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Introduction: Expanding our Educational Goals: Exploring Intercultural Competence

Alvino E. Fantini

SIT Graduate Institute

Paula Garrett-Rucks

Georgia State University

At the Heart of Our Work

We are delighted to present this collection of manuscripts that focus on various aspects of *Intercultural Competence* in this Special Issue of *Dimensions* 2016. Our hope for this Special Issue is not only to bring attention to the innovative programmatic changes and best teaching practices presented in the following chapters, but also to stimulate discussion in the field on the convergence of the diverse terminology used for a common end goal of fostering learners' intercultural competence. The development of language learners' intercultural competence—or more completely stated, intercultural *communicative* competence—engages them in a most profound educational experience, one that will serve them well throughout life. This competence enables learners not only to understand other peoples, but also to understand themselves better, and to be able to compare and contrast cultures in ways not otherwise possible. Most of all, it enables them to develop successful relationships with other people, both within and across cultures. This, we consider to be at the heart of our work.

Developing Successful Relationships

Language educators preparing students for study and travel abroad generally understand the need to address behaviors and interactional abilities that go beyond *speaking* the target language. However, the same preparation is also needed for students here, in our own domestic classrooms, whether or not they ever cross a border or travel across an ocean, to enhance the intercultural and interpersonal communication skills of all language learners, starting at beginning levels of instruction. Successful relationships everywhere, both within and across cultures, often depend on the ability to deal with racial, religious, ethnic, and cultural differences, in a positive way—to understand them, to appreciate them, and to respect them. Together, second language ability and intercultural competence promote this possibility; for such competence enhances learners' ability to see beyond their own paradigm and to reflect upon their own singular way of seeing the world—long described by sociolinguist Joshua Fishman (1976) as a state of *smug narrowness* and *narrow smugness*. The result is a most powerful and profound educational experience.

For these reasons, we submit that our collective end goal, aided by the learning of a second language and developing intercultural competence, be reframed; to wit: to enable students **to develop positive and meaningful relationships within and across cultures**. While this is obviously important to achieve with speakers of other languages and cultures, we must not forget that similar abilities are also important for developing positive and meaningful relationships right here at home—with classmates, friends, and neighbors who, in our diverse society, often represent diverse backgrounds. The development of second language and intercultural abilities aids these processes. And, by focusing on the development of successful relationships both within and across cultures, we appropriately unite the fields of diversity and intercultural communication in a single effort.

To understand why this is so, it may help to clarify the nexus between language, culture, and worldview; the power of transcending and transforming our initial way of seeing things; and how second language-culture experiences broaden our understanding and appreciation of those around us, both near and far, here at home and across an ocean. It may also help to explore further the process that enables us to do all this—the development of intercultural communicative competence.

Language, Culture, and Worldview: Exploring the Nexus

Today, worldview is a term that we hear frequently. But what exactly is a worldview? This concept—introduced by German philosophers in the late 1800s with the label *Weltanschauung* (and later adopted into other languages with terms like *cosmovisión*, *visão global do mundo*, *vision du monde*, worldview, and others)—draws attention to the fact that languages and cultures do not attend to, perceive, think about, nor express in the same way. This notion highlights the relative patterns that often exist across *linguacultures*. And, while we may understand this intellectually, it is impossible to grasp this concept directly and experientially if one is monolingual and monocultural. To fully experience this concept requires direct involvement, speaking another language and experiencing another culture—another language that reflects and affects its culture, another culture that reflects and affects its language. Herein lies the necessity of learning another language and experiencing the culture it represents (Fantini, 2009a). Doing so, of course, leads to varying degrees of bilingualism-biculturalism or, better yet, multilingualism-multiculturalism. For without “secondary” or alternative abilities, it is impossible to enter fully into any of the many views of the world reflected through the 6,000 or so other language-cultures of the world.

To examine this notion further, let us explore the components that form a worldview: First, consider that all cultural groups hold certain values, beliefs, and attitudes. They communicate these values, beliefs, and attitudes through both behaviors and language; that is, through symbol systems. We use the term *symbols* (instead of “language”) to ensure that we acknowledge aspects beyond the linguistic component (i.e., the sounds, words, script, grammar, etc.). These other aspects include the para-linguistic component (the tone, pitch, volume, speed, and affect) and the extra-linguistic (or non-verbal) component. The latter encompasses dimensions of space (proxemics), touch (haptics), eye contact (oculesics), smell (olfactics), movement/gestures (kinesics), and timing (chronemics) whether mono- or polychronic (i.e.,

conversational preferences that favor either speaking one at a time or speaking at the same time with overlaps in conversation). The result produces varied discourse styles and preferences that regulate conversational patterns, each culturally determined.

These multiple and interrelated systems develop together so early in life that we employ them without much conscious thought for the purpose of communicating the third component—the semantic component or meaning. Meaning, of course, is contemplated in our heads and remains a mental process and uncommunicated until and unless we employ symbols to convey our thoughts to one another. In this way, the multiple components of language (the symbol systems) are interrelated with meaning, which in turn is interrelated with thoughts (our values, beliefs, and attitudes). The three components reflect and affect each other; they are interrelated and together constitute our worldview:

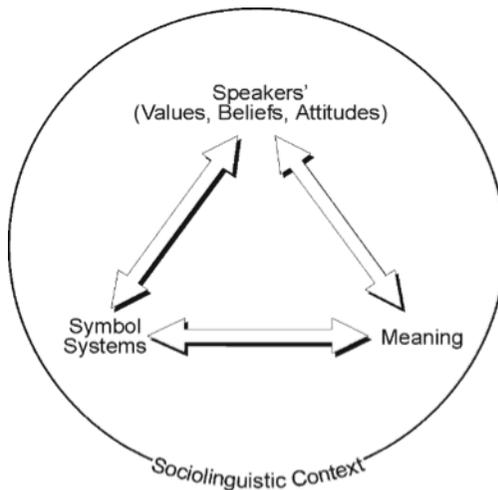


Figure 1. Worldview and components

Just as the first component (values, beliefs, attitudes) and the second (symbol systems) vary and differ from one linguaculture to another, so too does the third (meaning or semantics). To understand how this is so, consider that words in language have not only referential meaning (e.g., mother: the female head of a household) but also associative meanings (e.g., caring, affectionate, security, etc.). Words exist within a web of concepts, for example, organized above and below the notion of “mother” from more general to more specific. Stated another way, words cohere in a hierarchy in which each word is related to every other word, up and down the hierarchy. This relationship is fixed and one can generalize above the word by choosing a more general or supraordinate term (e.g., “human” for “family,” or “herd” for “animal”) or be more specific by choosing a word beneath it (e.g., “female” or “male” under “family,” and “cow” or “dog” under “animal”). Moving up the hierarchy, words are more inclusive and connote shared commonalities (e.g., “male” and “female” share all notions above them in the hierarchy, like “family,” “human,” and “animate”). Moving down the hierarchy, conversely, words below are more specific and designate phenomena that are more singular, more unique (e.g., “man” and “boy,” or “woman” and “girl.”)

Moreover, word hierarchies combine with other hierarchies in order to form a hetararchy (a hierarchy of hierarchies) much like a mobile is constructed. Whereas the words of all languages are combined into hierarchies and hetararchies, they differ, however, in composition and structure. Hence, if we compare words across languages (e.g., “family” in English and “famiglia” in Italian), despite being obvious cognates derived from a common origin and, despite direct translations provided in a dictionary, a comparison of their associative meanings and semantic hierarchies will undoubtedly reveal and differing perspectives conveyed through different languages, not always readily recognized on the surface. It is no wonder that learners often approach the task of learning a new language as one of simply learning new words for existing words without grasping that we often enter into new ways of construing and relating concepts to each other. The well-known Italian film producer, Federico Fellini, captured this notion when he said that a different language is a different vision of the world.

This aside, there is still another phenomenon to be taken into consideration—the sociolinguistic dimension. Sociolinguistic variation is extremely important; in fact, it is the aspect that directly binds language and culture together. Persons of every culture and every language develop their native tongue not as a monolith but rather as a system with variable linguistic choices, each of which must be selected and employed as appropriate in accordance with varying contexts or situations. The study of sociolinguistics over the past 50 years or so has contributed much to understanding how this works: For example, the selection of “he” or “she” in English (until now) is a grammatical choice contingent on a social variable—the gender of the person designated. While there are some indications that this could change as our attitudes or need to identify gender also change, this demonstrates the evolving relationship between culture and language. Certainly, this was true for titles like “Mrs.,” “Miss,” and “Ms.” which have undergone modifications in our lifetime. The choice of employing a title, choosing which title, not using one at all, or addressing someone by first or last name, is clearly a sociolinguistic variation that reflects the relationship and perceived relative hierarchy between interlocutors as determined by one’s culture.

Many social variables act as determinants that affect the appropriate choice of a linguistic form. Such determinants may vary from language to language in accordance with the norms of each culture. Social determinants often include: interlocutors (their age, gender, roles), the setting or context (whether the interaction transpires in public or private, on the street or in a religious space, whether others are present or not), the relationship between speakers (whether speakers are known to each other, strangers, etc.), the purpose or topic of the conversation, and so forth. Further linguistic variants are exemplified in the choice between *tu/vous* in French, *tú/usted* in Spanish, *tu/Lei* in Italian, and so forth. Whereas such distinctions are often treated as grammatical aspects to be learned (including their accompanying verb forms), the choice of which to use is contingent entirely on social factors. Hence, learning a second language-culture must investigate the use of appropriate linguistic forms as determined by the target culture since the answers are found in the culture although the forms are found in language.

Given this understanding, our task as language professionals clearly requires addressing all three components: We must teach the language (i.e., the symbol systems in their multiple dimensions plus their variants in accordance with sociocultural contexts); the notions, beliefs, and values which the speakers hold; and the meanings they convey. Although a vast and comprehensive task, it is also an exciting and rich one. In addition, we acknowledge the value of also comparing and contrasting their differences and any similarities with components of our own worldview. For it is through comparing and contrasting, reflecting and introspecting, that we explore not only what is new but also gain greater awareness of our own paradigm. In the process, we might anticipate that our original paradigm might be transcended and transformed. Learning proceeds in both directions and is perhaps why the process of intercultural development is often described as “looking out and looking in.”

With this expansion of tasks, teachers sometimes find they are at a loss to come up with activities to explore sociolinguistic variations or cultural contexts. Fortunately, most texts and other materials now devote increasing attention to both. One excellent supplemental source is in the Annenberg Learner *Teaching Foreign Languages K-12: A Library of Classroom Practices*, and especially *Rooted in Culture*, available at http://www.learner.org/workshops/tfl/session_05/analyze.html. Another source, the TESOL publication *New Ways in Teaching Culture* (Fantini, 1997), provides 50 such activities that can be used to advantage in any foreign language classroom. Taking a *Standards*-based approach to the teaching and learning of cultures, *Intercultural Competence in Instructed Language Learning: Bridging Theory and Praxis* (Garrett-Rucks, 2016) provides multiple classroom examples and systematic approaches to fostering learners' intercultural competence with *Standards*-based instruction. Finally, many excellent publications with activities for culture and intercultural exploration, beyond those found in this Special Issue, are available in the intercultural field.

Transcending and Transforming

Too often, students (and some teachers) view the task of learning a second language primarily from the point of view of a grammar framework. In other words, we learn new words and structures through which we attempt to say the same things we have always thought and said. When we understand that our task is about exploring (and discovering) a new view of the world, we also begin to understand that new words and structures belie new ways of thinking and conceptualizing. Our task as language-culture teachers, then, is to facilitate such a process.

The image below (Figure 2) attempts to illustrate that all worldviews have the same component parts— notions, beliefs, and values; symbol systems; and meaning—however, the components of each are configured differently. Hence, entering a new worldview requires that we anticipate, explore, and discover a new configuration. The three worldviews shown in Figure 2 illustrate how configurations might vary if superimposed. While each contains the same elements, their configurations do not coincide. Those derived from common origins and with long histories of interaction might align more closely (e.g., Spanish and Portuguese, English and Dutch, Italian and Romanian, Swahili and Twi). Conversely, languages and cultures that are dissimilar, derived from distinct origins, and with little historical connections

may be quite different. Often, the latter present exciting and sometimes confounding surprises (e.g., Spanish and Aymara, English and Japanese, French and Swahili, etc.):

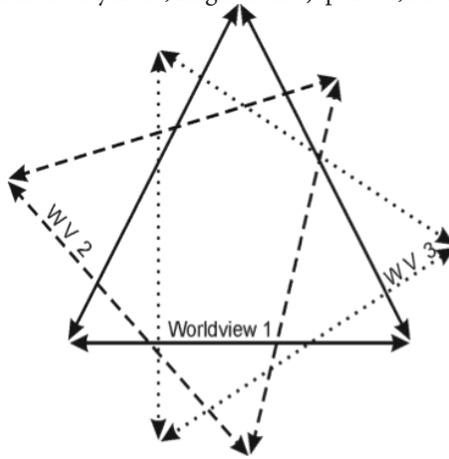


Figure 2. Overlap of three worldview configurations

Superimposing worldview configurations helps to underscore two important aspects: First, that all worldviews share similar components; these components interact and interconnect within each system (their universal aspect). Second, each worldview is also distinct in configuration and representation (their particularist aspect). The fact that systems share a universal aspect while differing in another reinforces the fact that all systems created by humans (different programs created by the same hardwiring) are therefore all also accessible to other human beings. What most impedes us from entering other worldview paradigms, especially as adult learners, then, is the success we have had with our own view of the world up to the point of encountering a new way of being. Recognizing the complexities associated with being adult language learners, Johnson (2015) underscored the need for transformative learning to support learners through confrontations with alternate worldviews. In other words, our existing worldview, language, and culture, often pose the biggest impediment to starting the process anew. Complacency, ethnocentricity, fear, disinterest? Many reasons may explain why some individuals may be reluctant to experience the wonders, challenges, and surprises, of exploring alternative ways. Surely, not everyone exhibits the “integrative” type of motivation identified by intercultural psychologists. A good language-culture teacher, however, may help to promote interest in another linguaculture by providing experiences that excite students to such a degree that they become intrinsically motivated to learn.

Exploring Intercultural Communicative Competence

Entering a new language-culture requires developing another type of communicative competence; that is: *intercultural* communicative competence (ICC). But what exactly is ICC? Although the concept is in wide use today, there is a lack of consensus about what it is or even what it should be termed. As a result, the process whereby we enter a second language-culture has been given many names—trans-cultural communication, cross-cultural communication, cross-cultural awareness,

global competence, international competence, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural cooperation, and more.

To remedy this situation, we refer to an extensive survey of the intercultural literature. Rather than select a single term or model put forth by a single researcher, this survey drew from over 200 works published in several languages by intercultural scholars and researchers (Fantini, 2015). This effort was an attempt to synthesize the evolving understanding of this phenomenon in order to ascertain the most appropriate superordinate term and to identify a comprehensive list of the components that make up ICC. The search revealed that the most consistent, pervasive, and perhaps logical term in use is intercultural communicative competence (often shortened to intercultural competence). Fortuitously, this designation is historically consistent with the term *communicative competence* introduced into the field of language education beginning in the 1970s. Since that time, it became common to speak of the development of one's native communicative competence in childhood as CC1, while referring to a second communicative competence, developed by some either simultaneously or later, as CC2. Given this context, the term *intercultural* communicative competence becomes a logical extension of this developmental process. Although lengthy, retaining the word "communicative" highlights the role of language as central to intercultural competence. Whereas this may seem obvious to language educators (while not always clear about other ICC components), target language proficiency is seldom mentioned among interculturalists when discussing intercultural competence, and is conspicuously absent from over 140 instruments that assess ICC that were examined in the same report (Fantini, 2015).

Labels aside, a description of ICC seems less controversial. A common definition is: a **complex of abilities** that facilitate and enhance *effective* and *appropriate* interactions when dealing with people of other cultural backgrounds. Whereas "effective" usually relates to one's own view of one's performance in the LC2 (i.e., an etic or outsider's view), "appropriate" relates to how one's performance is perceived by one's hosts (i.e., an emic or insider's view) (Fantini, 2009b). While etic and emic perceptions may differ, they are instructive when compared, precisely because they reflect differing cultural perceptions of the same situation. What is less clear, on the other hand, are the sub-components that make up this "complex" of abilities. It is here where we commonly find a profusion of terms, often used irregularly and inconsistently across our profession.

A lack of clarity regarding ICC components is obvious not only in the literature, but also throughout sessions presented at the recent ACTFL Convention in San Diego, California, in November 2015. In both instances, both the supraordinate term and references to components were varied and used alternatively. Indeed, ACTFL's board-approved position statement on *global competence* (ACTFL, 2014) promotes a term that has often been called into question by interculturalists as perhaps an impossible achievement for *individuals* but perhaps a term better applied when speaking *collectively* of many individuals together, each of whom is at least interculturally competent. No individual can be competent in all the language-cultures of the world but only in one other or several.

What is sorely needed, we maintain, is greater clarity regarding the *components* that together comprise ICC and consistency in what they are called. Whereas terms

like sensitivity, awareness, empathy, etc., are sometimes used, others point to varying skills, dispositions, etc. For consistency and comprehensiveness, we return once again to the vast body of literature produced by interculturalists and by SIETAR, their professional society (formerly SIETAR International, the Society for Intercultural Education, Training, and Research, founded in the 1960s with over 30 local groups around the world today). A review of over 200 works published in several languages, primarily by intercultural scholars and researchers (Fantini, 2015), unpacked the “complex of abilities” and revealed the following components on intercultural communicative competence: 1) various characteristics or attributes, 2) three areas or domains of abilities, 3) four dimensions, 4) proficiency in the host language, and 5) varying levels of attainment through a longitudinal and developmental process, shown in Figure 3. Following the figure is a brief explanation of each:

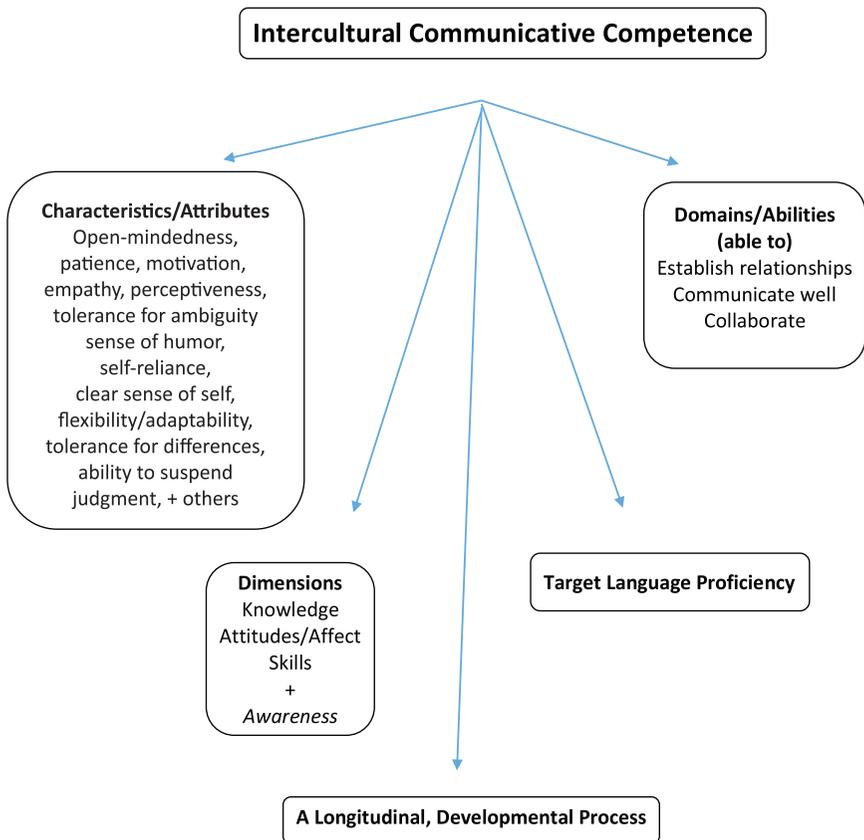


Figure 3. Intercultural communicative competence and sub-components

1) Characteristics or attributes. Several commonly cited characteristics or attributes are considered to be necessary as part of ICC competence. These include: flexibility, humor, patience, openness, interest, curiosity, empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, and suspending judgment, among others. Some attributes may assume

more importance than others in specific cultural contexts. It is also important to distinguish traits (i.e., innate personal qualities) from acquired characteristics developed later in life, related to one's cultural and situational context—a sort of nature vs. nurture distinction. This distinction is particularly relevant to training and educational programs because it poses the question: which attributes form part of one's intrinsic personality and which can be developed or modified through training and educational efforts?

2) Three Areas or Domains. Three areas or domains are commonly cited as aspects of ICC:

- the ability to establish and maintain relationships
- the ability to communicate with minimal loss or distortion
- the ability to collaborate in order to accomplish things of mutual interest or need.

It is interesting to note that while these areas are relevant to ICC success, they are also relevant to success in one's own LC1. The difference, of course, is that language-culture factors affecting one's ability in each area are more greatly multiplied in cross-cultural situations than when in one's own linguaculture.

3) Four Dimensions. Four dimensions of ICC commonly emerge from a review of the literature: knowledge, (positive) attitudes/affect, skills, and awareness—referred to by the acronym KAS+A (Fantini, 2015). Of these, awareness appears to be central. Awareness is enhanced by developments in areas of knowledge, attitudes, and skills, and, in turn, furthers their development. Awareness differs from knowledge in that it always involves *the self vis-à-vis* all else in the world (other things, other people, other thoughts, etc.) and ultimately helps clarify what is deepest and most relevant to one's identity. Awareness is further enhanced through deliberate reflection and introspection in which the LC1 and LC2 are contrasted and compared.

4) Proficiency in the Target Language. The ability to communicate in the target language is a fundamental component of ICC. It enhances ICC development in quantitative and qualitative ways. Grappling with a new language confronts how one perceives, conceptualizes, and expresses oneself and fosters the development of alternative communication strategies *on someone else's terms*. This challenging and humbling process facilitates transcending and transforming how one understands the world. Lack of proficiency in a second language—even at a minimal level—constrains one to continue to think about the world and act within it only in one's native system, and deprives the individual of a valuable aspect of the intercultural experience.

5) Developmental levels. ICC involves a developmental process over time, sometimes with moments of stagnation or even regression. It can be a lifelong process. Much depends on the strength of one's motivation (instrumental vs. integrative) with regards to the target language-culture. For this reason, establishing benchmarks or rubrics can help track one's progress. Various models and assessment tools exist that suggest such markers to help measure and monitor one's development although care must be taken to select a model and tool that is constructed on a comprehensive concept and approach to ICC.

Looking Ahead: Expanding Our Educational Goals

Now, well into the third millennium, the effects of globalization are increasingly felt in many ways. People around the world today have more direct and virtual contact with each other than ever before. This situation presents both opportunities and challenges, a phenomenon that raises new issues for educators who are well positioned to help students prepare for both. To do so, however, we need to reframe our educational goals. Our revised goals must include the preparation of students for positive intercultural contact and participation in order to develop relationships across cultures. As we have seen, this requires effective intercultural communication in which students have the ability to make themselves understood in another language and the ability to employ alternate behavioral and interactive strategies. Language alone is clearly inadequate, especially since acceptance by peoples of other cultures is more often strained by offending behaviors than by incorrect grammar. This insight, in fact, was the prompt that led to the development of the field of intercultural communication more than 50 years ago during early attempts to train Peace Corps volunteers.

Curiously, however, intercultural educators who became adept in the exploration of perceptions, behaviors, and interactive strategies, often ignored the need to develop proficiency in the specific “language” of intercultural encounters. Conversely, language teachers—culture notes aside—often overlooked behavioral and interactive aspects of communication. Clearly, we need to learn more from each other—language educators can learn more from their interculturalist colleagues just as interculturalists can learn more from language educators as we work towards our common goal.

Our combined task is more than academic and intellectual, but also deeply humanistic; our efforts must be oriented toward developing and sustaining intercultural relationships. We can do this in our own classrooms—between student and student, students and teacher, exploring our own commonalities and diversity, and moving outward from the classroom to learn about our families, our neighborhood, our region, and the world. The benefits of our electronic age also allow us to connect with others afar, beyond our borders, and across continents. International students in our schools and the possibilities of travel abroad provide additional opportunities to develop intercultural relationships. Indeed, international, intercultural educational exchange programs which feature this goal as the core of the experience (best done by living with a host family), further enhance this possibility. This was abundantly clear in a recent multinational study, funded by CERCLL (Center for Educational Research in Culture, Language, and Literacy) at the University of Arizona, in which more than 2,000 exchange students from eight countries identified family sojourns as the most important aspect of their experience abroad, providing them with an entrée into the culture, a sense of belonging, and relationships that lasted long after the program ended (Fantini, 2015).

With *relationships* as our central goal, we return to our focus on language education and intercultural communication as the processes which serve that goal. Both fields now assume increasing importance: everyone needs to become competent in a second language and culture in order to facilitate, enhance, and strengthen the

development of relationships with people in other cultures. Developing intercultural communicative competence becomes important for all.

There is still more: the phenomenon of being able to “look out and look in” as a dual process becomes a powerful aspect of developing self-awareness and empathy. The first, self-awareness, is not always easy to come by and yet it is an important aspect of education and an important aspect of human development. It is also at the center of an important educational approach, one popularized worldwide by the renowned Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, with the Portuguese word *conscientização*. And, perhaps it is also why the admonishment “know thyself” is at the center of the world’s great religions. The second part, empathy, is developed by seeing from another perspective.

In the end, as professionals and humanitarians, we aspire to help our students benefit from the distinct advantages of entering a new language and culture. We aspire to help our students become bilingual and bicultural; and, perhaps, multilingual and multicultural as well.

We recognize the importance of moving beyond even dual linguacultures into still a third: Whereas bilingual-bicultural individuals can now compare and contrast two worldviews given dual vantage points (not available to monolingual-monoculturals of either source language), there is also the possibility of remaining trapped in firm viewpoints held by each group of the other. Trilingual-tricultural individuals, with a broader vantage point (a sort of tripod), however, may now extrapolate more easily so as to perhaps conjecture how a fourth or fifth unknown system might be.

This transformative process, then, that we provide is both important and profound. These results are strongly supported in the two multinational research projects cited above. In both, respondents attested to the impact and power of intercultural experiences to affect and redirect perceptions; to lead to new ways of conceptualizing; to alternative ways of expressing, interacting, and communicating; to knowing more and to knowing *differently*; to enhance introspection about oneself and about others; to alter perceptions of both our LC1 and LC2; to allow direct participation and interaction in diverse groups; and, most importantly, to lead to other ways of seeing the world. Undoubtedly, our readers can add to this list.

Teachers excited by these possibilities may find they have also had to undergo a paradigm shift, either from the way they were trained or the way in which they taught previously. Although not always easy, addressing our subject matter from this expanded perspective opens the door to new experiences for both teachers and their students. Hopefully, for most, this becomes more exciting, more fun, more rewarding. This is enriched as connections are made with resources available in the surrounding community and vicariously online, somewhere else in the world. Indeed, such activities are both endorsed and promoted by *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages’* five “Cs”—Communication, Cultures, Communities, Connections, and Comparisons. Connecting with target language speakers, in person or online, makes an academic subject a live experience. As a result, hopefully some of our students will find their way toward a sojourn in the target culture, through an exchange program, a volunteer experience, study abroad, or the Peace Corps. And, hopefully, all of us, both language educators and interculturalists alike, supported by our three major professional societies—ACTFL, TESOL, and SIETAR—will work

together more effectively toward our common goal—developing intercultural competence in order to cultivate successful relationships within and across cultures. This, we truly believe, is at the heart of our work.

Dimension 2016: Focus on Intercultural Competence

This first chapter provides the background for our *Focus on Intercultural Competence* in this Special Issue of *Dimensions 2016* with an exploration of intercultural (communicative) competence and the discussion of ways to expand our educational goals as world language instructors. To this end, our call for papers encouraged contributions to further our understanding of the task—fostering learners’ ICC—and how to carry it out both conceptually and pragmatically, in content and in process. This special issue of *Dimension* contributes engaging and motivating ways to shape instructors’ views and understanding about world language instruction and the connections between research and best teaching practices.

Consideration is also needed concerning the preparedness of our students for a world in which they will need to become critical thinkers and problem solvers to analyze and solve complex global issues. Training our students to take into account alternative cultural perspectives when problem solving, is not only necessary for those who will work abroad, but also for those entering the increasingly diverse U.S. workforce. Accordingly, this issue is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on fostering learners’ intercultural competence at the programmatic level as we, as a profession, consider reframing our educational goals to prepare students for positive intercultural contact with relationship building abilities across cultures in response to the many ways in which globalization is felt. The second section attacks these same goals at the classroom level with findings from action-based research in which the authors investigated innovative teaching practices.

To further frame the chapters in the first section, one must consider that nearly a decade ago the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (2007) suggested the creation of interdisciplinary courses to reinvigorate language departments as valuable academic units. The report stated:

In addition to attracting majors from other disciplines, such interdisciplinary team-taught courses would encourage learning communities, forge alliances among departments, and counter the isolation and marginalization that language and literature departments often experience on American campuses. (MLA Report, 2007, p. 6)

In this same vein, the *ACTFL Global Competence Position Statement* (ACTFL, 2014) challenged the profession to prepare world language learners to acquire and apply disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge.

In addition to framing the topics found in the innovative chapters in the first section, we would like to address our conflicted acceptance of, and subsequent use of the term *global competence* in this special issue. As noted earlier, the term *global competence* deviates from the more salient term found in the literature, *intercultural communicative competence*. Furthermore, many interculturalists note that the term *global competence* alludes to the impossible achievement of an *individual* to be competent in all the language-cultures of the world beyond the realistic goal of attaining intercultural competence in one (or several) other language(s). Despite this ma-

for difference, both terms—intercultural (communicative) competence and global competence (as explicitly outlined in the ACTFL position statement)—share the same goal of achieving a complex of abilities that are “vital to successful interactions among diverse groups of people locally, nationally, and internationally” (ACTFL, 2014, para. 2). Despite reservations about further complicating the literature with a potentially misleading term, we accepted the interchangeable use of these terms—intercultural (communicative) competence and global competence—in this issue.

Notwithstanding potential confusion in the field with diverse ICC terminology use, there is an exciting turn in language instruction purported by leading U.S. national organizations (e.g. ACTFL, MLA) to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and to place an emphasis on fostering learners’ intercultural communicative competence. Taking this into consideration, the first section of this issue contains descriptive chapters on programs that have (1) tied second language and intercultural competencies to real-world contexts in Language for Specific Purposes courses; (2) successfully designed K-12 interdisciplinary curricula centered on intercultural citizenship; and (3) fostered inquiry skills among pre-service teachers in an attempt to internationalize a foreign language education teacher certification program.

More specifically, in the second chapter of this issue, *Preparing students for the global workplace: The Relevance of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP)*, co-authors Mary Risner and Carolina Egúsqiza identify the benefits of connecting language learning and intercultural abilities across disciplines to prepare students for the 21st century workplace. Additionally, this chapter provides an overview of the current state of LSP alongside specific resources, such as a professional learning network that brings together K-20 educators interested in developing innovative curricula for language learning in contexts that prepare students for a variety of career paths. In the third chapter, *Exploring collaborative work for the creation of interdisciplinary units centered on intercultural citizenship*, co-authors Manuela Wagner, Fabiana Cardetti, and Michael Byram report on ways to optimize interdisciplinary collaboration with foreign language instruction within the specific example of designing interdisciplinary teaching units that integrate intercultural citizenship (Byram, 2008) into world languages, mathematics, and social studies curricula. In the fourth chapter, *Fostering global competence among pre-service language teachers: A comparison of teacher beliefs and practices between language teachers from the U.S. and Spain*, co-authors Victoria Russell, Sarah Allison, Ashley Jacobs, Kristina Wingate and Hilaria Taft describe a project that resulted from an effort to internationalize a foreign language education initial teacher certification program. With the guidance of faculty, the teacher candidates examined teacher beliefs and practices between language teachers from the U.S. and Spain, recognizing their own and others’ perspectives across cultures.

The second section of this Special Issue features innovative projects and teaching practices that readers might consider introducing into their own curriculum. Each chapter provides empirical evidence of the ways in which a particular project or instructional practice enhanced specific aspects of the complex of ICC abilities that facilitate and enhance *effective* and *appropriate* interactions when dealing with people of other cultural backgrounds (Fantini, 2009). The following chapters share a commonality of describing instruction that demanded learners to compare and contrast alternative worldviews or sociolinguistic paradigms; to question the notions, beliefs,

and values which speakers hold and the meanings which they convey; and to reflect and introspect on the learner's own worldview so that his or her original paradigm might be transcended and transformed. Specifically, this section contains classroom-based action research findings from (1) a project that tasked learners to conduct ethnographic interviews with native speakers of French within their local community; (2) the use of a free online interactive program, *Mi Vida Loca*, that simulates travel in Spain and intercultural encounters to foster learners' pragmatic competence; (3) the ways in which structured service-learning projects in the local Hispanic/Latino community helped learners overcome their reported fears of communicating with native speakers; (4) a project where learners virtually explored living in Central America using Web 2.0 technologies—Pinterest and wikis; and lastly (5) a simulated *Moving Abroad* project where learners researched products, practices, and perspectives of target culture members from a less familiar culture—excluding Europe or the Americas—and presented findings in simulated intercultural encounters.

Specifically, in the fifth chapter in this issue, *Developing and evaluating language learners' intercultural competence: Cultivating perspective-taking*, author Kristin Hoyt investigates French language learners' development of intercultural (communicative) competence through the lens of Byram's (1997) five domains during a project in which the learners conducted ethnographic interviews with native French speakers in the local community for credit in a French conversation course. In addition to providing excellent documentation of the instruction that surrounded the ethnographic interview assignment, Hoyt provides a strong argument for consciousness-raising pedagogical strategies in foreign language instruction. In the sixth chapter, *Teaching pragmatics with the Mi Vida Loca Video Program*, authors Errol O'Neill and Inmaculada Gómez Soler describe their attempt to equip students with linguistic and behavioral skills necessary to interact in a pragmatically and culturally appropriate manner with native speakers in typical daily encounters—such as ordering food or purchasing tickets for public transportation—in a naturalistic way with the use of a virtual interactive BBC program, *Mi Vida Loca (MVL)* that simulates real-world encounters. The authors describe their innovative study that compared the performance of two groups of learners—the experimental group (that worked with episodes of *MVL*) and a control group (that practiced the same pragmatic functions by completing worksheets with partners)—on oral discourse completion tasks.

The next three chapters report findings from investigations on learner responses to intercultural encounters in both real and virtual environments. In the seventh chapter in this series, *Service-Learning: Overcoming fears, connecting with the Hispanic/Latino community*, author Laura Guglani explores Spanish language learners' claims to be hesitant to participate in the local Hispanic/Latino community and the ways in which service-learning helped many learners overcome their concerns. In the eighth chapter, *Web 2.0 use to foster learners' intercultural sensitivity: An exploratory study*, author Claire Mitchell describes how she adapted her curriculum to include cultural projects in which learners imagined they were going to study abroad in Central America and then later returned to live in the same country where they had studied abroad, and needed to find their own housing using a *House Hunters International* project scheme where learners described the country, the city, and the housing in that city in Spanish using *Pinterest* and *wikis*. Learners also participated in online

discussions with reflective activities where they demonstrated shifts away from ethnocentric thinking. In the ninth and last chapter, *Investigating products, practices, perspectives in a simulated Moving Abroad Project*, author Sabine Smith conducted action-research on a project that serves as a mid-term in a language major required undergraduate English-language survey class. The project tasks students to adopt the Three Ps Framework (Products, Practices, and Perspectives) from the *Cultures Standards in the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Language* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) to describe their imagined experiences with the unfamiliar cultures they explore beyond those found in Europe and the Americas.

We would like to state again how delighted we are to present this collection of manuscripts that focus on various aspects of *Intercultural Competence* in this Special Issue of *Dimensions 2016*. We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of several individuals who helped shape this volume. In addition to the tremendous efforts of the members of the Editorial Board who helped review and edit the chapters, we would like to thank the additional reviewers needed to sort through the great number of manuscripts submitted for this Special Issue. The additional reviewers we would like to recognize are Kelly Frances Davidson Devall, Christopher B. Font-Santiago, Elizabeth Goulette, Kaishan Kong, Raul Llorente, Mizuki Mazzotta, Oscar Moreno, and Cathy Stafford, who are all from research universities. We are especially grateful for the efforts of our research assistant, Michael Vo, who carefully read through each manuscript near the final stages of production. Thanks to the combined efforts of many individuals, we hope this Special Issue brings attention to the innovative programmatic changes and best teaching practices presented in these chapters. Our goal with this issue is to contribute to the profession in a way that encourages language teachers to promote interest in another language and culture by providing experiences that excite and motivate students.

Our profession, as language educators, can be quite compelling and grandiose. It can also be small and insignificant. Much depends on how we conceptualize and implement our task. It becomes compelling and grandiose when we recognize that language education is a pathway to entering another worldview. Learning a second tongue, and its culture, gives us access to another vision of the world and provides the prism through which to look back on our first. Most of all, it enables us to make contact, establish relationships, and develop friendships with people of other backgrounds. This is not an insignificant way of achieving peace in the world, one friendship at a time, an idea reinforced with an insight from Albert Einstein who said, "Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." This, indeed, is the compelling aspect of our profession, and our highest aspiration for this Special Issue.

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