreter Marc Bernabe, a native of Barcelona, Spain, and a graduate of Kyoto University, is not your run-of-the-mill classroom text. Nor is it a self-sufficient alternative to a language text, because it lacks the pedagogical apparatus needed to give students a solid foundation in the language. For example, there are not many follow-up exercises providing practice of the language structures studied. Rather, this text offers an entertaining supplement to a basic Japanese language text. As the author writes: “it brings fresh air to the area of Japanese language teaching” (6). Students can learn functional Japanese, as it appears in comics or *manga*, by following a step-by-step approach. What is original in this approach is not so much the material covered, which is quite traditional in terms of grammar topics and the order in which they are presented, as the concept of using *manga* to teach Japanese and the systematic approach.

However, as Bernabe acknowledges, the text builds on the “famous lessons in the no-longer existing American magazine *Mangajin*, where every month a linguistic subject was explained using *manga* panels as examples” (8). This magazine became very popular with Japanese language learners because of its innovative approach and its close ties to popular culture. Actually, the lessons that make up this course were originally published in a well-known Japanese comic book and animation magazine in Spain. The magazine’s co-editor asked Bernabe to produce a monthly Japanese course, which led to the present volume.

Each lesson is well conceived and integrates *manga* that are admirably suited to teach a particular grammar topic. Each lesson follows the same model: first, a short section on theory presents vocabulary and grammar; then, a second part with examples taken from Japanese *manga* illustrates the theory; finally, a short comprehension exercise featuring both language and culture provides students with an opportunity to practice the material. Ideally, this third section would feature more language-oriented exercises, giving students the opportunity to work more extensively on the grammar and vocabulary introduced in the chapter.

The thirty lessons that make up the text are meticulously organized and are geared toward taking the beginning student step-by-step to increasingly higher levels of proficiency. Topics covered include: *hiragana*, *katakana*, *kanji*, basic expressions, numerals, days of the week, days of the month and months, personal pronouns, *katakana*, the four seasons, nouns, telling time, “i” adjectives, “na” adjectives, suffixes for proper names,

particles, end-of-sentence particles, the verbs *aru/iru* (there is/there are), the —*masu* form, the dictionary form, family vocabulary, adverbs, swearwords and insults (eminently useful to anyone unfamiliar with the wonderful world of *manga*), the —*te* form, counters, the body, daily life expressions, the verb *naru*, *gion* and *gitaigo*, and orders. These are all standard topics with the possible exception of the swearwords and insults, covered in the first year or so of any Japanese language course. No doubt the comparison is unfair because, as I have already pointed out, this is NOT an adequate text for a standard language course. But the author has clearly tried hard to introduce content in the approximate order in which it is usually presented in class. Let’s take chapter 1, on *hiragana*, as an example. The first section of the chapter contains a discussion of the Japanese syllabaries and writing, followed by a list of *hiragana* characters with pronunciation and the correct stroke order. The second section of the chapter offers panels of *manga* to illustrate the *hiragana* just presented. All illustrations are written in Japanese with a translation into English and *romaji* (Japanese written in Western characters) below.

In other words, *manga* become a didactic tool, which is a novel approach in the American classroom. Panels from famous Japanese comic books illustrate the lessons’ grammar points. Not all teachers would see the pedagogical potential in *manga* or *anime*, and the author deserves credit for finding a way in which to involve learners who have been raised on a diet of popular culture. This reviewer found that *Japanese in Mangaland* is a very comprehensive and thorough introduction to Japanese. Learners who are interested in *manga* will be

thrilled to discover this text and will, I think, quickly take to this exciting approach to studying Japanese. The text is conceptually imaginative and sets a new standard for language learning. I strongly recommend it as a supplement to an introductory-level Japanese language class.

Dr. Ikuko Torimoto  
Associate Professor of Japanese  
St. Norbert College  
De Pere, WI

### **Publisher's Response**

This review by Dr. Ikuko Torimoto is both thoughtful and enthusiastic. Torimoto-san seems to have looked at the book from both sides, from the concept of *manga* to the realm of practical lessons for learning the Japanese language. She rightly states that this book should not be considered as an alternative to a language text, but rather as a fun and useful supplementary text to be used with dictionaries, audio, and other language guides. What the author does not develop in depth is how this new book can open up the world of Japanese to young people. *Manga* and *anime* are quickly becoming cultural emissaries for Japan. In fact, college students across the nation, who once took Japanese to get ahead in the world of business, are learning the language solely to be able to read *manga* and to watch their favorite *anime* film in Japanese! With the announcement in November 2004 of the creation of an Advanced Placement Program® course and examination in Japanese Language and Culture, Japan Publications Trading's *Japanese in Mangaland* series (its follow-up *Japanese in Mangaland 2: Basic to Intermediate Level* is scheduled for release in October 2005) is sure to

become a popular way to learn the Japanese language.

Heather N. Drucker  
Publicity Manager  
Kodansha America  
New York, NY

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## **Petit, Bernard.** *La Vida Cotidiana.*

**West Melbourne, FL: Bernard Petit Productions, 2003. Videocassette Tape I: 50 minutes. Contact information: 669 Danville Circle, West Melbourne, FL 32904. Phone: (321) 727-3660 Fax: (321) 727-9954 E-mail: bpetit@cfl.rr.com Website: www.bernardpetit.com**

This videotape, divided into seven short segments, was created to provide a linguistically and culturally authentic view of daily life throughout the Spanish-speaking world. As explained in the accompanying booklet, all video sequences were shot on location with little or no advance preparation by the persons involved. This approach works well to provide the viewers with natural, virtually spontaneous speech, and offers an accurate representation of what they would encounter while interacting with native speakers of Spanish. The use of speakers from a wide variety of locations also provides the viewers with an interesting range of regional dialects.

The seven segments deal with traditions, family life, work, housing, education, and city living, as well as issues involved with adjusting to life in the United States. In watching the entire tape, the viewer is exposed to scenery from all around the Spanish-speaking world. The video would work well as a

cultural complement at any level of the curriculum, providing a real-life context for linguistic concepts learned in class. Certain segments lend themselves especially well to teaching certain points of grammar or specific vocabulary. For example, the section on housing includes several vocabulary items used to describe a home, and the sections dealing with daily routines would be ideal for practicing reflexive verbs.

The importance of the family is emphasized throughout, both in segments specifically dealing with it and in numerous other scenarios. Different combinations of family members are featured, which teaches students how to address members of different generations both informally and formally.

One word of caution, though: some students might be distracted by the fact that much of the footage is rather dated. Perhaps one way to contextualize this material would be to activate and review prior knowledge with a quick discussion of the importance of family in all cultures. Most of us do keep home videos, and they too provide valuable information about how we view ourselves, as individuals and as members of an extended family.

Karen C. Williams, Ph.D.  
Mercyhurst College  
Erie, PA

### **Publisher's Response**

The author/publisher would like to thank Professor Williams for her review of *La Vida Cotidiana*. Her assessment of the spontaneous speech and variety of regional accents speaks to the heart of the video as a vehicle for giving students a real-life context for language study. The director stressed the family throughout the film

because this eternal theme is always of great interest and relevance to our students.

Dr. Bernard Petit  
Bernard Petit Productions  
Professor Emeritus of French  
SUNY-Brockport

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## **Fedi, Andrea and Paolo Fasol. *Mercurio: An Intermediate to Advanced Reader in Italian Language and Culture.***

**New Haven and London:  
Yale University Press, 2005.  
ISBN 0-300-10400-6.**

With the publication of *Mercurio*, Yale University Press has added yet another fresh, innovative text to its prestigious Language Series collection. *Mercurio* is a college-level reader designed, as indicated in its title, for the intermediate and advanced Italian student. Its approach focuses on an in-depth study of the Italian language through an understanding of contemporary Italian culture. The purpose of the text, clearly stated in its preface, is to provide a meaningful and realistic representation of life in contemporary Italy without the stereotypes and preconceived notions that have always prevented a genuine comprehension of what Italy today is really like.

*Mercurio* is divided into seven main chapters, each dealing with a particular object, subject, or event that has influenced and/or continues to influence present-day Italian society and culture: *Bicicletta, Case, Città, Migrazione, America, Europa*, and

*Ustica*. Each chapter comprises several fiction pieces that may be excerpts from novels, short poems, or songs that are relevant to its main topic. Also included are newspaper and magazine articles, reviews of films, and Internet material, such as advertisements and news-group postings. The authors chosen—Enrico Brizzi, Marco Beccaria, Maria Novella DeLuca, Lorenzo Cherubini, Dacia Maraini, Gianni Amelio, Andrea DeCarlo, to name but a few—are all contemporary writers of fiction, best-selling authors, journalists, non-fiction writers, and directors whose works and ideas reinforce the fresh, contemporary feeling of the text.

What is astounding and entirely engaging about *Mercurio* is the variety of reading materials, extensively researched by the authors, that not only correspond to the chapter topic but also provide a relevant flow of cultural information from one selection to the next within each topic. In *Biciclette*, a piece on the successes and failures of the Giro d'Italia is followed by a newspaper article on the death of Gino Bartali, one of the great Giro d'Italia champions, followed in turn by another piece, entitled *Città ciclabili*, which speaks of various European cities where the bicycle is a popular mode of transportation. Within this same topic the excerpt from Niccolò Ammaniti's novel *Io non ho paura* that speaks of a red bicycle belonging to the protagonist precedes a reading selection on the film version of *Io non ho paura* by the director Gabriele Salvatores. In *Case*, a selection from Dacia Maraini's *Voci*, telling of the character Michela Canova's return to her apartment after a long absence, is integrated with a piece from Frances Mayes' *Under the Tuscan Sun*, advertisements for buying and renting villas and apartments, and an article on the

arrival of IKEA in Italy. One of the readings in the chapter *Città* talks about Rome as the setting of many films such as *La dolce vita* and *Caro Diario*. Subsequent selections in this same chapter offer cultural insights on Torino, Napoli, Vigàta, Genova, and Milano. In *Migrazione*, selections ranging from songs like Francesco Guccini's *Amerigo* and Mau Mau's *Ellis Island* to Umberto Eco's essay *La Migrazione, la tolleranza e l'intollerabile*, and internet postings on the migration of Italians to Argentina illustrate how the authors of *Mercurio* have skillfully managed to link material so diverse in style and format to a single topic. The selections in *Mercurio* are always timely, absorbing, and intent on sustaining interest. One has only to look at the material in the last chapter, entitled *Ustica*, devoted to Italy's 1980 tragic plane crash in the sea around the island of Ustica, to understand that this text goes well beyond what is customarily the norm in foreign language readers.

Although cultural content is indeed the focus of *Mercurio*, language acquisition is nonetheless a primary goal. Each chapter includes a comprehensive *lessico* that is either related to the general topic or to one or more of the readings. For example, students not only learn basic words related to bicycles and bicycle riding (*Biciclette*) and airplanes (*Ustica*), but also are exposed to totally new vocabulary that would be difficult to find in even a good dictionary. These include a list of items from the Italian IKEA catalogue (*Case*), colloquial and slang expressions ("La lingua dei giovani" in *Città*), and a list of Sicilian words with their Italian equivalents (*Città*), to name but a few. Vocabulary is further expanded in the challenging crossword puzzles that end each chapter and through the

numerous references, located at the end of the text, which define particular words, expressions, and idioms used in the readings. Each chapter of *Mercurio* contains many useful exercises and interesting, thought-provoking activities whose aim is to expand conversation skills as well as provide a review of grammar commensurate with the level of the intermediate and advanced student. Additional exercises and activities will be made available on a website, currently in its last stages of preparation, that will also include audio files, pictures, supplementary readings, updates to the chapters, and a comprehensive list of Internet links related to the topics and reading selections in the text.

*Mercurio* is an ambitious, motivating, and insightful text that fills the need for an up-to-date, college-level Italian reader. Congratulations to the authors of *Mercurio* for their knowledgeable presentation of the varied aspects of contemporary Italian culture in a creative format that will appeal to instructors and students alike.

Dr. Sarafina DeGregorio  
Fordham University  
New York City

### **Publisher's Response**

Professor DeGregorio does an excellent job describing the many merits of this wonderful Italian reader. We are very proud of this book and it is an important addition to our growing list of Italian texts.

Mary Jane Peluso  
Publisher, Languages  
Yale University Press  
yalebooks.com/languages

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## **Bogomolov, Andrei, and Nummikoski, Marita. *News from Russia.***

**New Haven and London:  
Yale University Press, 2005.  
Pp. 130. ISBN 0-300-10437-6.**

This text for high-level intermediate and advanced students of Russian focuses on print media as a means of teaching reading and contemporary culture. Although it includes oral and written work, the primary purpose of the text is the development of reading skills. The text consists of five units: (1) the press, television, and radio; (2) government and its structure; (3) official visits, meetings, and negotiations; (4) economy and business; (5) war and peace: hotbeds of conflict.

Each unit follows the same structure, beginning with vocabulary pertinent to the topic, accompanied by English translations and exercises in context to reinforce comprehension. A section on roots highlights important features of Russian word formation. These sections provide good pre-reading materials. Class activities follow and include practice in comprehension, speaking, and translation. Authentic materials from the Russian press accompany the exercises, many of which are directed toward reading comprehension, and include post-reading activities. The unit concludes with an article, two to three pages long, from a current source. The organization of the text is clear and attractive, and also includes some photographs in black and white.

Although the text uses Russian almost exclusively, English does appear

in some places when it is necessary to make comparisons with American equivalents, such as government agencies, media stars, and technical terms. For example, the distinction between *poscuŭckuŭ* and *pyckkuŭ* is explained in English, followed by exercises in Russian to reinforce comprehension. Directions for the exercises and questions on the readings and charts are also sometimes given in English. Vocabulary exercises use English when necessary to make the appropriate connections. Although the vocabulary list at the beginning of the unit is accented, the other Russian selections and exercises are not. This provides a good transition for the more advanced student, who will not find accents in authentic materials.

Any text that relies on current media articles and statistics runs the risk of using dated materials. In fact, this is already evident in the choice of some articles that refer to Putin's visits with George W. Bush, as well as readings on the Iraq war and other topics. Some statistics and articles go back to 1999 or 2001. However, the authors have foreseen this problem and have coordinated the text with an interactive website, <http://mlc.utsa.edu/smi>. The website, especially the final two units, was still under construction at the time of this review; however, what is currently available promises to keep the book up to date and contains many valuable links.

The text is well integrated with the website. For instance, in the unit dealing with Government, the text directs the student to the Kremlin website to find out when the current President was elected and inaugurated and when he left office (just in case Putin decides to step down). The text gives ratings for Russian periodicals in 2002, and

then encourages students to consult the website and find the current ratings; this gives the teacher a good opportunity to work with comparisons. The website also permits individual responses, for example, inviting students to make a list of the TV programs they would like to watch in a given day or week. The website includes a workbook offering supplementary exercises and provides an answer key for some of them. Although the text does not have a glossary, an interactive one will be available on the website. The word list in each unit is alphabetical, which can help the student locate important vocabulary on the given topic.

The textbook approaches vocabulary from many angles and stresses word formation. The use of roots, verbs related to nouns, adjectives formed from nouns, and abbreviations in the current media recur in each unit. The authors have taken care to train the student to see vocabulary in context rather than simply memorizing isolated words. They also foster the development of an active vocabulary, instead of simply a passive one for reading. The exercises are varied, with clear directions and models, so that students get ample practice in using the vocabulary and recognizing it in context. Some exercises focus on translation, an important skill for more advanced students.

*News from Russia* uses a number of diagrams and tables, which clarify vocabulary and the content of the reading selections considerably. For instance, definitions of media terminology (*Раздел, рубрика, заголовок, заметка*) are easy to apply when placed next to a sample article. A diagram of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the Russian Federation

makes the structure of the government easy to understand. An exercise on *who makes what decisions* helps the student to internalize government operations. The section on the economy makes good use of tables and gives practical applications, such as Russian imports and exports.

The text integrates grammar with a variety of activities. The use of the nominative, accusative, and instrumental cases is incorporated into a class discussion about who chooses or elects whom in one's own country, and what these persons' responsibilities are. Agreement of adjectives, especially of nationality, comes in a section on various countries. Passive constructions, participles, and gerunds are found in a section on journalistic style. These last forms are often confusing and unfamiliar to students, and there is unfortunately very little explanation of them in the text. The endings are given for participles and gerunds, without an explanation of their formation. Presumably, the students have learned this material in previous courses, but since they are not likely to have used it, a fuller development would be helpful. On the other hand, the section on Economy and Business gives a detailed explanation of numbers in Russian, with good practice. This is a difficult grammar point, which students would probably not have used in the past, and its integration with the material will help them absorb the concepts.

On the whole, the text emphasizes primarily the coverage of politics and economics in the press. The first unit moves slightly beyond this focus in the introduction of TV programs, especially in the website links. The other units are more limited in scope. This approach would make the text especially attractive to students in

International Relations and Political Science, but less appealing to the general student. However, the techniques for reading apply to anyone who wants to learn or improve this skill through the use of authentic materials.

*News from Russia* is a user-friendly book, both for teachers and students. The format is predictable, the patterns are easy to follow, and the objectives, which are stated at the beginning of each unit, are clear. The exercises are practical and interesting. Although they follow the same model throughout the book, they have enough variety to appeal to diverse types of students. The flexibility of the text gives the teacher the opportunity to select supplementary material through the numerous links on the website and from other sources. Although subjects vary in difficulty, it is not necessary to cover all of them, or even to use them in order. The connection between language and culture is clearly reinforced throughout the book. This text is an important contribution to Russian studies, and teachers who use it should have a valuable tool for the development of language, reading, and culture skills.

Mary Helen Kashuba, SSJ, DML  
Chestnut Hill College  
Philadelphia, PA

### **Publisher's Response**

Yale University Press thanks Professor Kashuba for her positive and thorough review of *News from Russia: Language, Life, and the Russian Media*. This text is a versatile and important tool for intermediate and advanced Russian courses, and we hope that it can help fill a void in a field without many new and innovative texts.

Mary Jane Peluso  
Publisher, Languages  
Yale University Press  
yalebooks.com/languages

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**African Studies  
Program, University  
of Wisconsin-Madison.**  
*Passeport à l'Afrique  
Francophone:  
A Resource for the  
French Language  
Classroom, 2003.*

DVD or Videocassette with  
transcript manual (36 pp.).  
Price: \$75.00, including shipping  
and handling. For ordering  
information, please contact: Eileen  
McNamara, Assistant Director,  
African Studies Program,  
University of Wisconsin-Madison,  
205 Ingraham Hall, 1155  
Observatory Drive, Madison,  
WI 53706.  
E-mail: [outreach@africa.wisc.edu](mailto:outreach@africa.wisc.edu)  
Telephone: (608) 262-4461.  
Fax: (608) 265-5851.  
Website: <http://africa.wisc.edu>

*Passeport à l'Afrique Francophone:  
A Resource for the French Language  
Classroom* is a truly remarkable film  
which introduces students to  
Francophone Africa. This film was  
produced in the Republic of Bénin by  
faculty and staff of the University of  
Wisconsin-Madison and fourteen  
American middle school, high school,  
and university French teachers.  
*Passeport à l'Afrique Francophone*  
was created with support from the  
U.S. Department of Education, the  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
International Institute, the University

of Wisconsin-Madison Division of  
Continuing Studies, Bruce Johnson,  
senior videographer-editor of Wis-  
consin Public Television (who donated  
his time), the African Studies Program  
at UW-Madison, and the fourteen par-  
ticipating teachers.

As one watches the film, one can  
feel the excitement of the American  
teachers as they discover the joys and  
marvels of Bénin. It is important to  
note that the film is not just a series of  
talking heads. In fact, it is a highly  
enjoyable mix of cultural lessons from  
Bénin, featuring African speakers of  
French from all walks of life, including  
a tour guide showing where Bénin is  
located on a map of Africa, and the  
King of Abomey. The film provides a  
cornucopia of cultural insights, ranging  
from an intriguing lesson on religion,  
the slave trade, and African legends to a  
visit to a typical African marketplace  
and a sampling of the musical prefer-  
ences of African adolescents today.

*Passeport à l'Afrique Francophone* is  
divided into two discs, which each  
have two sections. Section One of Disc  
One is entitled "Découvrons le Bénin"  
and contains the following topics:

Découvrons le Bénin;  
Je m'appelle;  
L'ancien royaume d'Abomey est au  
centre de l'actuel Bénin;  
Le roi d'Abomey;  
La religion;  
Que veut dire *Vodun*?  
Ganvié, Ouidah, et la Route de  
l'esclave;  
Le Baobab: un conte;  
Les proverbes.

Section Two of Disc One, “La vie de tous les jours,” contains the following titles:

- En famille;
- Allons au cinéma;
- Au marché;
- Qu’est-ce qu’on mange au Bénin;
- La musique des jeunes;
- Au marché de disques;
- Au village.

Section One of Disc Two is entitled “Au travail” and consists of the following subjects:

- Au salon de coiffure;
- Fait à la main au Bénin;
- La couture;
- Les artisans d’Abomey;
- Hippolyte Agboton, professeur et cardiologue;
- Le cinéaste Séverin Akando.

Section Two of Disc Two is “Musique, danses, et traditions” and deals with the following topics:

- La danse au Bénin;
- Les musiciens: Jean et Jaya;
- Au marché Adjara;
- Un message pour les jeunes Américains.

In producing the transcript of the twenty-six video clips, the authors have remained as faithful as possible to the French language as it is spoken in Bénin instead of making “clarifications” that would conform to the norms of conventional metropolitan French. In addition, instructors will find cultural

notes in the transcript that will help them understand the video clip, as well as prepare pre- and post-viewing activities for students. For example, at the very beginning of the transcript, in the section “Découvrons le Bénin,” a website is provided that helps students find the national anthem of Bénin (<http://www.abacci.com/atlans/anthem.asp?countryID=147>).

Indeed, what is special about *Passeport à l’Africa Francophone* is the set of lesson plans developed by the fourteen participating American teachers of French. As one can well imagine (since the teachers come from middle schools, high schools, and colleges), lesson plans are geared to multiple levels. The curriculum units, which are continuously updated and which correspond to *Passeport à l’Africa Francophone*, can be found at <http://africa.wisc.edu/outreach/passeport/index.htm>.

Just some of the many wonderful lesson plans are: “Alphabet Africain: Bénin” by Sarah Hinton, “Le Pagne” by Claudine Clark and Allison Martin, “La Danse traditionnelle au Bénin” by Kirsten Keeley Fletcher, “Eeen, Un Se Fongbe Bi!” (“Yes, I speak Fon well!”) by Amy Ewan, and “Comment faire un blason” by Antoinette Newell, which can be paired nicely with “Les Symboles royaux d’Abomey” and “Un Royaume imaginaire” by Jennifer Eck.

Hinton’s “Alphabet Africain: Bénin” is a cultural alphabet that introduces students to the sights and sounds of West Africa, specifically Bénin. Hinton suggests that the teacher present a new letter daily or weekly, depending on the needs of the class, and that class discussion may be in either French or English. The outcomes of “Le Pagne,” as described by Clark and Martin, are

defined as follows: "Students will be able to identify colors and shapes, describe African cloth patterns, count to twelve, use different greetings, ask for and give information necessary for purchasing items, express likes/dislikes, and recognize various cultural differences." The authors further suggest asking students to perform a skit involving the purchase of African cloth at a market. Fletcher's "La Danse traditionnelle au Bénin" emphasizes the importance of rhythm in African daily life. Ewan's "Eeen, Un Se Fongbe Bi!" provides students with an important aspect of Francophone culture, the indigenous language Fon, found in Bénin, and incorporates Fon into daily speaking, reading, writing, and listening activities through mini-lessons. Ewan has designed this curricular unit so that the lessons are self-contained and interchangeable. The lessons use the websites [http://www.geocities.com/fon\\_is\\_fun/](http://www.geocities.com/fon_is_fun/) and [www.beningate.com](http://www.beningate.com) as references. Newell's "Comment faire un blason" is described as interdisciplinary, as it integrates art (the principles of color, texture, line, and form in an art project); social studies (the circle of history which starts with the individual and family, before moving to the community, the state, the nation, and then the world); and French (introduction of vocabulary pertinent to the situation). This unit can be paired nicely with Eck's "Les Symboles royaux d'Abomey" and "Un Royaume imaginaire," which ask students to recognize and identify the king's symbols, describe their significance, write an original story describing the development of an imaginary kingdom, and create an appliqué cloth of its symbol(s).

Without a doubt *Passeport à l'Africa Francophone* is a gold mine for teachers wanting to incorporate

units on Francophone Africa into their teaching. The film and its accompanying website are highly welcome resources!

Eileen M. Angelini, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of French  
Philadelphia University  
Philadelphia, PA

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## **Lomba, Ana and Marcela Summerville.** *Play and Learn Spanish.*

**New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.**  
**Includes an audio CD.**  
**ISBN 0-07-1441484-4.**

*Play and Learn Spanish* is a textbook designed to allow parents to teach Spanish to their children. The book opens with a five-page introduction that provides the reader with a few techniques and states the teaching philosophy of the authors. Twenty-seven thematic chapters follow, each consisting of two pages. Various topics, for example, "Ready for the Day," "Let's Be Firemen!" "Going Places," and "Visiting Family," to name just a few, are presented using pictures and thematic phrases.

All of the phrases and vocabulary are presented to the reader on an audio CD, which is included with the book. In each chapter, key vocabulary words are highlighted in boldface, while others appear in the bottom margin of the page, where they are accompanied by a picture. An interesting feature of this text is that the accompanying CD includes songs which make use of the vocabulary presented. As the authors state, "Don't let pronunciation stop you." On the audio

CD a native speaker provides the correct pronunciation of a word, so the listener can attempt to reproduce the sounds and intonation of the Spanish language.

The intended audience appears to be young children; however, the book also lends itself to adults (the caregivers) interested in teaching their children. Because of the CD, an adult need never have spoken Spanish in order to work with a child on learning the vocabulary. The themes, pictures, and phrases are all presented in a manner which demonstrates that a family can learn together. Also, while learning about the Hispanic community in America, readers of the book create a community within their own family since they see firsthand how important family is to creating and maintaining cultural identity.

A pleasing aspect of the book is the extension provided in the “Did You Know?” sections, found throughout the text. Whether providing a tip on how to successfully teach or learn Spanish, or further explaining a word or phrase from the vocabulary, these little boxes add to the cultural material provided in the book and further allow a non-Spanish speaker the ability to effectively use cultural information.

Although this text might not find a place in the traditional classroom, the idea of the authors is to allow parents to become language teachers in their own right and work with their children to “seamlessly integrate the Spanish language into everyday life.” There is a great abundance of words and phrases in this text; however, the pictures, comics, cultural facts, and accompanying CD all provide the structure necessary for anyone to present the information in a fun and

interesting way, which is certain to create a desire to learn a new language. Overall, the book lends itself to children and adults alike; to borrow Chaucer’s famous words about the Clerke of Oxenford, the former will “gladly learn” and the latter “gladly teach.”

Michael W. Donnelly  
Spanish Teacher  
Tohickon Middle School  
Doylestown, PA

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**Hershberger, Robert,  
Susan Navey-Davis,  
and Guiomar Borrás.  
*Plazas: Lugar de  
encuentros.***

**New York: Heinle, 2005. ISBN  
0-8384-0890-7. Accompanied by a  
*Workbook/Lab Manual* (also avail-  
able in a Quia online version), an  
*Instructor’s Resource Manual and  
Testbank CD-ROM, a Student  
Multimedia CD-ROM, a WebTutor  
Toolbox* available in WebCT or  
Blackboard platforms, audio  
CDs and audio tapes, integrated  
video on DVD or VHS, and a  
*Transparency Bank.***

The second edition of *Plazas* is a finely tuned and fully integrated first-year program that is designed for use over two to four semesters as an introduction to the Spanish language and the diverse cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. It is a comprehensive series that develops the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing with special attention to the “Five Cs” (Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities). *Plazas* is unique among first-year programs due to its extensive

cultural content, which brings each chapter's grammar and vocabulary to life while opening students' eyes and minds to the richness and complexities of Hispanic culture. The creators of *Plazas* have carefully woven cultural content into every aspect and component of the program in engaging and dynamic ways, thereby modeling for students the intrinsic relationship between the two.

The primary text is divided into 15 chapters and an initial *Capítulo preliminar*, each of which focuses on one or two Spanish-speaking countries (except *Capítulo 9*, whose focus is on the Caribbean, covering the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Puerto Rico). Each chapter opens with a two-page color photo of a prominent *plaza* and a description of the chapter's objectives, broken into communicative goals, grammatical structures, and cultural information. These opening pages also provide five questions that introduce students to the corresponding "¡Bienvenidos a ...!" video segment and pique their cultural curiosity about the chapter's featured country(ies) or area. These questions, as well as instructions for exercises, appear in Spanish beginning with chapter four; once students have been introduced to the vocabulary and grammar necessary to understand them. These introductory pages are followed by a vocabulary section on a specific theme that provides context and content for the exercises immediately following it. The two vocabulary sections found in each chapter also include "Palabras útiles," which provide students with additional terms and expressions to expand their discussion of the topic. Themes covered by the vocabulary sections are useful and relevant to the 21st-century student and include greetings, the classroom, family, sports and

leisure activities, the home, food and dining out, clothing and fashion, travel, the environment, the arts, politics, and computers.

Each chapter also contains three "Estructura" sections and one or two "Así se dice" sections, which provide clear and concise grammar explanations supported by examples that integrate pertinent cultural content of the chapter. For example, chapter six features Venezuela, and in the "Estructura" section on comparatives and superlatives, one finds examples comparing typical weather conditions between two of its major cities. All vocabulary, "Estructura," and "Así se dice" sections are followed first by a series of mechanical exercises under the heading "¡A practicar!" and then by those of a personal and communicative nature in the "En voz alta" sections. Between the initial vocabulary section and the first "Estructura" section, each chapter also contains an "En contexto" section that provides a text in the form of a dialogue, followed by several questions or a brief exercise to test comprehension. These dialogues are also contained on the *Text Audio CD* along with each chapter's active vocabulary, all of which are recorded by native speakers of Spanish. The "En contexto" dialogues feature terms and expressions from the preceding vocabulary section and expose students to additional vocabulary and grammar covered later in the chapter.

Each chapter also contains two "Encuentro cultural" texts which introduce students to a dynamic array of cultural topics that increase understanding of the people and ways of life of the twenty different countries included in the *Plazas* program. These texts are engaging and informative and are enhanced by color photographs.

The “Encuentro cultural” sections also include pre- and post-reading questions that not only test factual comprehension but also require students to think critically about the cultural topic and its relationship with their own experiences and interests. The range of themes addressed by these pieces is extensive and includes: the *plaza*; use of *tú* and *usted*; the family unit; coffee; housing in Latin America and Spain; Venezuelan food and desserts; shopping in Buenos Aires; the Salvadoran archbishop Óscar Romero; weddings; proper business protocol and etiquette; Latin American film; the Chilean government; and telecommunications in Uruguay.

The cultural content of the *Plazas* text is further enhanced by a series of socio-linguistic notes that are interspersed throughout each chapter under the heading “¿Nos entendemos?” In addition, a *Plazas Revista* appears after every three chapters; it contains four authentic and informative articles of cultural content that correspond thematically to the preceding three chapters. These articles have been modified for the second edition and now are at a level appropriate for beginning students of Spanish. Each of the four articles is followed by several questions that cover content or require students to think critically and answer based on their own experiences or preferences.

The *Instructor’s Annotated Edition* of the primary text includes useful teaching tips in the left- and right-hand margins. These notes offer a plethora of strategies to introduce, practice, and review grammar, vocabulary, and cultural information. The bottom margins offer further suggestions and direction, in relation to the “five Cs,” that expand upon the exercises of the student edition.

The *Plazas Workbook* and *Lab Manual* are bound together in one volume. The *Workbook* closely follows the structure of the textbook, providing additional mechanical and open-ended exercises for all vocabulary, “Estructura,” and “Así se dice” sections. Each chapter of the *Workbook* also contains a “Síntesis” section, which provides additional reading and writing exercises that expand upon those presented in the “Síntesis” sections of the textbook. Each chapter of the *Workbook* concludes with an “Autoprueba,” which allows students to test their understanding of the chapter’s material in preparation for chapter quizzes and semester exams. Only answers to the “Autopruebas” are included at the end of the *Workbook/Lab Manual*. This reviewer appreciates this feature since students must therefore complete all exercises on their own, but are able to test and check their mastery of the material at the end of each chapter through the “Autoprueba” and its accompanying answer key. The *Lab Manual* and audio program also mirror the structure of the textbook and its presentation of vocabulary, grammar, and culture. Like the video component, discussed below, the audio program exposes students to different accents and voices of the Spanish-speaking world. It also includes pronunciation activities for students to practice difficult sounds and stress patterns found in Spanish.

The integrated video component (available in VHS and DVD format) is new to the second edition of *Plazas* and contains two sections for each chapter. The first of these, “Bienvenidos a . . .,” gives a general introduction to the country or countries featured in the chapter and contains footage and commentary that

highlight that country's history, culture, economy, and political system. The "¡A ver!" section is a series of vignettes that follows the lives of five Hispanic individuals with different backgrounds (Alejandra from Colombia, Valeria from Venezuela, Sofía from Spain, Antonio from Texas, and Javier from Argentina). These five strangers must share living quarters in their new home of Hacienda Vista Alegre in Puerto Rico, and they gradually get to know one another and form friendships through experiences that correspond to the chapter themes of the textbook, such as leisure activities, shopping, travel, health, and food and cooking. Each segment also incorporates a chapter's active vocabulary and grammar and is intended for use at the end of each chapter to reinforce linguistic content. Due to the different countries represented by the five main characters, students are exposed to a myriad of accents and to the lexical differences between Spanish-speaking countries. The dialogue of the "¡A ver!" segments is at times too challenging for students at the beginning level; yet this problem is offset by the segments' format, which students will likely recognize since it mimics MTV's "The Real World." The video component requires some further editing since this reviewer found a glaring error on the chapter two heading, which reads "En una reunión familiar" instead of "familiar." The "¡A ver!" pieces are supported by pre- and post-viewing activities in the "Síntesis" section of the textbook, found at the end of each chapter. These sections also contain reading, writing, and conversation activities that correspond to the grammar and vocabulary presented in the chapter.

The *Plazas* program offers an extensive array of additional components, all of which reflect its creators' success at

integrating exciting cultural content into its presentation and practice of grammar and vocabulary. Among these components is an online version of the *Workbook/Lab Manual*, which provides immediate feedback to students on their answers and allows instructors to modify content and follow students' progress through a grade book. The *Student Multimedia CD-ROM* allows students to apply grammar and vocabulary to real-life tasks and offers a video that examines cultural understanding and immerses students in the various countries presented in the primary text. The *Instructor's Resource Manual* contains three tests per chapter and midterm and final exams that may be customized and printed for use, and it now includes an *Audio-Enhanced Testbank CD-ROM*, which offers listening activities to test aural comprehension. Additional components that will save instructors time are the *Activity File*, which provides a variety of lesson-specific worksheets and additional exercises for in-class use, and the *Transparency Bank*, which offers 100 color transparencies, including maps and presentations of vocabulary.

The *Plazas* program is effective and engaging because it has successfully blended exciting cultural content with its presentation, practice, and review of grammar and vocabulary. The primary text and *Workbook/Lab Manual* are clear and well structured, and the extensive array of supporting components allows students to immerse themselves culturally and linguistically. This is a thoroughly integrated, detailed, and extensive program that provides dynamic and creative opportunities for students and instructors to explore the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world.

Bradford G. Ellis, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Spanish  
St. Norbert College

### **Publisher's Response**

I was delighted to read this review of *Plazas: Lugar de encuentros*, Second Edition, by Professor Bradford G. Ellis of St. Norbert College. His comments were thorough and insightful, and he truly captured the spirit of this culture-rich program. To further the component integration and to address the reviewer's concerns, we offer *ILRN Spanish for Plazas*, featuring an updated video, which students can speed up or slow down depending on their level of comprehension, as well as view or hide the running transcript.

Helen Alejandra Richardson  
Jaramillo  
Senior Acquisitions Editor, Spanish  
Heinle

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## **Knorre, Marty, Thalia Dorwick, Ana María Pérez-Gironés, William R. Glass, and Hildebrando Villarreal. *Puntos de Partida.***

**7th Edition. (Instructor's Edition:  
Ana María Pérez-Gironés and  
A. Raymond Elliott.)  
New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005.  
ISBN 0-07-295130-3.**

The complete 7th Edition for instructors includes: Instructor's Edition, Instructor's Manual and Resource Kit, Testing Program, Online Test Generator, Online Learning Center, Video Program, Audio CD Program, Institutional CD-ROM package (20 student copies), Overhead

Transparencies (also available as digital transparencies online), Instructor's Testing and Resource CD, Instructor's Resource CD-ROM, Supplementary Materials Book, and Teacher's Guide to accompany Supplementary Materials Book.

From the newly designed cover artwork of the textbook to the Online Learning Center's splash page featuring animation and music, the 7th edition of the popular *Puntos de Partida* text offers instant visual appeal to both students and instructors. As author Bill Glass notes in a video-clip interview on the website, this text made its debut in 1981 and has been used by more than 1,000,000 beginning learners of Spanish. A visit to the website alone would give most instructors sufficient information to decide whether or not to adopt *Puntos*, so here I will simply highlight some of the most exciting aspects of the most recent edition of an old classic.

The authors of *Puntos de Partida* have aimed to create a first-year Spanish textbook grounded in proficiency-based and communicative teaching methods. It has been a flexible text, used by a wide variety of institutions, each with its own needs and scheduling challenges. It has provided clear and comprehensive grammar presentations and has always included authentic cultural information. Perhaps, most notably, *Puntos* has explored the question of how technology can support language learning.

The 7th edition of the text continues this tradition of excellence, focusing on more integrated cultural information and incorporating the latest multimedia technology. Based on extensive feedback gathered from instructors and students, improvements also include new artwork,

updated vocabulary and cultural notes, and a more student-centered summary of the main points covered in each chapter. Each chapter begins with a culturally-based spread that serves to focus students on a theme. The country-specific information and vocabulary of each chapter are now better matched to the theme. There is more emphasis on authentic literature; excerpts are presented throughout each chapter, with more extended focus on both reading and writing skills in the “Un Paso Más” section.

A page in the Instructor’s Edition directly addresses the ACTFL Standards for Foreign Language Learning. As the authors note, “*Puntos* exemplifies the spirit of the Standards.” Integrated Culture is the connecting thread that runs throughout the text. A focus on functional language and personalized activities speaks to the Communication standard, and there are ample Comparisons between both English and Spanish language, and American and Hispanic cultures. Connections with other disciplines are illustrated through each chapter’s theme (geography, history, fine arts, environmentalism, etc.), and the suggested Internet activities for each chapter encourage students to go beyond the classroom and reach out to the Communities of the Hispanic world. The Instructor’s Manual includes many specific ideas about how to integrate the Standards consistently, gathered from teachers from around the country who have used the text in their classroom.

The format of the textbook itself is very student-friendly, beginning with a chart of commands and phrases commonly used in the classroom on the inside cover. Grammar charts are more visually clear, using colored typeface to

draw attention to verb endings, gender markers, stem changes, etc. Each chapter begins with a photo that connects the theme with the featured country, and a clear listing of the culture, vocabulary, and grammar to be covered. In the “En resumen” section at the end of each chapter, the student is presented with a grammar checklist in the form of questions asking whether or not one has understood how to do *x* or *z*. Throughout each chapter, there are hints for authentic pronunciation, “Autopruebas” with answer keys for grammar spot-checks, and suggestions about where to find extra practice in the workbook or lab manual, interactive CD-ROM, or Online Learning Center.

The most impressive additions to the 7th edition for students are the multimedia components of the supplementary materials and Online Learning Center. Designed to appeal to today’s media-savvy youth, this use of technology also accommodates multiple learning styles. For example, the very appealing Interactive CD-ROM for students includes vocabulary games that combine visual, aural, and kinesthetic skills. The student sees a list of vocabulary for the chapter, accompanied by a set of corresponding drawings or photos (visual). The student uses the mouse to drag the vocabulary term to its matching visual (kinesthetic), and if she/he is correct, a native speaker is heard pronouncing the word (audio). This CD-ROM also includes video-based activities, speaking activities simulating conversation with native speakers, and a “talking” dictionary. Many of these same features are included in the Online Learning Center, along with a verb conjugator and “flash” grammar tutorials. While the free content areas of the learning center are available to anyone with access

to the Internet, the Premium content areas are limited to registered students who have purchased the textbook. If a student purchases a used textbook, there is an option to purchase a password separately for access to the Premium areas. The student can also choose to purchase the Video Program on CD. While it has the same content as the videotape, the CD version provides the student with the option of viewing the transcript as she/he watches the video components. For each chapter, there is an interview with a native speaker based on the chapter theme, a conversation between native Spanish speakers, a short audio/visual presentation about the featured country, a mini-drama, and additional video clips. A traditional paper workbook and lab book are available to students, but the 7th edition also offers a more modern take on outside-of-class individual learning through the Online Workbook and Lab Books. Created in collaboration with Quia™, these online tools have students complete self-scoring activities for instant feedback. There is also an option to save the scores or send them directly to the instructor. A final component available for student purchase is “A Practical Guide to Language Learning.”

Equally exciting are the supplementary materials and Online Learning Center specifically designed for instructors. The Instructor’s Edition is advertised as having an “enlarged trim size” featuring a wide variety of ideas, suggestions, activities, variations, follow-ups, and ways of engaging heritage speakers. Although the additional information in the margins is abundant and relevant, it does require some effort to focus on the center portion of the pages, which depicts what the student sees. The Instructor’s Manual and Resource Kit

includes an introduction to teaching techniques for novices, scheduling tips, communicative games and contextualization ideas for each chapter, focusing on raising awareness and soliciting prior knowledge. Some of the recurring games throughout the chapters include “Oraciones quebradas,” where students each have a card with one word of a sentence and then have to find others to make a complete sentence; “Battleship” (*Sumarino*); *crucigramas*; and a crystal ball activity to practice the future tense. A Testing Program is available in both paper and electronic formats, providing 110 communicative tests at the chapter, quarter, and semester levels. The benefit of the electronic Test Generator, also developed in collaboration with Quia™, is that instructors can create customized tests, even making multiple tests for one class. The tests can be saved and stored as well. The Instructor’s area of the Online Learning Center offers additional resources and links to more information about cultural topics. Most of the materials there are available in PDF format, along with PowerPoint presentations on grammar topics and digital transparencies. A particularly useful feature is a “Calendario cultural,” which uses Spanish to describe holidays that are celebrated in Hispanic countries throughout the year. The 7th edition continues the tradition of offering a video program of approximately five hours in length; however, the sections “Entrevista cultural” and “Entre amigos” are entirely new components.

For instructors who adopt the text, there is also an audio CD program, an institutional CD-ROM package that includes 20 student copies, and traditional overhead transparencies. Finally, the instructor package includes a Supplementary Materials Book with

listening comprehension and pronunciation activities, grammar worksheets, chapter reviews, integrative activities and games, guided writing and speaking practices, communicative goals practice, and “round robin” grammar monitor activities for groups of three students who keep exchanging roles. A Teacher’s Guide accompanies the Supplementary Materials Book.

If there is any drawback to this most recent edition, it could only be described as “an embarrassment of riches.” Some instructors might be overwhelmed by the scope of the text and by the seemingly endless instructional possibilities provided by the ancillary materials. It would be especially difficult for an institution on the term system to cover all of the material. However, this can be the case with many other textbooks, and each individual instructor is free to pick and choose from the offerings, making priorities based on particular program goals. Novice and seasoned instructors alike should feel well supported adopting *Puntos de Partida*, as it offers what is perhaps the most extensive collection of supplementary materials of any text currently on the market. (As a side note, the same authors developed the program *¿Qué Tal?* over twenty years ago as an abbreviated version of *Puntos de Partida*. Now in its 6th edition, the program is solid, but understandably does not provide as much supplemental material as *Puntos*, nor does it offer the same level of interactive multimedia enhancements.)

Karen C. Williams, Ph.D.  
Mercyhurst College  
Erie, PA

### **Publisher’s Response**

McGraw-Hill Higher Education is pleased to respond to Dr. Williams’s

favorable review of the seventh edition of *Puntos de partida: An Invitation to Spanish*, a comprehensive Introductory Spanish program that has long been a favorite among Spanish instructors. Since its first edition, *Puntos* has enjoyed an excellent reputation as a pedagogically sound and classroom-friendly introduction to language and culture, grounded, as Dr. Williams notes, “in proficiency-based and communicative teaching methods.”

We were particularly pleased that Dr. Williams pointed out that the seventh edition “continues this tradition of excellence” and has also moved forward with innovative and exciting new features, particularly in the areas of cultural integration and technology components. The integration of cultural content throughout the program is a hallmark of this seventh edition, and the multimedia components available with this edition are truly outstanding.

Dr. Williams also mentioned the seventh edition’s student-centered design and features, such as the improved grammar presentations, self-quizzes, and other study resource reminders. Great care was taken in creating the design and features; focus groups of both students and instructors were involved in providing feedback and suggestions to make *Puntos* a more effective teaching and learning tool, and we are delighted that Dr. Williams recognized these improvements.

Dr. Williams noted that another of McGraw-Hill’s introductory Spanish programs, *¿Qué tal?*, an abbreviated version of *Puntos de Partida*, does not offer as many resources for instructors and students as *Puntos*. We would like

to point out that the coming seventh edition of *¿Qué tal?* (to be published in January 2006) will offer the same comprehensive package as well as the same content improvements as the seventh edition of *Puntos de Partida*.

McGraw-Hill World Languages is committed to publishing high-quality foreign language textbooks and multimedia products, and we are proud to include *Puntos* and its rich package of ancillary materials among our many titles. We are delighted that Dr. Williams has shared her review of *Puntos de Partida*, Seventh Edition, with the readership of the *NECTFL Review*.

Christa Harris  
Senior Sponsoring Editor, World  
Languages  
McGraw-Hill

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**VanPatten, Bill,  
Michael J. Leeser,  
Gregory D. Keating,  
and Esperanza Román-  
Mendoza. *Sol y viento:  
Beginning Spanish.***

**1st Edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005. *Sol y viento*. Student Edition with Online Learning Center Bind in Card. 1st Edition. Bill VanPatten, Michael Lesser, Gregory D. Keating, and Esperanza Román Mendoza. ISBN 007297219X. *Workbook/Lab Manual: Vol. A and B*: VanPatten. Soft cover. ISBN 007296572X and 000072965738. *Online Workbook/Lab Manual: Parts A and B*: VanPatten et al. ISBN 0072966746 and 0072965754. *Instructor's Annotated Edition*: Hardcover. Pp. 592. ISBN 0072965711. *Instructor's Manual***

**and Test Bank**: Soft cover. ISBN 0072965991. **Picture File**. ISBN 0072966033. **Instructor's Resource CD**. ISBN 0072970588. **Adopter's Audio CD Program**: VanPatten et al. ISBN 0072961385. **Student Audio CD Program: Parts A and B. Spiral bound**. ISBN 0072972203 and 0072972211. **Student CD-Rom (pre-pack)**: VanPatten. ISBN 007297222X. **Director's Cut DVD**: VanPatten. ISBN 0073202576. **Institutional CD-Rom (pre-pack)**. ISBN 0072974869. **Instructional DVD**: VanPatten. ISBN 0073197823. **Student Viewer's Guide**: VanPatten: Softcover. ISBN 00729665789. **Instructional Version on VHS**: VanPatten. ISBN 0072862971.

Many of us used *Destinos*, the video-based series by Bill VanPatten et al., most successfully in our classrooms in the 1990s. For those of us who did, news that the accomplished author and educational screenwriter was preparing an equally innovative film-based language program was cause for celebration. The publication of the multifaceted series *Sol y viento: Beginning Spanish* is most welcome. In fact, it takes many of the outstanding qualities of the *Destinos* program and makes them even better: the comprehension-based approach to learning a second language; the emphasis on the visual and extra-linguistic cues that aid understanding; the immersion in a culture in which Spanish is spoken; the attention to a variety of accents, formal and informal speech, and different levels of comprehensibility of spoken Spanish; and the logical presentation of grammatical points.

The central piece of the program is the film itself, *Sol y viento*, which takes its name from a Chilean vineyard in the Maipo Valley. An American hydroelec-

tric company sends the ambitious bilingual Jaime Talavera (Frank Lord) to Santiago to meet with debt-ridden Carlos Sánchez (Felipe Armas), the ethically compromised son of the vineyard's dead founder, to finalize the sale of the small operation that is the last piece of land needed in the corporation's billion-dollar dam/reservoir plan. However, the vineyard is home to many workers and is located in a valley held sacred by the indigenous Mapuches, whose name means "people of the earth." Flooding the region would cause ecological damage and economic disruption, and would show disrespect for an ancient culture and its traditions. Jaime's business trip turns into a journey of self-discovery as he learns that love, land, and connections, especially to one's roots, can be more important than money. He begins this transition when he literally runs into María Teresa Sánchez (Javiera Contador), Carlos' sister and a professor of anthropology. She is also an activist in indigenous rights movements and is against insensitive globalization. Without realizing she is related to the man with whom he is doing business, he starts dating her. As Jaime and María Teresa get to know each other, they realize that their interests in the vineyard are diametrically opposed. It is perhaps María's mother and owner of the vineyard, Doña Isabel, movingly portrayed by Maité Fernández, who helps Jaime see the error of his ways. Through ten episodes, each divided into a prologue and nine segments, each lasting about ten minutes, we watch enthralled as the potential couple tries to overcome these obstacles to their relationship. In subtle ways, both visually and through language, we see Jaime become reconnected to his own background but more importantly to the land itself. The

cinematography is spectacular; the acting by professionals and amateurs alike is superb; and the sense, at the end, is that we have seen a "real movie," not an educational tool. A showing of the entire director's cut at a special viewing at ACTFL in Chicago (November 2004), elicited a standing ovation for the creators.

The Instructional DVD (or CD-Rom or VHS) component has on-screen features to enhance learning. Each episode begins with a "Preparación" with both verbal and visual review followed by an innovative "Play close attention to..." section that highlights either a linguistic item or cultural practice that students should notice in detail. After the 10-minute episode, there are multiple-choice questions, true and false questions, and other activities created by Isabel Anievas-Gamallo of San Joaquín Delta College, similar to those used in *Destinos*. In *Sol y viento*, however, it is an off-screen narrator and not the protagonist who does the language "lesson," a feature that may be an improvement since my students never liked seeing Raquel Rodríguez out of character. Another new feature is the "Lengua en contexto..." on-screen teaching clips in which students are asked to watch, for example, how "*conocer*" and "*saber*" are used in the dialogue of the film or how Jaime discusses his previous day's trip using the preterit tense.

The joy of learning a language in this format is the visual context: every scene presents language in exciting simulated "real-life" situations that enrich the vocabulary and aid memory. Written by Bill VanPatten and Carlos Barón, directed by David H. Murray, produced by Rocío Barajas and David H. Murray, and beautifully photographed by Lamar Owen with a

haunting sound track of original music by Fred Story, the movie was shot on location in the United States, Mexico, and Chile. As Bill VanPatten says in an interview included on the DVD, the job of motivating language students is already taken care of; the film and its story line do that for the teacher.

The abundant ancillary components are of equally high quality and pedagogical value. Like *Destinos*, the text includes activities that are based on meaning, not rote drills. As could be expected from a group of authors so well grounded in linguistics and second language acquisition, the text is a compendium of “best practices” of communicative-oriented language learning. Pre-viewing and post-viewing activities abound. The textbook uses stills from the film to stimulate memory and to help the student re-live the episodes in their original context. The text is divided into nine “episodes” paralleling the episodes of the film, with two lessons each (A and B). Every lesson is subdivided into three parts, each containing vocabulary, grammar, and related activities. The episodes end with a two-page *Sol y viento* section that concentrates on the film itself. Additional reading selections and cultural “*enfoques*” and “*vistazos*” are interspersed throughout the text, as are additional vocabulary, useful suggestions for active communication, and hints for viewing “*detrás de la camera*.” A traditional audio component is available for each segment and, in addition, the remarkable interactive online resource center also has audio capabilities.

A typical textbook chapter, “*¡Vamos de compras!*” begins with lesson objectives and presents vocabulary through interesting drawings. It then includes activities about what you personally

would or would not wear to certain events, a survey to see what classmates are wearing, an Internet activity to search for clothing prices in a Spanish-speaking country, a presentation of “i stem-changing verbs,” a useful communicative hint about getting dressed, pictures from the *Sol y viento* movie that return students to the original context of the vocabulary, a focus on linguistic elements, activities based on the characters in the film, a comparison of student/teacher clothing choices, a questionnaire about fashion interests, presentation of agreement of adjectives through color vocabulary and clothing items, a cultural tidbit on currency in the Hispanic world, an activity about whether or not items of clothing “*combinan bien*,” a listening practice exercise about whether men, women, or both might wear certain items of clothing, a listening activity about the price of certain clothing items in which you write down the number amount and then decide whether it is “*caro*,” “*buen precio*,” or “*una ganga*.” The photographs of markets and stores in the text exercises are quickly recognizable since we have “visited” them previously in the movie. The variety of activities is staggering; all revolve around meaning and active communication, not drills. The workbook expands the number and type of activities. One can only imagine the hours of brainstorming that brought about such an unusually vast and engaging set of language learning exercises.

Professors will find the same careful organization and attention to detail in the ancillary materials. Whether used outright or as a guide, the test bank will save teachers hours. Most professors will find the resource CD and Instructor’s manual helpful, especially if the text is adopted for two semesters. I personally plan to use

*Sol y viento* in a one-semester accelerated class so the materials available in the film, the text, the workbook/lab manual, and the online resource center should be more than enough for my purposes. I plan to purchase the coordinated picture file.

If student response to *Destinos* is any guide, I can imagine only an even more positive involvement with *Sol y viento*. I remember coming across students talking on campus and inquiring if their friend in the hospital was going to be OK. However, it turned out that they were involved in a heated discussion of Roberto, Don Fernando's grandson from the *Destinos* program, and not a personal acquaintance.

The *Sol y viento Cinematic Journey for Beginning Spanish* is a welcome addition to the options for an elementary language course. It is versatile enough to engage students for one or two semesters. The film and various components, however, can also be used at more advanced levels of instruction. Since the issues involved are so relevant to domestic and foreign policy, the film could generate discussion at any level of language competency. More advanced students could research the role of the IMF and World Bank in Latin America or the political situation in Bolivia during the last few years which was mentioned in the film, or debate values such as the relative merit of love and personal connections as opposed to wealth and disdain for tradition.

What is most exciting about the program is that the film drives all activities, both on screen and in the various ancillary components. VanPatten points this out in his interview. Students learn greetings because the characters meet and depart; they

learn the preterit because Jaime needs to tell María what he did the previous day; they learn the imperfect because the two lovers are finding out about each other's childhood experiences. Presenting grammar in context is the most meaningful way of presenting it, and this series, like *Destinos* before it, makes grammar come alive with freshness and purpose.

All of the dozens of professionals who collaborated on this massive project are to be commended. Its completion is a major contribution to the field of language study. Using what is considered the most current research in second language acquisition, they have produced an exciting and innovative program. If I could change only one thing, I might change the pace of the online exercises that follow a rhythm that is not my own... and probably not that of my more impatient students. I think there is very little that I could say, however, that in any way would detract from the overall quality of this magnificent program.

Marilyn Kiss, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Spanish  
Wagner College  
Staten Island, New York

### **Publisher's Response**

We are very pleased to respond to Dr. Kiss's favorable review of McGraw-Hill's new introductory Spanish program *Sol y viento: Beginning Spanish*. It is apparent that Dr. Kiss carefully examined all aspects of the program and we are grateful for her diligence and attention to detail.

It is very gratifying to both the authors of *Sol y viento* and the editorial staff at McGraw-Hill that Dr. Kiss has identified many of the critical pedagogical and instructional goals that

the authors strove to achieve throughout the many components of the program: “the comprehension-based approach to learning a second language; [...] the variety of activities [that] revolve around meaning and active communication, not drill; [...] the logical presentation of grammatical points; [...] the film drives all activities, both on screen and in the various ancillary components.” Speaking for both the authors and the editorial staff, we are all delighted to hear that, in Dr. Kiss’s opinion, these goals have been successfully achieved.

Dr. Kiss also points out that she expects student response to the integrated film to be enthusiastic and positive. The response to early screenings of the film supports this expectation. Both instructors and students alike find the film to be highly engaging. We anticipate that the combination of an exciting and realistic film, developed specifically for beginning language learners, with a stimulating, learner-centered textbook program, will motivate students and instructors alike, and offer departments the opportunity to do something truly new and invigorating in their first-year programs.

At McGraw-Hill World Languages, we take great pride in publishing high-quality foreign language textbooks and multimedia products. We are proud to include this exciting new program for introductory Spanish among our many titles. To paraphrase Dr. Kiss, the publication of *Sol y viento* is cause for celebration. We are grateful that Dr. Kiss has shared her review of *Sol y viento* with the readership of the *NECTFL Review*.

Christa Harris  
Senior Sponsoring Editor,  
World Languages  
McGraw-Hill

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**Munday, Pilar,  
Steven McGroarty,  
and Marcel Danesi.**  
***2,000+ Essential  
Spanish Verbs.***

**New York: Living Language/  
Random House, 2003.**  
**ISBN 1-4000-2054-9. \$14.95.**

*2,000+ Essential Spanish Verbs* proposes to go where no other book of verb conjugations has gone before. The more popular examples of this genre on the market really can serve only as reference guides — since they usually give only the definitions and tenses of about “501 verbs” — but this book aims much higher. Its title, therefore, is somewhat misleading. Of course, the authors hope that students will use the book as “an essential reference manual about Spanish verbs,” but since it also includes explanations of verb tenses and numerous practice sections, the authors’ intent is clearly to challenge students on a daily basis.

The book begins with an alphabetical list of more than 2,000 verbs in Spanish, listing English equivalents. Prepositions commonly used with verbs are also listed. For example, *votar*, in addition to being translated “to vote,” also includes the prepositions “a” and “por” (to vote for). This approach is very helpful since these little nuances are often problematic for English speakers. Next to each verb is a corresponding “chart number.” A chart number in boldface refers to a page where the verb is conjugated in all its forms. This procedure is used for approximately 250 verbs. For the other 1,750 verbs included the reader is referred to a page that has a verb

conjugated in a similar way to the one you are looking up. For example, “*sombrer*,” a “regular -ar verb,” sends the reader to Chart 1 (“*abandonar*”), since it is conjugated the same way. In theory, this works well, since, rather than being given the information, students have to think for themselves, and apply the conjugation to the verb they wish to use; however, it is a little confusing for the novice user of the book since one has to flip back and forth so much. Another interesting aspect of the list is that it specifies whether or not a verb is used only in Latin America, or, even more specifically, in the Southern Cone Region; this feature comes in handy in the classroom. The book does the same the other way round (English to Spanish) at the end, but without providing the same amount of detail.

Also included is a very concise, six-page guide to tense formation. Although it is difficult to know who would benefit most from this section (since students usually learn the language in piecemeal), it is nicely laid out and perfectly clear. It was also impressive to see a sample English verb with all its tenses, since many students nowadays seem to have difficulty understanding the grammar of their own language, let alone a new one.

The list of 2,000 verbs and the 250 conjugated verbs are clearly the focus of the book; however, there is also “Part II: Spanish Verbs in Action,” which makes up one-third of the volume. This 100-page section might have been called “Everything you ever wanted to know about Spanish verbs but were afraid to ask,” because it covers every tense and possible problem regarding verbs (including reflexive verbs, impersonal constructions, etc.). Explanations in each section are followed by numerous examples of

real speech, e.g., “...y *ahora voy a beber un vino americano*,” ten practice questions or translations, and an answer key. Given how much is made of technology and expensive texts with lots of gloss and shine, here is a Spanish textbook with nary a picture. At times, I appreciated its simplicity and straightforwardness. After a while, though, I felt I was eating a sandwich without the bread: the meat was there, but it just did not taste the same.

It is not clear what kinds of learning situations Part II is targeting. My feeling is that it probably would not be used in the classroom, but would be very helpful when tutoring struggling students. The book ends with an Appendix that is somewhat of a hodgepodge of various attributes of the Spanish language. “The uses of *ser* and *estar*” and “Verbs that change meaning in the reflexive form” are some of the headings. Interestingly, the last part of the Appendix before the English-Spanish Glossary and cut-out flash cards is a section entitled “Grammar Summary.” In four pages, the book basically sums up any aspect of Spanish grammar that was not touched in the previous four hundred pages. Would that it were that easy. Nevertheless, this guide to Spanish verb conjugations is immensely useful to students at all levels and delivers what it promises.

Heather McCullough, Ph.D.  
Director, Language Resource Center  
University of North Carolina-  
Charlotte

### **Publisher’s Response**

When we set out to develop the 2,000+ *Essential Verbs* series, we wanted to provide a complete picture of verbs, while still creating a book that would be accessible and useful to any student. Heather McCullough’s

excellent review of *2,000+ Essential Spanish Verbs* acknowledges the success of this goal, calling it “immensely useful,” and recognizing its ability “to challenge students on a daily basis” and “deliver what it promises.”

Ms. McCullough’s review highlights our book’s unique strengths, the features we ourselves look for when picking up a language reference: the inclusion of supplementary information (prepositions, regional usage) in the index of more than 2,000 verbs, the “nicely laid out and perfectly clear” charts, and the “numerous practice sections.” It’s not just the small details that make this book great: the various parts of this reference manual — from the expansive index to the detailed charts, from the challenging lessons to the straightforward glossary — work together to provide the most complete verb reference on the market.

Many verb reference titles ignore the fact that verbs are living, and fail to show how verbs actually work in the context of the language. While Part I is

reference pure and simple, Part II is targeted practice and review, to be used as a complement to the student’s usual pattern of study by providing real-life context, reinforcement, and interactive exercises. *2,000+ Essential Verbs* is also available in French and Italian. Additionally, new editions of the *2,000+ Essential Verbs* books will include the “Before You Know It” CD-ROM from Transparent Language, which expands the learner’s knowledge of various verbs and vocabulary words through the use of flash cards, audio clips, and quizzes. We would like to thank Ms. McCullough for her flattering review. We hope you will explore the rest of our Living Language catalogue of more than 25 languages, and discover for yourself how our dedicated, multifaceted approach to language learning is applied not only to great books such as *2,000+ Essential Spanish Verbs*, but to all of our courses and reference materials.

Suzanne McQuade  
Living Language

# **REVIEWERS WANTED**

The Northeast Conference invites you to submit your name as a reviewer of textbooks, software, websites, programs, ancillaries, videos—in short, any product or opportunity or program that might be of interest to you and your colleagues. You can help others make their way through the wide array of materials they may see at a conference, in a catalogue, on a website, or through advertising! Share your knowledge and experience ... and see yourself in print! Don't be shy if you've never written for publication before: we are eager to work with you!

Reviewers are needed at all levels and in all languages. If you would be interested in exploring this possibility, would like to submit a review, or wish to receive materials to evaluate, please send your name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address to:

Thomas S. Conner  
Review Editor  
St. Norbert College  
De Pere, WI 54115-2099  
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920-403-3102



# NEWS FROM NORTHEAST

## *A Message from the 2007 Conference Chair*



**Marjorie Hall Haley**

Dear Colleagues:

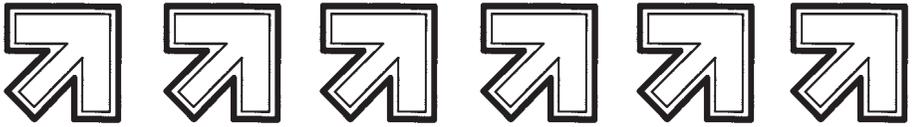
How exciting it is to chair the 2007 Northeast Conference! Now that we are firmly settled in the 21st century, one thing is certain: changing demographics will continue to shape and focus language teaching and learning. It has become abundantly clear that One Size DOESN'T Fit All, and therefore, we must commit ourselves to reexamining differing epistemologies. It is with this background we have chosen the theme, "The Many Views of Diversity: Understanding Multiple Realities." We hope to examine current U.S. and global demographics and the realities of what takes place in foreign language teaching and learning. This exploration will be framed by the importance of bilingualism and multilingualism in our new century. The goal is to investigate and understand the many aspects of diversities among both students and teachers: cultural, linguistic, and cognitive diversities. Sessions and workshops will address instructional practices and assessments in accommodating the wide range of teachers and learners.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this conference will be that each participant will receive a DVD that will include (1) WGBH's video, "Valuing Diversity in Learners"; (2) successfully-used activities and strategies for working with culturally, linguistically, and cognitively diverse learners; and (3) papers that address a bi-directional flow, teaching to research and research to teaching, to direct/instruct future research initiatives with the goal of creating life-long language learners and informed, culturally literate world citizens.

Plans are already well underway and we are working hard on your behalf to make the 2007 Northeast Conference the best ever! We look forward to seeing you there. I urge you to start thinking about submitting a conference proposal and to begin making plans to be with us in New York City at the Marriott Marquis on Broadway, April 12-14, 2007.

*Marjorie Hall Haley*

Marjorie Hall Haley, PhD  
Tenured Associate Professor  
Director, FL Teacher Licensure  
Graduate School of Education  
George Mason University



## *Call for Proposals*

Have you enjoyed Northeast Conference sessions and workshops in the past?

Have you occasionally left a session or workshop thinking, “I can do better than that!”?

Have you ever written on a conference evaluation, “You need more sessions and workshops on ‘x’”?

Have you wondered about the excitement of working with a group of close colleagues on a presentation?

Have you had a great idea, developed a new instructional strategy, enacted curricular change, mentored fellow teachers, interacted with colleagues in other disciplines or with community members, conducted interesting research, found a good assessment tool, engaged in policy-related endeavors or leadership activities, created innovative teaching materials, or implemented technology in exciting ways?

Have you heard that the NECTFL 2007 theme is “The Many Views of Diversity: Understanding Multiple Realities”?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then you need the Northeast Conference, and we need you!

Proposals are being accepted now for sessions and workshops to be presented at the 2007 Northeast Conference, which will be held April 12-14, 2007, in New York City. The deadline for proposals is May 15, 2006. Please go to [www.nectfl.org](http://www.nectfl.org) and click on the “2007 Session Proposal” link: you may submit your proposal electronically or download and print the form for submission by mail.

Thank you!



**OUR THANKS  
TO THE 2006 NORTHEAST  
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The following companies are loyal supporters of our Conference. We encourage you to contact them and add your thanks to ours!

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**CHECK OUT THE NORTHEAST  
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**LOTS OF LINKS, INFORMATION, AND MORE!  
BOOKMARK US AND VISIT THE SITE OFTEN!**

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Northeast Conference at Dickinson College  
Carlisle PA 17013

## FUTURE CONFERENCE DATES AND LOCATIONS

2007: **APRIL 12-14,  
NEW YORK MARRIOTT  
MARQUIS**

2008: **MARCH 27-29,  
NEW YORK MARRIOTT  
MARQUIS**

## IMPORTANT!

### HOW TO CONTACT THE NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

*PLEASE KEEP THIS  
INFORMATION HANDY*

Mailing Address:  
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at Dickinson College  
P.O. Box 1773

[for non-U.S. Postal Service deliveries:  
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Carlisle PA 17013-2896

Telephone: 717-245-1977

Fax: 717-245-1976

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# In Memoriam



The Northeast Conference is saddened to report news of the deaths of several individuals with links to our organization. We extend heartfelt condolences to their families, colleagues, and friends.

## Robert J. Elkins, Jr.

Robert J. "Bob" Elkins, Jr., professor emeritus of German at West Virginia University and former NECTFL Board member, died December 19, 2005 in Morgantown at age 75. He taught full-time at the university from 1973-1994, and part-time from the year of his retirement until 1997. Bob served on the NECTFL Board from 1991-1994, but his loyalty to the organization both predated and followed his tenure as a Director. Bob was known for bringing over 60 West Virginia University graduate students to the Northeast Conference each year, to introduce them to the benefits of professional networking, teacher development and the joys of the exhibit hall! The students' affection and respect for Bob were obvious, and his work to guarantee their presence with us each year was unique.

Along with his co-authors, Theodore B. Kalivoda, and Genelle Morain, Bob wrote not one, but two Stephen A. Freeman Award-winning articles! In 1972, the article "The Audio-Motor Unit: A Listening Comprehension Strategy That Works," which first appeared in 1971 in *Foreign Language Annals*, 4: 392-400, was honored. It was reprinted in the 1973 Northeast Conference Reports. The article begins:

The classroom teacher is not indifferent to the theorist. We listen attentively to the grammarian, the audiolinguist, the cognitive-coder, and the eclecticist. But while we wait for the Revelation, we have to go on teaching the language Monday through Friday from September to June. The question we ask most fervently when two or three gather together is, "What are you doing that works?" (p. 132, 1973 Reports)

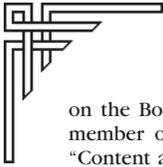
The 1974 award went to "Fusion of the Four Skills: A Technique for Facilitating Communicative Exchange," which was first published in 1972 in *The Modern Language Journal*, 56: 426-29, and then reprinted in the 1975 Northeast Conference Reports.

Bob was a U.S. Air Force veteran who spent six years in Germany. His survivors include wife, Elfriede, and sons, Andre and James, as well as two grandchildren.

## William F. Bottiglia

William F. Bottiglia died at 92 years of age on August 19, 2005. A professor of languages and linguistics at MIT from 1956 until 1991, Dr. Bottiglia was a prolific author of scholarly works on topics ranging from Voltaire's *Candide* to pedagogical approaches to Dante. He taught humanities in the Sloan School of Management at MIT and belonged to the Phi Beta Kappa Society and the Dante Society of America. He was appointed an Officier in the Société des Palmes Académiques by the French government. Prior to his time at MIT, Dr. Bottiglia taught at Princeton (from which he had earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees) and at Ripon College, and also worked at the J&S Tool Company in the 1940s.

Dr. Bottiglia's service to the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages was exemplary. He edited the annual Reports volume no fewer than three times. In 1957, he was editor of *The Language Classroom*; in 1962, he tackled *Current Issues in Language Teaching*; in 1963, he returned as editor of the Reports volume titled *Language Learning: The Intermediate Phase*. He also did a stint



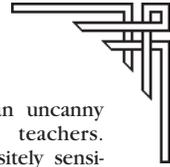
on the Board of Directors in 1964. As a member of the Working Committee on "Content and Crossroads: Wider Uses for Foreign Language," Dr. Bottiglia joined with colleagues from a private academy, a college, a junior high and a state department of education to write in the 1966 Reports titled *Language Teaching: Broader Contexts*:

...we have new insights about language; we have improved methods for language learning; we have a wider demand for language; yet we continue to direct our students toward a single goal, literary appreciation. By so doing we overlook the broader horizons of language study and thereby lose many students whose interests and talents are not exclusively literary. (p. 62)

In his willingness as a pre-eminent literary scholar to acknowledge the multiple other motivations for language study, Dr. Bottiglia reflected the inclusive dispositions and "outside-the-box" thinking that have always characterized the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

### Ursula Meyer

The Northeast Conference is privileged to be able to nominate candidates for the various ACTFL awards each year. In 1997, the name of Ursula Meyer, of the Goethe-Institut, was suggested for the ACTFL Nelson Brooks Award on the Teaching of Culture. Dr. Meyer's dossier was selected by the Brooks Award Committee, and she received the award in 1998. As we wrote in our nominating letter, Dr. Meyer dedicated her life to promoting cultural proficiency among the nation's teachers. She was among the most loyal of the many outstanding NECTFL workshop leaders and infected all of us with her joy at returning annually to New York and our conference. As a lifelong learner



herself, Ursula Meyer had an uncanny instinct for teaching teachers. Furthermore, she was exquisitely sensitive to the sacrifices teachers make in order to attend a seminar or conference and wanted every minute of a teacher's time to be packed with information, collaboration, skills development and new perspectives. Our conference attendees left her workshops "feeling good" about themselves, as many stated, in addition to knowing much more about minorities in Germany or about using film to teach culture. Yet "Ulla" was unfailingly modest and humble, seeing her extraordinary work as nothing more than "doing my job." We were so saddened to learn of her passing on October 29, 2005.

NECTFL is grateful to the Goethe-Institut and Ursula Meyer's many friends for the opportunity to share her with our Review readers by quoting from tributes made at the memorial service in her honor here.

"She was the first person to turn me on to music as a means of teaching language."

"... she made me feel legitimate in speaking her language and I always learned good teaching methodology from her - things I learned that first year are still effective, today."

"How I will miss her hearty laughter..."

"Not many people could understand, let alone advocate for German teachers, the way she did."

"She had the talent to make everyone feel included and valued."

"Because of her profound influence on many of us, a part of her still exists in our teaching and our love for the German language and culture."





## Paul Gagnon

In 1996, acting in response to an Atlantic Monthly article by historian and educator Paul Gagnon on what all children should learn, Conference Chair Julia Bressler, a French teacher from New Hampshire, invited Dr. Gagnon to keynote the conference. The address was remarkable for its reflection of the breadth of Dr. Gagnon's knowledge, the passion of his commitment to all children, and the pragmatism of his suggestions. As he commented in the speech:

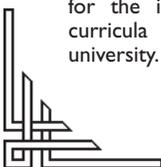
"Standards" was the wrong word from the start. We should say "essentials" – the things most worth learning from the academic subjects, things so important that everyone in a democracy has the right not to be allowed to avoid them (...)

So at a time when the hottest thing in educational fashion is to obsess over "outputs" or "outcomes," I am here to argue the hopelessly backward notion that we have not yet worried enough about "inputs" — the things we try to teach and the conditions that equalize children's chances to learn them. (...)

...equity requires us never to decide early – and certainly not beforehand – who can learn and who cannot...

Paul Gagnon died last year after a brilliant career of which we at NECTFL were privileged to be a very small part. We thank the Organization of American Historians and Dr. Gagnon's colleague, Paul Bookbinder, for permission to reprint Dr. Bookbinder's tribute to Paul Gagnon in these pages.

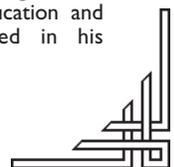
Paul Gagnon was a French historian, a founding member of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and an advocate for the importance of history in all curricula from primary school to the university. He grew up in Springfield,



Massachusetts, where he graduated from the High School of Commerce. After service in the Navy during WWII, he went on to receive a BA in history from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a PhD from Harvard. His personal educational experiences convinced him of the appropriateness and value of a liberal arts education for young people of working class background and of the crucial role played by public institutions of higher learning. He overcame a lifelong stuttering disability to become a devoted, successful, and popular teacher. While maintaining a broad focus on history, Gagnon argued in the introduction to his major study *A History of France since 1789* (1964) that, the writing and study of national history deserved an important place in historical scholarship because so many major historical developments took place within national frameworks.

In 1964, Gagnon played a key role in the founding of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, becoming its first Dean of Arts and Sciences. Richard Robbins, whom Dean Gagnon hired to create the Department of Sociology, calls Paul Gagnon "the heart and soul of the university" in its early days. "Paul had the vision to create a public urban university committed to providing a first class liberal arts education to students of working class background. He would never accept the idea that these students could only follow a vocational educational path."

Gagnon was a passionate advocate for the teaching of history in secondary schools. In nominating him for an outstanding achievement award for his work on secondary education, the Personnel Committee of the History Department of the University of Massachusetts, Boston wrote, "Professor Gagnon's activities in this area grow out of a lifelong interest in education and educational policy, reflected in his





classroom teaching and his research into the history of education in France, Great Britain and America . . . he served as a consultant to a number of distinguished commissions including the Paideia Group, Pfizer, Inc, the California Blue Ribbon Commission on Social Studies, the United States Department of Education and the American Federation of Teachers.” The National Council for History Education has established in his honor the Paul A. Gagnon Award to be given to a teacher for scholarship or outstanding achievement in the promotion of history in the schools.

After retiring from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, Gagnon served as a senior research associate at Boston University’s Center for School Improvement and published widely on questions of state public school history curricula and standards. In his 2003 article “In Pursuit of a ‘Civic Core’ A Report on State Standards,” he wrote, “Alexis de Tocqueville gave us a tall order a century and a half ago. He opened *Democracy in*



*America* with his plea to American and French leaders alike ‘First among the duties that are at this time imposed on those who direct our affairs is to educate democracy.’” Gagnon believed that young people needed a thorough knowledge of history to be effective citizens of a democracy and that their teachers needed a quality liberal arts education in order to help them attain this knowledge.

Paul Gagnon died April 28 in his Cambridge home at the age of eighty. He leaves his wife Mona Harrington, his sons Benjamin and Thomas, and his daughter Eliza.

*Paul Bookbinder*

University of Massachusetts, Boston  
From *OAH Newsletter* 33 (August 2005).  
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