



# DIMENSION 2016

## SPECIAL ISSUE: FOCUS ON INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Sarah Allison  
Michael Byram  
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Carolina Egúsquiza  
Alvino E. Fantini  
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Inmaculada Gómez Soler  
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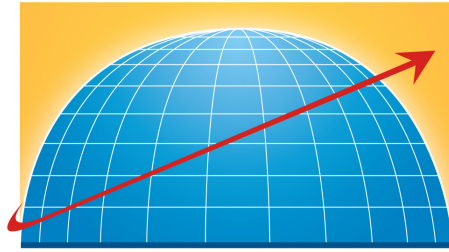
### EDITORS

Paula Garrett-Rucks  
Alvino E. Fantini

*Dimension* is the annual volume of peer-reviewed articles sponsored by 2016 Joint Conference of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching, the Foreign Language Association of Georgia, and the Southeastern Association of Language Learning Technology.



# SCOLT 2016



NEW LEVELS, NO LIMITS.

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## Review and Acceptance Procedures

### SCOLT *Dimension*

The procedures through which articles are reviewed and accepted for publication in *Dimension* begin by the authors emailing manuscripts to the editor at SCOLT. [Dimension@gmail.com](mailto:Dimension@gmail.com).

The editor then uses a double blind review process to review the manuscripts. That is, the names and academic affiliations of the authors and information identifying schools and colleges cited in articles are removed from the manuscripts prior to review by members of the Editorial Board, all of whom are published professionals, committed to second language education at research universities. Neither the author(s) nor the reviewers know the identity of one another during the review process. Each manuscript is reviewed by at least two members of the Editorial Board of Reviewers, and one of the following recommendations is made: “accept as is,” “request a second draft with minor revisions,” “request a second draft with major revisions,” or “do not publish.” The editor then requests second drafts of manuscripts that receive favorable ratings on the initial draft. These revised manuscripts are reviewed a second time before a final decision to publish is made.

The editors of *Dimension* 2016 invited prospective authors at all levels of language teaching to submit original work for publication consideration without having to commit to presenting a paper at the 2015 annual meeting of the Southern Conference on Language Teaching. Starting as a proceedings publication, *Dimension* has now become the official peer-reviewed journal of SCOLT and is published once annually in the spring. Under the direction of the former editor, Dr. Peter Swanson, *Dimension* transitioned from a proceedings publication to an official peer-reviewed journal, and the board decided to place the journal online via SCOLT’s webpage. This transition has dramatically improved the international visibility of the authors’ work. In the first few years of being placed online for global consumption, authors’ work is being read and cited globally.

The current lead editor of *Dimension*, Dr. Paula Garrett-Rucks, continued Dr. Swanson’s legacy of excellence for the journal by inviting the renowned intercultural competence expert, Dr. Alvino E. Fantini, to serve as co-editor for this 2016 *Special Issue: Focus on Intercultural Competence*. Beyond the focus of this special issue, *Dimension* will continue to publish manuscripts that provide readers insight into a variety of research on the teaching and learning of languages and culture in subsequent issues.

## **SCOLT Editorial Review Board 2016**

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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:

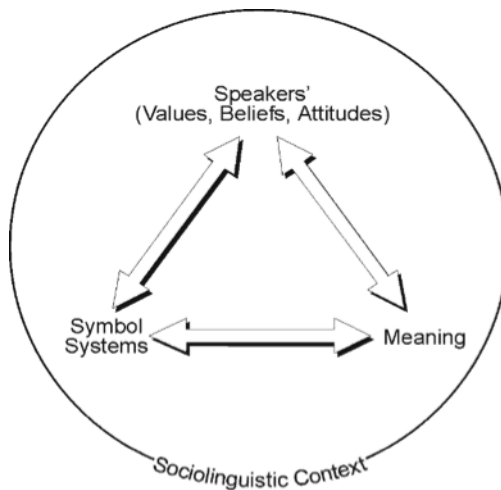


Figure 1. Worldview and components

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 heterarchy (a hierarchy of hierarchies) much like a mobile is constructed. Whereas the words of all languages are combined into hierarchies and heterarchies, 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 significantly different semantic fields. These differences contribute to the relativity 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](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.):

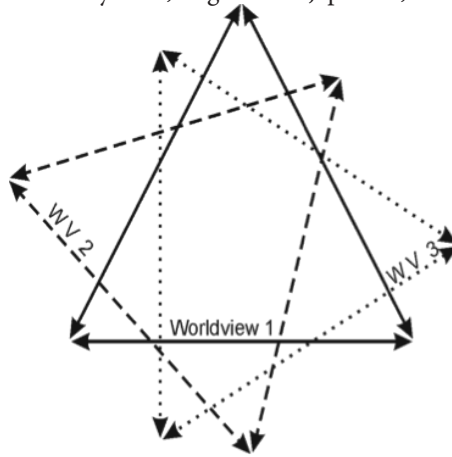


Figure 2. Overlap of three worldview configurations

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:

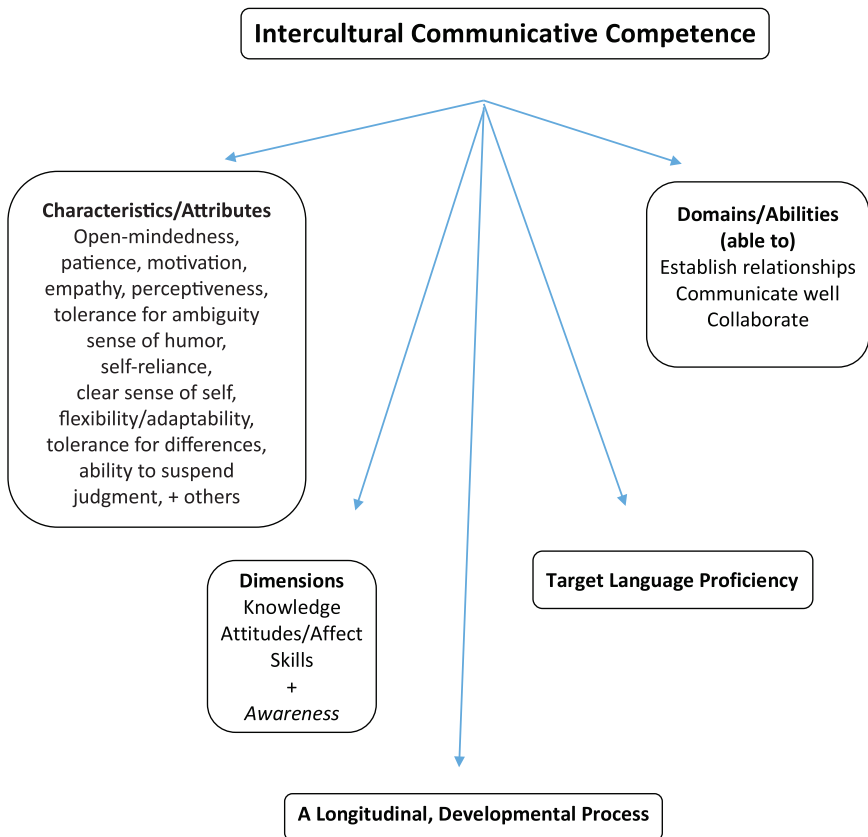


Figure 3. Intercultural communicative competence and sub-components

**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-

jor 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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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# Preparing Students for the Global Workplace: The Relevance of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP)

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## Abstract

*Acquiring second language and intercultural skills tied to real-world contexts is key to personal and professional success for students in today's globally connected society. This paper defines and details the benefits of integrating a current Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) approach, which connects language learning and intercultural skills across disciplines, particularly professional schools, and prepares students for the 21st century workplace. Additionally, the paper 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 curriculum for language learning that prepares students for a variety of career paths.*

**Key words:** Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), global competence, language instruction/language learning, careers, intercultural competence

## Background

As world economies become more integrated, industry and educational reports regularly tout the need for language and cultural skills to succeed in the 21st century workplace (Davies, Fidler, & Gorbis, 2011; Language Flagship Report, 2009; Fenstermacher, 2013; Languages: State of the Nation Report, 2013; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2012; Across the Atlantic- Languages for All?, 2014). The ability to analyze and solve complex global issues taking into account diverse perspectives is not only necessary for those who will work abroad, but also for those entering the increasingly diverse U.S. workforce who will virtually collaborate with clients and colleagues around the world. Singmaster (2014) cites this need for globally competent students to meet the demands of changing demographics in the U.S. workforce, to strengthen U.S. economic competitiveness, and to maintain national security.

Many educational researchers discuss the importance of global competence (Caligiuri & Di Santo, 2001; Parkinson, 2009), which Hunter (2004) defines as “having an open mind while actively seeking to understand cultural norms and expectations of others, leveraging this gained knowledge to interact, communicate and work effectively outside one's environment” (p.1). The Asia Society issued a report on Edu-



cating for Global Competence in which it defines global competence as “the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance” (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2011, p. xxiii). The American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) 2014 Position Statement expands the definition to explicitly include language skills. It emphasizes the need to communicate with cultural understanding in more than one language as an essential attribution of global competence. LSP as a discipline bridges this gap between the definitions of global competence that may or may not include language skills precisely because it has the capacity to integrate languages and cultures across subject areas that bring relevance to the curriculum and prepare students to navigate the global workplace.

### **Overview of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP)**

Through an LSP approach, educators can better prepare students to interact appropriately across a broad range of professional and personal real-world contexts. A common misconception is that LSP curriculum focuses only on terminology and rote dialogues. According to M. Long (2010), language for ‘professional use’ goes beyond being a technical course and demands critical thinking skills and deeper cultural knowledge that have always been fundamental elements of humanities education in language and literature. What has changed from the traditional approach to language and culture courses is the type of texts and situations being studied. García Laborda (2011) adds an emphasis on learners and their plans for using the language studied in his definition of LSP as “the teaching of a language as a second or foreign language for certain groups of students to whom the syllabus, tasks and methodology are especially tailored to their interests and needs” (p. 1).

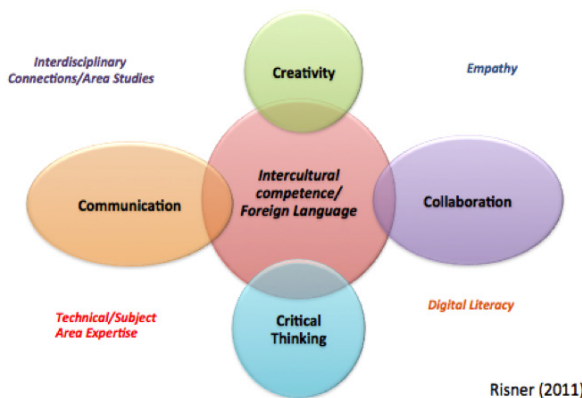
An LSP approach helps students discover and practice the types of communication skills and cultural knowledge they need to meet their specific professional goals (Crouse, 2013). In addition to these practical communication skills, LSP materials and pedagogical activities can help students develop empathy and a deeper understanding of other perspectives by taking into consideration contexts beyond those with which they are already familiar. Empathy and understanding of the “other” is cited as a top skill required to successfully interact with an increasingly diverse citizenry (Anders, 2014). LSP courses in higher education have traditionally focused on professions including business, medicine, and law enforcement. However, recent findings by Long & Uscinski (2012) show that LSP courses are expanding across languages and professions such as leadership, STEM, tourism, translation/interpretation, legal, diplomacy and to a variety of specific topics within healthcare.

While LSP has historically been more prevalent in higher education curriculum, it has been emerging at the secondary level. There is some literature on business language within the secondary curriculum (Fryer, 1986; Grosse, 1988; Risner, 2006; Takami, 2010), but only anecdotal information about other industry themes being integrated into K-12 classrooms. More recently documented secondary level courses have expanded the scope of LSP by offering courses such as “Language for Leadership” (Bleess & Cornelius, 2012) and “Language for the Community and the Workplace” (Beeck, 2013). These language courses allow students with broad career interests to acquire professional skills with a global perspective as they contemplate what type of work to pursue in the future.

At any grade level, integration of LSP content into the curriculum develops skills for real-world use of the target language. It strengthens the notion of language study by helping students see language in context as valuable for their professional future and not just an academic requirement. Students see the value of language study when it is applied to workplace skills. LSP makes connections across disciplines, helping students see the big picture of the need to be able to navigate an increasingly complex world. When students learn the language of the workplace, examine the cultural practices of international professionals, and discover that their future supervisors, clients and colleagues might be from the target culture, then they see the potential outcomes and impact of language study.

As the demands of the world and workplace change, educators also need to adapt their curriculum to student-centered learning and consider a variety of skills to prepare them for multiple perspectives. Figure 1 illustrates the overlapping elements necessary to navigate the global workplace and how language and culture occupy the center. The four “Cs” of communication, creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration as proposed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) function best when tied to intercultural competence and language proficiency. For students who will be interacting in virtual spaces and on teams at a distance, it is important to master other skills such as digital competence. This implies more than using technological devices, but also the ability to effectively deploy them to collaborate across national borders and cultures (Ilomäki, Kantosalo, & Lakkal, 2011). Connecting to classrooms in the target culture and hosting virtual guests through Skype and other free online tools are excellent ways for students to improve their digital literacy.

In addition to area and technical expertise, students need a grounding in the liberal arts to understand and connect the politics, history, and economics of nations and regions across the globe (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006). And finally, students should develop empathy for other cultures by reflecting on their own cultural expectations and norms (Anders, 2014; Hunter et al, 2006) in order to successfully navigate a variety of diverse contexts by utilizing the intercultural competencies they acquire in their LSP courses.



Risner (2011)

Figure 1. The 4 “Cs” of 21st century skills expanded. Adapted from Risner, 2011.

## LSP & Proficiency

A primary concern for language educators is meeting standards and building student proficiency to comply with ACTFL's five "C" standards: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. An LSP focus can meet these standards. Table 1 lists examples of real world applications of the five C's and activities that can be implemented to reinforce them in an LSP classroom.

Table 1

### *Fives C's Applied to LSP and Real World Contexts*

Standard	LSP Focus	Real-World Application
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice communicating in a variety of work situations</li> <li>• Integrate pair work with meaningful tasks that require students to get accurate new information</li> <li>• Interview professionals in TL</li> <li>• Telecollaborate with classes across borders</li> <li>• Blog about relevant workplace topics in the TL</li> <li>• Build a professional learning network in their field of interest through social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle tasks that vary from simple clerical messages taken by phone to scheduling and leading meetings giving presentations</li> <li>• Interact professionally in TL</li> </ul>
Cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze case studies, films, documentaries related to the global workplace</li> <li>• Conduct virtual or local consulting projects</li> <li>• Telecollaborate with teams across borders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate and accomplish goals according to local norms</li> <li>• Understand and adapt to local perspectives</li> </ul>
Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridge the gap between the humanities and the professional schools, other fields</li> <li>• Invite guest speakers from various fields, webinars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use appropriate terminology in specific contexts according to subject or professional area in question</li> </ul>
Comparisons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare and contrast professional contexts in case studies, films, documentaries</li> <li>• Identify similarities and differences across workplaces through virtual or local consulting projects</li> <li>• Telecollaborate with classes across borders to explicitly identify varying professional norms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and respect differences in cultural norms</li> </ul>

Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide service learning opportunities</li><li>• Provide internships, volunteer work</li><li>• Coordinate site visits at relevant venues in community</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain an open mind to interact in personal and professional contexts through an ethnorelative* view rather than an ethnocentric one</li></ul>
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*\*Ability to understand and accept a variety of viewpoints different from one’s own.*

As Table 1 shows, LSP puts some of the often-neglected “C’s” such as Communities and Connections on equal footing with the others-Comparisons, Communication, and Culture (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). LSP provides a means to fully embrace the 5 “Cs” within the classroom and beyond it—both spatially and temporally.

**Integrating LSP in the Curriculum**

An LSP approach to foreign language teaching focuses on the needs of learners who study languages to complement their pre-professional studies and plan to use languages in diverse industries and careers. LSP needs can be different at each institution and will vary by student interest and social and employment demographics of the local community. For instance, on a campus with a high number of pre-med students, medical-focused LSP courses might be in high demand. The proximity of a strong law school could drive demand for legal-focused courses. Lists of current minors and majors will indicate other key areas of study so that courses for specific purposes can be built around enrollment. LSP course types might also be influenced by the industries surrounding a community such as logistics and international trade in a major port area or engineering (STEM) where there is a large concentration of high tech firms.

Basturkmen (2010) stresses the importance of needs analysis in the development of English for Specific Purposes (also applicable to LSP) courses and describes it as a “pre-course design process.” As part of the design process the instructor determines the course focus, content related to terminology and culture skills to be covered, and the learning methodology. Materials resulting from the needs analysis are based on aspects such as specialty or topic, learner situation, skills needed, and expected outcomes (García Laborda, 2011). LSP activities should ultimately infuse intercultural components through guided reflection and comparison between the world of origin and the target community (CoE/CEFR, 2001).

Wherever possible, LSP course design should also include opportunities for students to interact and engage with professionals in the workplace through service learning, consulting projects, shadowing, or internships. One example of this type of integration is the high school World Language and Business Leadership program at the Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) in Kansas where business students with intermediate language proficiency complete an internship at a local firm using their language skills. In this way, students experience first-hand the daily operations of local companies while developing intercultural skills as they work on

a variety of projects with local employees and others based abroad through virtual connections. Building more partnerships with industry professionals and making interdisciplinary connections between Colleges of Liberal Arts and professional schools (or K-12 career academies) can be the role of LSP in educational contexts.

Developing solid relationships across colleges can aid in developing workforce skills that bring together technical expertise and global competence across a variety of content areas. In the field of engineering, an LSP approach could be a valuable contribution to the education of 21st century engineers where soft skills are not a required part of coursework, but certainly necessary for teams of engineers working to solve problems on a global scale. By integrating an intercultural and multilingual, interdisciplinary approach, LSP instructors foster critical reflection on historical, ethical and social aspects of engineering (Arnó-Macià & Rueda-Ramos, 2011). An example of this type of interdisciplinary collaboration at the K-12 level is through the integration of language in career academies. One Florida school has established a program where all healthcare academy students take Spanish courses that are adapted specifically to the medical field (Caplan, 2015; Josey, 2015). The program is in the early stages, but has plans to eventually develop projects where students work with local health professionals and Latino populations.

Increased articulation across disciplines and colleges, and education and industry has the potential to improve the way we prepare our students for the 21st century workplace by reducing boundaries between education and work environments. Furthermore, an emphasis on articulation and collaboration among K-12 and post-secondary levels can contribute to higher levels of proficiency as we strive toward regular offerings of LSP-focused second language courses from elementary levels and beyond.

Offering a full LSP course or program for any profession requires garnering support from colleagues, obtaining course approval, developing content, and recruiting students. However, LSP activities which focus on future work-related skills can also be integrated on a small scale in existing courses from business to mathematics. Sample activities for courses consist of basic communicative tasks that are needed across a variety of job possibilities and in everyday life such as taking messages, answering the phone, introducing oneself while using appropriate body language and gestures, and writing numbers in a variety of contexts such as during sales negotiations.

Another classroom-tested activity is introducing business cards. Students can create their own business cards as well as learn about variations in content and how they are exchanged across cultures. Lessons using foreign currency build math skills by converting exchange rates and increasing awareness of national symbols and historical figures often found on bills and coins. Other examples for an introductory level class are learning about personality traits and discussing which words people mostly use across cultures to define themselves on their resume or LinkedIn profile. For example, cultural differences across cultures might include listing marital status or not on online profiles, what kind of photo to include, or even submitting a cover letter by hand to analyze handwriting style. At the intermediate level the activity can be expanded to developing a resume or profile in the target language according to their career interests.

Other sample activities at the intermediate to advanced levels include discussing concepts and fundamental questions about leadership through literature as in March's (2003) lecture-length film *Passion and Discipline: Don Quixote's Lessons for Leadership*. M. Long's (2015) recent text *Teaching Gender for the Multicultural Workplace* offers students an additional perspective to compare and contrast gender dynamics in the workplace across cultures. Career exploration projects followed by face-to-face or virtual guests who use language and culture in their work are also ways to get students thinking about professional and real-world use of these types of global skills.

Full descriptions of some of the lesson ideas mentioned above and more are available through the free online handbook *Connecting Foreign Language Curriculum to Workplace Skills* (Risner & Markley, 2015), a collection of intermediate lessons to enhance the curriculum with content and activities that make language learning more relevant for students. The examples are in Spanish and have been used in K-12 courses to date, but the activities can be adapted to other languages and levels. The goal of the handbook is to provide a ready-to-use resource that teachers can expand upon and adapt to their particular teaching context. The handbook is one of the few resources originally developed for K-12 classrooms.

A plethora of existing resources and activities that integrate intercultural issues into the LSP curriculum are available online. Some case study examples that include teaching notes, discussion questions, and supplementary resources are available for Portuguese (Kelm & Risner, 2007), French (Sacco & Senne, 2013), and Spanish in the business Spanish textbook *Éxito Comercial* (Doyle & Fryer, 2015). An e-handbook with video clips on how to use business language case studies in the classroom is available through the George Washington University CIBER Business Language Program website (Gonglewski & Helms, n.d.). A rationale for and sample case activities on leadership in the language classroom are presented in *Fusing Language Learning and Leadership Development: Initial Approaches and Strategies* by Spaine Long, Le-Loup, Derby & Reyes (2014). Finally, the sixth and most recent edition of *Éxito Comercial* (2015) includes readings and leadership-focused activities throughout the text.

### **LSP Professional Learning Network**

While the field of LSP in the United States extends back for more than 30 years (Grosse & Voght, 1991), it still maintains a minority presence within foreign language curriculum, professional development offerings, and a focus of major professional associations. This is gradually changing and LSP has become more mainstream, (Doyle, 2014; Long & Uzcinski, 2012). Instructional materials and course models are still limited and there is a need for further development of theoretical foundations and empirical studies. One attempt to unite LSP instructors at all levels is through the Network of Business Language Educators (NOBLE), a professional learning network established in 2009. NOBLE brings together K-20 educators interested in curriculum and program development that integrate the study of foreign language and culture across disciplines, particularly professional schools and career academies. While the NOBLE acronym only includes business, the network promotes all LSP areas. The NOBLE website provides LSP resources, models, research, and events to those just starting out so that they can avoid re-inventing the wheel.

The network also organizes professional development opportunities that connect educators and industry professionals to promote real-world connections that foster innovative teaching and learning approaches. Table 2 lists the type of resources available at [nbl.org](http://nbl.org).

Table 2

*Resources at nbl.org*

Resource Type	Brief Description
Course Models	K-12 syllabi, program development information
Program Models	Post-secondary certificates, minors, majors, continuing education courses
Publications	Journals and special issues focused on LSP
Professional Development	Webinars, workshops, conferences, LSP meetings
Advocacy	Academic and industry reports, video clips
Social Media	Blog, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
Languages and Professional Fields	Business, Healthcare, Legal, STEM, Law Enforcement, Translation
Events Calendar	Conferences, Call for Papers

NOBLE goes beyond compiling resources and aims to increase LSP visibility by leveraging group strength connecting the humanities to professional schools and career academies to build connectivity and advance the field. NOBLE also provides social media platforms to stay engaged with colleagues virtually. The ultimate goal is to develop foreign language leaders that promote change and prepare globally competent students with increased levels of language proficiency and cultural competence. Table 3 lists some of the activities that take place through NOBLE and how they fulfill needs in advancing an LSP approach.

Table 3

*How NOBLE Promotes LSP*

Activity	PD*	Free LSP Resources	Language Advocacy	Empower Educators	Empower Grad Students
Workshops	X	X		X	
Videos			X	X	X
Conference Sessions	X	X			



Exhibit Booths at State, Regional, and National Conferences		X		X	
State Conference LSP Track	X	X			
LSP Webinars	X	X			
Co-present with K-16 Faculty/Grads				X	X
Develop Materials	X	X			
Monthly Newsletter Social Media	X	X	X	X	

*\*Professional development*

LSP teacher training is crucial for instructors to develop practical how-to skills to integrate relevant and authentic language activities in their classrooms. With basic LSP training, language instructors can see how to make relevant connections to authentic contexts that lead to deeper learning, increased language proficiency, and ultimately to global competence. Resources, curricular models, and training to support implementation of LSP programs such as those available through NOBLE must be widely disseminated via social media channels, professional publications and listservs, at professional conferences, and in-service continuing education events (Risner & Markley, 2013).

Many national language conferences are held annually where little by little, LSP is becoming more prominent in sessions and workshops. Some sample sessions since 2012 at the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) conference covered diverse LSP areas such as translation, healthcare, advertising, government careers, business, global internships, sustainability and general career skills. These sessions focused on languages ranging from French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian as well as sessions that applied across languages. Since 1981, a conference on Foreign Languages for Business was held annually at Eastern Michigan University, which eventually became a series of ongoing events sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. They are professional development opportunities provided by the Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER). The first CIBER was held in San Diego in 1999. The most recent iteration of this event is the International Symposium on Languages for Specific Purposes (ISLSP), which convenes every other year at different campus locations and includes all areas of LSP.

Many teachers are unable to take advantage of existing professional development opportunities or attend events outside of their local area due to limited funding. Virtual platforms such as webinars and strong, highly-trafficked social media channels together with robust LSP professional development offerings at state and regional conferences will benefit faculty at all levels. By improving affordability, responding to the local context, and developing community connections, these strategies for dissemination of LSP will reach a mix of K-12 and post-secondary faculty and consequently enhance articulation between levels (Risner & Markley, 2013).



## Conclusion

This chapter makes the case for the seamless fit between LSP and U.S. language teaching standards, which provides an excellent way forward for language education in the U.S. The usefulness of the activities and resources provided above are supported by the 2011 report on Global Engagement U.S. Higher Education in the 21st Century, which provides strong evidence of the need for LSP programming to promote global competence. The report voices concern that U.S. students have a minimal knowledge of other cultures through interaction from long-term exchange programs, while non-U.S. students are much more regularly immersed with other languages and cultures. Even when long-term exchange programs are not viable for U.S. students, LSP-focused programming builds global competence by integrating language and culture skills across disciplines and course activities that give students a chance to apply what they are learning into the workplace and community.

One of the many advantages of LSP is that it can be adopted on a very small scale by simply adding one professional element to a single section of a course or integrating one new lesson or activity from LSP resources such as those listed in this chapter. At present, LSP programming is disseminated instructor to instructor, course to course, and program to program. Through increased publication efforts, a stronger presence at local and national conferences, and growth in virtual communities of educators, the value of LSP will increase in educational contexts as well as in broader communities.

In addition, for the emerging field of LSP to advance we need to prepare graduate students for the field, provide more options for professional development that is specifically focused on LSP, and garner support from decision-making administrators. Articulation across languages, academic subject areas and industry automatically occurs as LSP programs develop. LSP has the potential to stimulate foreign language enrollments in the U.S. while also meeting the need for globally competent citizens working toward a sustainable world and future.

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## Exploring Collaborative Work for the Creation of Interdisciplinary Units Centered on Intercultural Citizenship

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### *Abstract*

*In this work we report on a collaborative project at a large Northeastern University, in which we explored how to best collaborate to develop interdisciplinary teaching units, which integrate intercultural citizenship (Byram, 2008) into world languages, mathematics and social studies sixth grade curricula. We argue for the importance of addressing current critical areas in education. After introducing a framework that allows teachers to focus on the development of intercultural citizenship while at the same time fostering skills in the diverse content areas, we report on how we worked with a group of graduate students, teachers and administrators in order to co-design interdisciplinary units focused on intercultural citizenship. An example of such an interdisciplinary unit is provided along with lessons learned about how we can facilitate this type of interdisciplinary collaboration. Our recommendations are based on qualitative analyses of the notes, memos and observations documented by the authors. Specifically, we share four emergent themes that illustrate how this group of educators successfully collaborated in this project: (1) Respecting disciplinary identities and boundaries, (2) Extending the understanding beyond the disciplines, (3) Ensuring a collaborative learning environment, and (4) Offering opportunities to continue the work beyond the course.*

**Key words:** *Interdisciplinary collaboration, intercultural citizenship, STEM, teacher education*

### **Introduction**

The work presented in this chapter was motivated by two trends that occurred concurrently. Firstly, it is now more important than ever to prepare our students for an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Secondly, it is a much-lamented fact that U.S. students are behind many other countries in their performance on STEM

(science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) assessments. Here, we hope to offer an approach that can tackle both challenges by helping students understand the interconnectedness of the content they learn in schools. Our proposal is to find ways of linking subjects, such as world languages and mathematics, and education and life beyond the walls of the school, through the concept of “intercultural citizenship.”

We will first discuss recent calls for educational programs that prepare students to meet the challenges they will face in a globalized world by building competence in intercultural citizenship and then discuss the challenges in K-16 education that are obstacles in meeting those challenges. Then, we introduce a theoretical and practical framework that can potentially address the challenges via collaborative and interdisciplinary efforts. After this we introduce one project that exemplifies one way to achieve these specific goals. Lastly we describe the processes experienced by the team to achieve the respective goals in the project.

It is important to note that we are not advocating a duplication of the project described in this paper because every collaboration may be different depending on the setting in which it will take place. However, we hope to provide the reader with a rationale for planning collaborative interdisciplinary projects focused on intercultural citizenship and some insight into the benefits as well as the complexities of a collaborative project of this kind.

We start with the concept of intercultural citizenship which as we will show later, is related to the more widespread and a much-invoked term “global citizenship.” Because there are so many different definitions of global citizenship, the term remains vague. And yet many mission statements for schools and universities in the U.S. and abroad emphasize global citizenship as one of their major goals in educating their students. In addition, educators, administrators and parents tend to agree that students need to be prepared for a more globalized world. While there are a number of instrumental reasons for that sentiment, such as a well-served economy and an employable workforce, in the face of violent incidents worldwide, there are now also calls for an education that prepares students for peaceful negotiations, as can be seen in the quote below from U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken at an event on Preventing Violent Extremism through Education organized by the UNESCO on November 6, 2015. Mr. Blinken stressed that UNESCO’s (2014) role as a guardian of shared humanity was needed more than ever:

By arming young minds with a world perspective rooted in respect, social justice, diversity and critical thinking, we cannot only counter radicalization as it arises, but prevent its growth in the first place... In the 21st century, what really defines the wealth of a nation is its human resource, and the ability to maximize the potential of that resource to be creative, to innovate, to think, to argue and to create. (§ 4)

Many U.S. universities are now following up their mission statements by creating programs in global citizenship. For example, Webster University, in Missouri, described the rationale for their Global Citizenship Program as follows: “Living and working in the 21st century demands more complex skills and abilities than during previous eras. Expert thinking, complex communications skills, problem solving, and working with diverse teams are more important than ever” (Webster, n.d., § 1).

Similarly, the Council of Europe (CoE), which comprises 47 member states and which was “set up to promote democracy and protect human rights and the rule of law in Europe” (CoE, n.d.), recognized in its *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. Living Together as Equals in Dignity* (CoE, 2008) the importance of competences required for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue. Using the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) (CoE, 2001) as a blueprint, a new initiative was started in 2014 to develop a model of democratic and intercultural competence that can be used, in all school subjects, to inform curriculum design, the development of new pedagogies, and new forms of assessment. The new “framework” will provide a model of 20 (intercultural and democratic) competences that each have a number of descriptors formulated as learning outcomes. It is intended that these descriptors will be placed on a scale, as are language competence indicators in the CEFR.

Although the CoE refers to “democratic and intercultural competence” due to its emphasis on its three basic values of “democracy, human rights and the rule of law”, the term “global citizenship” is commonly used elsewhere, as in the example from Webster University above. It is, however important to note that Gordon (2014) observed a move away from the use of the term *global citizenship* and a shift towards the use of *intercultural competence* at the 2012 meeting of the Association for International Education Administrators. In his opinion, the reason for that shift is “the recognition that humans still organize and/or inhabit discrete societies, cultures, movements for self-determination, and nation states” (p. 61). In our work, intercultural competence is integrated into the concept of intercultural citizenship which focuses on the education required to prepare our students to engage in meaningful intercultural interactions, but before we elaborate more on the specifics of intercultural citizenship we want to introduce another problematic aspect of education.

Coffey (2009) makes an important observation about the fragmentation of content addressed in schools and the lack of connections between what students learn and real world applications:

There are many topics that are not addressed in schools because of the breadth and depth of information that is accessible in a globalized, technological society. Much of the curriculum that is contained in textbooks is neither timely nor relevant to students’ lives. Additionally, the daily schedule often fragments learning so that each teacher is given a defined time block to cover material that will likely be assessed on a state-mandated test. All of these hindrances make it difficult for teachers to engage students in studying any material in depth and to make connections between subject areas and topics. (¶ 2)

We argue that this lack of interdisciplinary curricula must have an impact on the preparedness of our students for a world in which they will need to become critical thinkers and problem solvers in complex situations not addressed solely within one discipline. It might not be a coincidence that U.S. K-12 students have most problems within STEM assessments when they are asked to apply their knowledge and skills to more complex problems.



Yet another problem we are faced with in education is a lack of articulation of instruction at the various levels. We are often surprised that our students cannot move from one level to the next in their proficiency as they study either mathematics or a world language, just to give two examples. Often students are registered for rather elementary world languages courses when they enter college or university after having studied languages for multiple years in their elementary and/or secondary education. Similarly, in mathematics, an alarming number of students enter higher education under-prepared to succeed in their mathematics courses. Almost every program has a mathematics requirement for their majors. The required courses are mostly entry-level mathematics courses that rely on fundamental understanding of concepts that are part of the K-12 mathematics curriculum; yet too many students fail to succeed in these courses because of their lack of necessary fundamental knowledge. This happens in spite of the supports offered by the institutions, such as free tutoring, one-on-one conferences with instructors and teaching assistants, as well as dedicated review sessions. These students end up dropping, withdrawing, or failing these basic courses, all of which affect, in smaller or larger ways, their plans of study.

Even within content-specific programs it is a challenge to plan and execute well-articulated course sequences. In order to help students with the transition from high school to college, secondary schools and colleges have formed partnerships, allowing students to gain college credit in high school courses that are coordinated with the respective programs in colleges. For example, at the University of Connecticut, that program is called Early College Experience (ECE) and is quite popular.

We have thus far introduced a number of challenges with which educators are faced in world language and mathematics education as examples of interdisciplinary thinking and as two subjects, which are crucial to students' university success. We now introduce a theoretical and practical framework, which can be used to address these challenges in collaborative projects and will then go on to illustrate how a group of educators from different disciplines and backgrounds collaborated in practice to integrate the skills, attitudes and knowledge that promote intercultural citizenship, into interdisciplinary units in order to help students experience connections within their school subjects (e.g., mathematics and world language education) and between their course subjects and problems beyond the confines of the educational institution. In specific, we report on the processes that built a community for the purpose of promoting intercultural citizenship in sixth grade students based on interdisciplinary units created by the collaborative efforts of public school teachers, district administrators, university faculty and graduate students across STEM disciplines, represented by mainly math, as well as other disciplines, i.e., world languages and social studies. Various sources, e.g. notes, observations and memos of first hand experiences were used to document collaboration and interdisciplinary perspectives throughout the process.

The overall question we address is therefore: *How can a group of educators from different disciplines and backgrounds collaborate to integrate intercultural citizenship into interdisciplinary units in order to help students see connections within their subjects (e.g., mathematics and world language education) and between their subjects and real world problems?*



## Theoretical Framework

The way we conceptualize the connections between world language education and mathematics education is based on Byram's (1997) model of Intercultural (Communicative) Competence and his concept of Intercultural Citizenship (Byram, 2008). Intercultural Communicative Competence combines the linguistic skills of communicative competence with (certain dimensions of) Intercultural Competence. The linguistic dimensions, familiar to language teachers, are defined as follows:

- *linguistic competence*: the ability to apply knowledge of the rules of a standard version of the language to produce and interpret spoken and written language;
- *sociolinguistic competence*: the ability to give to the language produced by the interlocutor – whether native speaker or not – meanings which are taken for granted by the interlocutor or which are negotiated and made explicit with the interlocutor;
- *discourse competence*: the ability to use, discover and negotiate strategies for the production and interpretation of monologue or dialogue texts which follow the conventions of the culture of an interlocutor or are negotiated as intercultural texts for particular purposes. (Byram, 1997, p. 48)

Intercultural competence has the following dimensions:

- *knowledge*: of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country or region, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction (p. 51)
- *skills of interpreting and relating*: ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own (p. 52)
- *skills of discovery and interaction*: ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction (p. 52)
- *attitudes*: curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own (p. 50)
- *critical cultural awareness*: an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries. (p. 53)

When linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competences are combined with the dimensions of intercultural competence, we arrive at Intercultural Communicative Competence. The purpose of teaching, in world languages, Intercultural Communicative Competence and not just Communicative Competence is to enable students first to interpret and understand the cultural contexts of their interlocutors – whether native speakers or people using the language as a lingua franca – second to be able to interact with them accordingly, and third to act as mediators between two groups with mutually incomprehensible languages (and cultures).

On the other hand, Intercultural Competence is also required when speaking a shared language with someone from a different cultural context, someone from a different region of the same country or from a different country where the same

language is used (Americans speaking to Australians, for example). It is also important to note that some dimensions of Intercultural Competence (attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, knowledge, and critical cultural awareness) can also be taught in other subject areas. In mathematics, for example, it is now considered crucial to develop students' skills to communicate their ideas for solving problems (Kazemi & Stipek, 2001; NCTM, 2014) that move beyond simply "show and tell" (Ball, 2001). The goal is that learners can, through interacting with each other, gain access to multiple ways of finding solutions, and open up opportunities to discuss insights with each other, obtain clarity, and make connections to others' ideas. This helps to achieve a greater understanding of the mathematics involved and potentially develop new and/or more effective ways to solve problems. Orchestrating mathematics classroom discussions that result in these outcomes requires students to be competent in the skills and attitudes mentioned above for Intercultural Competence: from understanding themselves as thinkers of mathematics, to learning the range of accepted ways to communicate and discuss mathematical ideas, to understanding how to think critically about this information to solve the problem at hand.

Now that we have determined that we can theoretically teach the dimensions of intercultural competence in different subject areas, we want to take this thought a step further. With the help of the concept of Intercultural Citizenship (Byram, 2008), we can help our students become intercultural citizens in the here and now. This concept combines notions of citizenship education, which are taught in most education systems, and certainly in the U.S. context (U.S. Department of Education, 2012), with concepts of internationalism and interculturality. In other words, Byram (2008) found that while most curricula in many countries have as their main goal to prepare their students for citizenship in their respective nation country, we now also have the duty to prepare our students for a more interconnected and diverse world. The skills acquired through such an approach can be applied to intercultural situations with someone with a different background than one's own in another country or in one's own community. Byram further claims that intercultural citizenship has the following characteristics: (1) a focus on the learners acquiring knowledge and understanding (not just information) about people who speak the language they are learning (not necessarily only native speakers) and a corresponding knowledge about learners themselves; (2) the encouragement and planned development of attitudes of curiosity and critical questioning; (3) the teaching-and-learning of skills of inquiry from which knowledge about self and others evolves, and secondly the skills of comparison as the juxtaposition from which understanding is derived; and (4) engagement and taking some type of action in the world outside the classroom in parallel with classroom work, to *improve* the world in however small a way.

Intercultural citizenship is, furthermore, related to initiatives to teach languages (and other subjects) for social justice (Osborn, 2006; Glynn, Wesely & Wassell, 2014). Students' development of *critical cultural awareness* (Byram 2008) as part of intercultural citizenship goes hand in hand with their understanding of social justice issues. By fostering our students' curiosity and a questioning attitude, we help them pose important questions about the world in which they live. More importantly, we provide tools for learners to judge events critically, from a variety of perspectives and

based on specific evidence. As we discussed above, these skills are crucial in light of our realization that we need to prepare our students with the tools to promote peaceful resolutions for growing conflicts around the world.

### **Connecting Mathematics and World Languages with Intercultural Citizenship**

The teaching and learning of mathematics is complex and the discipline is not well understood by other educators and the general public. Most people view the learning of mathematics as rote memorization of rules, procedures, and results and the correct application of these to different abstract problems or to applied “real” problems that seem to have very little to do with life as experienced outside the classroom (Ellis & Robert, 2005). In addition, there is a widely-held belief that in mathematics there is always only *one* correct answer and only *one* way to arrive at the solution, that “you were either born to understand mathematics, or you were born to struggle with it” (e.g., Boaler, 2013). All of this however, is an oversimplification and narrow view of mathematics and what the teaching and learning of mathematics is really about. For, in fact, mathematicians find results following logical reasoning and sense making, develop procedures that help perform operations in an efficient manner based on the underlying structures of the operations (rather than mindlessly imposing rules), use different representations and take multiple perspectives into account to create new results. They are constantly building new knowledge with other experts from different areas within mathematics and/or between mathematicians and other scientists.

In this perspective on mathematics, achieving the levels of mathematical understanding that students need to succeed now requires much more than what was necessary in the 1900s. For example, given the modern advances in automation and instant access to information via the Internet, memorizing certain sets of facts is no longer a crucial skill (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). In her account of what now counts as competent performance, Resnick states “Automated skill in performance of routines still matters, but 21st-century skills mostly focus on a person’s ability to participate in argumentation and discussion” (2010, p. 186). As a consequence of such insights, research in mathematics education has been pointing for the past two decades at ways to teach mathematics more efficiently, with greater depth and understanding of concepts rather than breadth of content covered.

The research on effective teaching that would help us reach these goals highlights practices that go beyond rote memorization of rules and computational fluency. These research-based practices promote a classroom culture that more faithfully resembles how professional mathematicians construct mathematics knowledge, so that students can develop the skills they will need to be college and career ready in this new century. At the core of these effective practices lies the ability to create learning environments in which students can communicate their ideas to better understand their own and others’ ways of thinking about mathematical concepts, engage in mathematical conversations that help them make sense of different approaches and compare them, and in turn help them reach deeper levels of understanding. Research has provided evidence of the positive impact on student learning when teachers use well orchestrated practices for facilitating mathematical discourse in the classroom (Lehrer & Schauble, 2002; Yackel & Cobb, 1996), as well as other effective

practices that support classroom interactions to deepen student understanding of important mathematical concepts (Chapin, O'Connor, & Anderson, 2009; Smith & Stein, 2011; Wood, 1998).

Currently, with the adoption of the new Common Core State Standards by the majority of states in the U.S., there is a renewed interest and wide-range need for changing school mathematics education to address the new standards. One significant difference between the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics (CCSSM; Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010) and the independent standards previously used by each state, is that the CCSSM comprise not only mathematical *content* standards that delineate what students should know and be able to do at each grade level but also a set of standards for mathematical *practices* (SMP) that students should engage in as they learn mathematics in school. The eight practices are formulated as follows:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
4. Model with mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision
7. Look for and make use of structure
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

These practices are based on the aforementioned research and on research-based process standards from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 1989, 2000) along with the mathematical proficiency strands identified by the National Research Council for successful mathematics learning (NRC, 2001). The mathematical practices parallel the learning of mathematics in the schools with the most important habits inherent to the discipline—what mathematicians do.

For the project described in this paper, some of these practices become particularly relevant. For example, looking more closely at the description of SMP 3 “Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others” (CCSSM, 2010, p. 9) it is clear that this practice entails two activities that demand (intercultural) communicative competence and a solid understanding of ways to discuss mathematics with others. On the one hand, *creating viable arguments* requires a student to be able to articulate the reasoning used to arrive at a certain conclusion or result, providing warranted evidence for their claims. Once students can express their ideas, then a door opens for others to analyze them and potentially benefit from each other’s ways of thinking about the problem. Thus, on the other hand, *critiquing the reasoning of others*, calls for students to interpret and make sense of the explanations given by others to critique them not only in terms of mathematical correctness, but more importantly to compare different approaches, distinguishing between them, and analyzing the efficiency of the strategies used. Compare the skills required to complete such tasks to aspects of intercultural competence such as, taking different perspectives into account, practicing tolerance for ambiguity, interpreting and relating, discovery and interaction, among others.

The notion of taking alternate perspectives into consideration is further supported by SMP 6 “Attend to precision” (CCSSM, 2010, p. 7), which calls for students to use

mathematical precision. This practice standard references not only precision in computation, but more importantly, precision in communicating mathematically by using appropriate vocabulary, clear definitions, and precise use of symbols to help the learner and others understand the reasoning that is being discussed (compare to skills of interaction, linguistic competence, attitudes of curiosity and openness in Byram, 1997).

In addition, mathematics educators and researchers are also concerned with strengthening the connections between mathematics and other school subjects to enhance content knowledge of all subjects and to help students learn how to use the different disciplines as tools for problem solving and, more generally, for critical analysis of global situations. This vision is evident in the NCTM's *Principles and Standards* (NCTM, 2000) document and it is made explicit in the more recent *Principles to Actions* document (NCTM, 2014) that supports the CCSSM by describing key actions required to ensure that students learn. In particular, in discussing standards' design and curriculum it calls for the mathematics curriculum to "not only be coherent but also make connections from the mathematics curriculum to other disciplines" (NCTM, 2014, p. 75).

These examples provide evidence of some of the many ways in which the Common Core State Standards for mathematical practices have clear connections to our work. Both educators in mathematics and world languages are interested in enhancing their students' communication skills. Not only that, but we also have some deep rooted intentions for these heightened skills that go beyond the disciplinary interests, such as critical thinking, 21st century skills, and intercultural citizenship. In addition, we want to provide our students with situations in which they can apply their disciplinary knowledge and skills as well as their intercultural citizenship skills to real world problems.

### **The Collaborative Project**

Over the past year we have been leading a project that has brought together world languages, mathematics and teacher education faculty (the authors of this chapter), graduate students and (pre-service) teachers of mathematics and world languages, as well as administrators and curriculum directors (in world languages, mathematics and social studies) from a local school district. Our overarching goal was to create a loosely defined community of practice using Wenger's (2006) definition "Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (p. 3). Our shared concern and passion was to create interdisciplinary units which contain the various elements discussed in the introduction to this chapter and apply the agreed theoretical framework explained above. Due to the scope of this chapter we will not describe the theory of communities of practice in detail. For now it suffices to know that the authors view learning as a social activity and designed learning activities which created opportunities for the graduate students to a) become inducted into the theoretical framework of intercultural citizenship within the disciplines, b) collaborate with a group of colleagues who learn from and with each other, and c) apply their knowledge in practice (to the K-12 curriculum in the partner school system).

In order to prepare our graduate students for the work, the authors planned two consecutive graduate courses, for a mixed group of graduate students from four

departments: mathematics, mathematics education, literatures, cultures, and languages, and world language education. These courses were mostly co-taught by the first two authors (see Table 1 for an overview of participants in the overall project). We will refer to the participants of the graduate courses as “graduate students” and our participants in the partner school system as “administrators and teachers” if they were involved in the planning and design of the project. We created most of the units for the students in the K-12 partner school system. We will refer to the students in the K-12 school system as “students”.

Table 1  
*Overview of Project Participants*

Participants at the university level	Faculty in in the Department of Mathematics
	Faculty in in the Department of Literatures, Cultures and Languages
	Emeritus faculty in teacher education (the three authors)
	Graduate students in the Department of Mathematics
	Graduate students in the Department of Literatures, Cultures and Languages
	Graduate students in Mathematics Education
	Pre-service teacher of French
Participants in partner school system	Curriculum coordinators of mathematics, world languages, and social studies

In the fall of 2014, the first graduate course was intended to facilitate our students’ reflection on the nature of their disciplines in terms of commonalities but also differences. We also introduced important concepts of intercultural competence and classifications thereof. Some examples of concepts and authors discussed are Intercultural Communicative Competence and Intercultural Citizenship by Michael Byram, Third Culture and Symbolic Competence by Claire Kramsch, the model of Intercultural Competence by Darla Deardorff, the role of language in intercultural communicative competence by Alvino Fantini, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity by Milton Bennett, linguistic approaches to intercultural communication by Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon, and comparisons of educational models of intercultural competence, for example, by Brian Spitzberg and Gabrielle Changnon and by Paula Garrett-Rucks. We also took a look at models used in business such as the cultural dimensions by Geert Hofstede in order to understand differences in approaches to understanding and teaching intercultural competence, and theories of critical pedagogy and social justice by for example, Paolo Freire, Terry Osborn, and Timothy Reagan were an important part of our discussions. Cassandra Glynn, Pamela Wesely, Beth Wassell’s ACTFL Publication (2014) *Words and Actions: Teaching Languages Through the Lens of Social Justice* was also consulted by students who focused on issues of social justice in their units. We explored topics surrounding mathematics teaching and learning by researchers such as Angela Barlow, Katherine

Gavin, Donna Kotsopoulos, and were concerned with publications on the role of the development of academic language in education by students and the understanding thereof by teachers (for example by Catherine Snow, Mary Schleppegrell, Paola Uccelli) and the interplay between mathematics and culture (for example, Beatriz d'Ambrosio and Sarah Lubienksi). Equipped with background knowledge in this area, we looked for connections between intercultural competence and mathematics.

Concurrently, the authors and the graduate students worked with colleagues in a school district (hereon referred to as school partners or colleagues in the partner school system) and engaged in conversations on how to best collaborate in this project. We had several meetings with the school administrators and curriculum directors at the partner school and at the university in which we introduced and shared theory (e.g., by a presentations on intercultural citizenship by the third author during a campus and partner school visit), reviewed the partner school's goals and needs, analyzed the partner school's curriculum plans corresponding to the different subjects, and collaboratively envisioned potential teaching unit ideas.

The second course took place in Spring 2015, where the collaborative work focused on the development of the units, which were planned, revised, and modified according to feedback and input from all constituents. In order to create these interdisciplinary units, we worked in collaboration with our partner school to identify appropriate grade levels at which the school could implement the units. In an early conversation about possible places to implement this interdisciplinary intercultural citizenship we decided for a variety of reasons that mostly had to do with realities in the partner school district that the best connections can be made through the curriculum in social studies in sixth grade as teachers and administrators had been planning to focus on global citizenship. We then selected topics of interest that would cut across different content areas (social studies, world languages, and mathematics) and used the content knowledge that each subject covers around the same time in the academic year. Drafts were developed by teams of graduate students consisting of at least one member in mathematics and one member in foreign languages. In total there were four teams consisting of 2 to 3 students. One team did not include a graduate student in mathematics. Instead, the whole group as well as the faculty members helped ensure an interdisciplinary approach in this team's projects. All unit drafts were continuously revised based on insights, ideas, and feedback from all constituents (the authors, the school partner participants and the graduate students) to ensure meaningful learning experiences within each subject, authentic use of the theories we had already learned and additional customized readings specific to each unit, attention to school resources and needs, as well as inclusion of assessments throughout the units. This is also resulted in furthering shared goals as mentioned above. Note that three groups worked on units to be implemented at a later time in sixth grade in the partner school district while two units were created for a different context due to logistical considerations. By the end of the semester, five units had been created, and were presented in front of the university community and also at the school in front of teachers and administrators where more feedback and input was received (Please see Table 2 for an overview of units). It is important to mention that this was considered to facilitate plans for their future implementation in line with the plan to continue collaborations beyond the creation of the units. In the next



section we first offer a description of a sample unit that was created in this project to give the reader a sense of what was accomplished by this interdisciplinary community of practice. This is followed by a short reflection on the processes that facilitated the collaboration and ensured that the goals were met.

Table 2  
*Overview of Interdisciplinary Units*

Unit topic	Main Team <sup>1</sup>	Grade Level
Water shortage	2 graduate students in German Studies, 1 graduate student in mathematics	6th grade
Natural Disasters	1 graduate student in German Studies, 1 graduate students in mathematics	6th grade
mathematics and Culture	1 graduate student in German Studies, 1 graduate student in mathematics Education	6th grade
City Spaces	1 graduate student in German Studies	Adult German education in Germany (university level)
Morocco	1 pre-service teacher in French Education	High School French

**Example of unit plans.**

We now share one sample unit which was developed for sixth grade for partner school district. The main topic of the unit, chosen from the social studies curriculum is water, as it relates naturally with the science curriculum on the water cycle, and provides a unique opportunity for students to use mathematics and world languages to explore and understand the topic in depth and in relation to global issues surrounding the global water crisis. In particular, using the lens of environmental justice, students look more deeply into important issues, such as water shortage, interdependence of factors, and cooperation between constituents.

The unit evolves from having students investigate their own ecological footprint with respect to their individual water consumption and compare their results with members in small groups, and with the entire class. Students are also engaged in several activities to explore global differences, including taking the perspectives of people in different regions around the world that suffer water shortage to help them start to develop critical cultural awareness around this issue. Content knowledge from each subject is embedded and intertwined to press for higher-order thinking (e.g., world languages to connect with different parts of the world, mathematics to understand crucial connections between data and real world problems). This helps them to determine what should be taken into account in their decisions according to the different regions’ customs and economic and geographical resources. In a culminating hands-on project, students work in small groups to create solutions to either limit water



consumption or to solve water issues in places where not everyone has access to water. This engineering project is accompanied by a dissemination project in which students expose the community (students, parents and others) to concepts and conflicts about the use of water, pollution, water wars etc., and point to engineered solutions they designed (compare to the action component in Intercultural Citizenship).

### **Processes of collaboration.**

We set out to explore *how* a group of educators from different disciplines and backgrounds can collaborate to integrate the skills, attitudes and knowledge of intercultural communication and intercultural citizenship into interdisciplinary units in order to help students see connections between their subjects (e.g., mathematics and world language education) and between their subjects and real world problems. To gain insight into the processes involved in our collaboration we analyzed our own notes, memos, and observations following the work of the group from the beginning of the project to the creation of the units. In specific, we looked into our notes, memos, and observations to identify the different happenings related to becoming part of the learning community, such as the quest to understand ourselves as members of our own groups (mathematicians, linguists, educators), as well as finding our identity as a whole group, while at the same time faithfully representing our individual disciplines and authentically integrating all of the subjects into common ground. We also analyzed the data focusing only on events that helped the group build trust and fully engage in the collaboration (e.g., jigsaw activities, intensive feedback sessions, in-class and public presentations). Comparing our data sources we were able to build themes around the different instances of the collaborative learning process that included envisioning the units, exploring possible outcomes, discussing ideas and going back to the drawing board many times until suitable ideas started to emerge, exploring targeted literature as well as giving and receiving feedback to reach the culminating products: interdisciplinary units which can be implemented in the respective contexts for which they were designed. We classified these themes to help us unpack the different support systems that facilitated the collaboration across the different groups that lead up to the successful creation of the units. We now share some insights into four prevalent themes emerging from our reflection. These themes are “respecting disciplinary identities and boundaries”, “extending the understanding beyond the disciplines”, “ensuring a collaborative learning environment”, and “offering opportunities to continue the work beyond the course.”

### **Respecting disciplinary identities and boundaries.**

As we discussed above, the three authors agreed to ensure that the graduate students were able to first consider the role of intercultural competence and intercultural citizenship in their own disciplines. Therefore we held the first meetings of the first graduate course in the fall of 2014 separately. We also planned group work strategically so that sometimes mathematics and foreign language educators would work in separate groups in order to explore targeted discipline-specific questions.

Although we planned the lessons together we gave the participants the opportunity to become familiar with the concept of intercultural competence within their own disciplines before sharing their thoughts with the interdisciplinary group. This

“respect for disciplinary identities” helped participants develop and contribute their ideas about their discipline with confidence and in the understanding that everybody’s contribution is important and heard.

As a result, the group could then tackle theories of intercultural competence, intercultural citizenship, social justice, mathematics discourse and the common core of mathematics together as a group while at the same time feeling comfortable to bring in their own experiences and disciplinary knowledge.

This in turn resulted in an understanding of each other’s content areas and also how the various theories can inform the development of interdisciplinary units that incorporate the various disciplines as well as intercultural citizenship in meaningful ways.

### **Extending the understanding beyond the disciplines.**

By stretching our students’ (and our own) understanding of disciplinary boundaries, we were able to gain a deeper understanding of intercultural citizenship and its impact on our own disciplines, and also on education in general. The interdisciplinary graduate student partnerships consisting of at least one graduate student from mathematics and one from foreign language education, as well as our work together as a whole group, and the collaboration with the school district resulted in situations in which we were inspired, but also ones in which we had to overcome hurdles. Groups had to negotiate their sometimes-different understandings of the project. There were also logistical challenges that had to be overcome. Such situations necessarily led the participants to challenge some of their preconceived notions and thereby might well have contributed to their own continued development of intercultural competence. As we often advised our students to facilitate and welcome potentially controversial situations and even conflicts in order to challenge our beliefs, we in turn welcomed these “bumps in the road” as teachable moments and learning opportunities.

The lessons learned in such interactions which at times caused frustration (because university students might not immediately have grasped why they could not implement their unit in a certain way, for example) ultimately led to a better understanding of articulations, and sometimes the lack thereof, between school and university curricula. We concluded that in order to address the lack of articulation we first must understand the underlying reasons of the problem. Our graduate students shared with us that they were surprised by how much they learned about K-12 schools during the planning of their project. In turn, school administrators and teachers were exposed to discussions and academic presentations at the university level (for example, a presentation on the development of intercultural citizenship and criticality by Michael Byram during his visit at UCONN as part of the project) which in turn ensured their connection to the university level.

### **Ensuring a collaborative learning environment.**

In the collaboration on developing interdisciplinary units we encouraged the teams to take advantage of different perspectives related to disciplines, educational settings, but also personalities. The teams accepted offers to meet in person in class as well as online with the graduate course instructors as well as with the creator of the theory of intercultural citizenship and with colleagues from the public school district. We also facilitated the sharing of developed material in an online platform and

strongly encouraged groups to provide each other with constructive feedback and questions on reflections on theoretical aspects we were pondering as a group as well as on the projects each group was developing. Participants emphasized the importance of this collaborative environment in their reflections and in conversations. All agreed that the units would not have been the same if they had been created alone or even cooperatively (meaning without creating meaning together but merely dividing the tasks). The collaborative nature of the learning environment provided a number of affordances, which we will explore in later publications.

### **Offering opportunities to continue the work beyond the course.**

The last theme pertains to creating an extended community of practice of sorts. It is clear that the three faculty members were committed to continuing their community of practice beyond the two-course sequence as they are already working on preparing the implementations of the planned units in schools, applying the findings to a variety of contexts including new disciplines, disseminating the findings, and securing funding to continue the work. It is important to note, however, that the graduate student groups also bought into this extended model as they created websites with their curricula in order to share their products with interested educators. We also have plans as a group to spread the word in various publications, which will be mentored by the three faculty members.

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this chapter was to share how a group of educators from different disciplines and backgrounds can collaborate to thoughtfully integrate intercultural citizenship into interdisciplinary units in order to help students see connections within their subjects (e.g., mathematics, world languages, and social studies) and between their subjects and real world problems. We hope to have a) convinced the reader of the importance of collaborative endeavors in order to teach intercultural citizenship and b) provided the reader with a glimpse into the complexities as well as the rewards of such an initiative, which was considered a success by the participants involved. The developed units integrate theory of intercultural competence and social justice into the curriculum in mathematics, world languages and social studies. Moreover, we shared some insights into how such collaborations can be facilitated. We also highlight the importance of respecting disciplinary boundaries as well as identities while also fostering a truly collaborative (learning) environment. It might be of interest to the reader to know that we are currently working on the implementations of the units as well as on studying the impact on student outcomes concerning their development of intercultural citizenship and their understanding of content knowledge in the different disciplines and their interconnections. It is our goal to continue to develop or modify units and to conduct studies of their effects in a variety of educational contexts.

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(Footnotes)

- 1 Note that the authors and core members of the partner school district participated in all teams.

## Fostering Global Competence Among Pre-Service Language Teachers: A Comparison of Teacher Beliefs and Practices Between Language Teachers from the U.S. and Spain

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### **Abstract**

*This chapter describes an effort to internationalize a foreign language education initial teacher certification program through a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) grant project that was funded by Valdosta State University. The purpose of the QEP grant was to foster discipline-specific inquiry skills among undergraduate students and to promote the development of global competence. With the guidance of faculty, the teacher candidates who participated in the project conducted a research study that examined teacher beliefs and practices between 18 foreign language teachers from the U.S. and 15 foreign and second language teachers from Spain. The results revealed that both teacher groups share many similar beliefs; however, they diverge in the areas of knowledge and application of language learning standards and the amount of instruction delivered in the target language. The teachers from Spain demonstrated greater knowledge and application of language learning standards, and they also reported spending more time teaching in the target language compared to their U.S. counterparts. Through this research project that took place at home and abroad, the teacher candidates met four global competency learning goals: (1) students investigate the world beyond their immediate environment, (2) students recognize their own and others' perspectives, (3) students communicate their ideas effectively with diverse audiences, and (4) students translate their ideas into appropriate actions to improve conditions (U.S. DOE International Strategy, 2012-2016, p. 6).*

**Key words:** internationalization, study abroad, teacher preparation, world language education

## **Background**

In August of 2014, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) released a position statement on global competence that recognizes the key role that language learning plays in students' development of global competence. Through language study at home and abroad, learners are exposed to cultural products and practices as well as the perspectives that underpin them while communicating and interacting in multicultural communities. According to the position statement, all subject areas should strive to foster global competence from primary through post-secondary education. The position statement also lists five practices that are effective for the development of global competence. These include:

1. Recognize the multiplicity of factors that influence who people are and how they communicate.
2. Investigate and explain cultural differences as well as similarities, looking beneath the surface of stereotypes.
3. Examine events through the lens of media from different countries and cultures.
4. Collaborate to share ideas, discuss topics of common interest, and solve mutual problems.
5. Reflect on one's personal experiences across cultures to evaluate personal feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and reactions. (ACTFL, 2014)

Global competence is closely related to the construct intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and learning environments that foster global competence may provide the ideal conditions for the development of ICC. Byram's (1997) notion of ICC includes how learners view the contact and communication between themselves and members of the target language culture as an "opportunity to learn and be educated, acquiring the capacity to critique and improve their own and others' conditions" (p. 2). Scholars in the area of ICC emphasize the need to prepare learners to engage and collaborate within a global society by figuring out how to interact appropriately with those from other cultures (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007). Similarly, ACTFL (2014) asserted that the development of global competence is essential for successful interactions between diverse groups in local, national, and international settings. Byram (1997) claimed that speakers who possess ICC not only attempt to gain an inside view of another's culture, they also attempt to understand their own culture from an alternate cultural perspective. This may be achieved by investigating the world beyond the learners' immediate environment, identifying and evaluating perspectives, obtaining and applying both disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, expressing ideas, and taking action, all of which are essential for the development of global competence (ACTFL, 2014).

ACTFL's position statement on global competence is well aligned with the U.S. Department of Education's (DOE) International Strategy 2012–2016, which is a fully articulated plan to prepare today's youth for a globalized world and to improve education at home through engagement with the international community. According to this document, U.S. students must broaden their understanding and perspective of the world in order to compete in the global job market. This includes knowledge and understanding of the practices of other countries as they apply to students' specific



disciplines and future professional practice. As a result, the lessons learned abroad could promote innovation and excellence at home. The International Strategy 2012–2016 includes four global competency learning goals for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills applied to the world: (1) students investigate the world beyond their immediate environment, (2) students recognize their own and others' perspectives, (3) students communicate their ideas effectively with diverse audiences, and (4) students translate their ideas into appropriate actions to improve conditions (U.S. DOE International Strategy, p. 6).

During foreign language coursework in the U.S., teacher candidates are typically exposed to the products, practices, and perspectives of other cultures. However, learners do not always develop awareness and/or connect the importance of learning about the practices of the foreign culture; furthermore, they often fail to understand the applicability of this knowledge to their future professional activities (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999). In support of the DOE's global competency learning goals, a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) grant was secured to internationalize a foreign language education (FLED) program at a regional university in the Southeast. The teacher candidates who participated in the project were all undergraduates who were seeking initial certification in Spanish. Not only did they participate in a summer study abroad program where they took teacher preparation coursework with native Spaniards who were training to teach Spanish as a second language in Spain; but prior to studying abroad, the candidates also took a research seminar course in which they developed knowledge of discipline-specific inquiry skills. Namely, they completed a Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) module on Human Research Ethics, they learned about survey design and quantitative methods (*t*-tests), and they conducted a review of the literature on foreign language teacher beliefs and practices, which they compiled into annotated bibliographies. In addition, they designed a survey instrument, translated it into Spanish, and piloted it prior to traveling abroad. This chapter describes the research study that stemmed from the grant project to internationalize the FLED curriculum. By designing the study, conducting the research at home and abroad, and analyzing and disseminating the results, the teacher candidates met all four global competency learning goals outlined by the DOE's (2012-2016) International Strategy.

## **Review of Literature**

The teacher candidates discussed potential areas where teacher beliefs might differ between foreign and second language teachers from the U.S. and Spain. Based on their discussion, they researched beliefs about language learning (Horwitz, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1990) as well as three additional constructs to include on the survey. This literature review highlights the research studies that were compiled, analyzed, and synthesized by the teacher candidates to inform the survey instrument used in this study. The review of literature presented below focuses on the four constructs that were investigated in the present study: (1) beliefs about language learning, (2) beliefs about knowledge and application of language learning standards, (3) beliefs about the importance of teaching grammar, and (4) beliefs about the amount of instruction that should be delivered in the target language.



## **Beliefs about Language Learning**

Horwitz (1985, 1988, 1989, 1990) asserted that responses on the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) can indicate whether an individual's beliefs about foreign language learning are comparable with what scholars know about how people learn foreign languages. The BALLI measures beliefs about language learning in the following five areas: (1) foreign language aptitude, (2) difficulty of language learning, (3) nature of language learning, (4) learning and communication strategies, and (5) motivation and expectation.

With respect to foreign language aptitude, Horwitz (1985) claimed that some teacher candidates tend to believe that certain individuals have an innate ability for language learning while others do not. She suggested that this perception could have negative consequences for learners because teachers may have lower expectations of students whom they view as lacking an innate aptitude for languages. Regarding the difficulty of language learning, Horwitz (1985) asserted that when some languages are perceived as being more difficult than others, then teachers could become frustrated when students have difficulty learning an "easy language" (p. 336). With respect to the nature of language learning, she claimed that when teachers believe that foreign language instruction is different than teaching other academic disciplines, then they are less likely to spend the majority of their instructional time teaching grammar rules and/or translation. In the area of learning and communication strategies, Horwitz (1985) stated that teacher candidates have begun to show greater acceptance of communicative approaches; however, she suggested that they often do not incorporate them into their classrooms effectively because they lack sufficient models of communicative activities from their own language learning experiences. Finally, Horwitz (1985) asserted that teacher candidates often begin their methods course believing that motivating students is the responsibility of the teacher. Over time, however, teachers often become frustrated and begin to blame students for their lack of motivation for language learning.

Since the BALLI was developed by Horwitz (1985, 1988, 1989, 1990), it has been widely used as a research instrument in the fields of foreign language education and second language acquisition (Abraham & Vann, 1987; Cotterall, 1995; Holec, 1987; Horwitz, 1988, 1989, 1990; Mori, 1999; Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Wen & Johnson, 1997). In addition to the BALLI's use with pre-service teachers, it has also been used to uncover the beliefs of in-service language teachers and foreign language students across various levels (Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1999, 2001; Rifkin, 2000; Samimy & Lee, 1997; Siebert, 2003; White, 1999). Furthermore, it has been demonstrated to be a valid and reliable instrument (Horwitz, 1988, 1989, 1990; Kern 1995).

## **Knowledge and Application of Language Learning Standards**

Apart from the five areas examined by the BALLI, the present study also investigated beliefs and practices related to knowledge and application of language learning standards. Within the U.S., many foreign language educators adhere to the ACTFL Standards for Foreign Language Learning (1996, 1999, 2006); the most current (fourth) edition is known as the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (2015). Similarly, second and foreign language teachers in Spain employ

the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (CEFR) standards (2011), which are published in 39 languages. Both the ACTFL and the CEFR standards are used to identify what students should know and be able to do in the foreign language.

The two frameworks (ACTFL and CEFR) provide guidelines for teachers that explain what topics need to be covered and the skills that need to be fostered in classroom instruction at specific levels. Both systems also provide proficiency guidelines to determine the level of the student based on specific tasks they are able to perform in the target language. The main differences between the two frameworks can be found within the evaluation scales for students. The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012) divide proficiency into five main levels (novice, intermediate, advanced, superior, and distinguished); the first three of which are further broken down into the sub-categories of low, mid, and high. In the CEFR framework (2011), there are three main levels (A or basic, B or independent, and C or proficient), which are broken down into two subcategories for each that are marked with either a 1 or a 2 (i.e. A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2). While the categories are marked differently, both systems run more or less equivalent in the major markers for changing from level to level. Mosher, Slagter, and Surface (2010) found no difference in the ability to classify proficiency accurately between the two systems with the exception that the ACTFL self-assessment speaking statements provide a slightly more accurate description than their CEFR counterparts.

With respect to teachers' use of language learning standards, Bärenfänger and Tschirner (2008) suggested that the CEFR standards could be used to create a quantifiable quality management system for foreign language educators and curricula in order to improve foreign language teaching and learning in Europe. Furthermore, they asserted that the CEFR framework is especially useful for prompting language educators to reflect on their current practices and for helping teachers, learners, course designers, administrators, and examining bodies to "situate and coordinate their efforts" (Bärenfänger & Tschirner, 2008, p. 81). Conversely, Liskin-Gasparro (2003) asserted a more skeptical view for teachers within the U.S. by stating that the ACTFL standards and the idea of "proficiency" are grounded more in theory than in real world application. Moreover, Quinn Allen (2002) found that there are a diverse number of variables that can impact U.S. teachers' knowledge and use of the ACTFL standards, including: location, membership in professional organizations, gender, and the type of school at which they teach. Another possible factor in U.S. teachers' application of the ACTFL standards is their knowledge of research and theory in the field. Byrd, Cummings Hlas, Watzke, and Montes Valencia (2011) found that U.S. teacher educators who were experts on second language acquisition theories perceived the standards as a greater resource than language teachers who did not have a strong background in research and theory.

There have been relatively few studies conducted that investigate teachers' knowledge and use of language learning standards within either the ACTFL or the CEFR frameworks and even fewer studies have compared the two frameworks. More research is needed in this area; in particular, research that compares teachers' understanding and use of the CEFR versus ACTFL language learning standards.

## **Importance of Grammar Instruction**

The third area of focus for the present study was to compare European and U.S. teacher beliefs and practices with respect to grammar instruction. Research findings suggest that teachers and learners alike perceive grammar instruction to be an important part of language learning (Jean & Simard, 2011; Kissau, Algozzine, & Yon, 2012; Polat, 2009; Schulz, 1996). Jean and Simard (2011) conducted a large scale study with 2,366 students and/or instructors of either English as a second language or French as a second language in Canada. They found that language teachers and students believe that learning grammar rules is necessary for language learning; however, they also found that both instructors and students alike perceived grammar instruction as being boring. Therefore, the researchers suggested that grammar should be taught explicitly only when it is necessary (e.g., for teaching complex structures) in order to avoid dampening students' motivation for language learning. They also recommended using more implicit instruction for structures that can be learned inductively.

Similarly, Polat (2009) also found that both teachers and learners perceive grammar instruction to be essential for language learning. He compared teacher and learner beliefs in Georgia (the former Soviet Republic) between teachers and students of English as a foreign language. Not only did he find a strong belief among teachers for the importance of teaching grammar, he also found that both teachers and learners believed that knowledge of grammar in the first language is a prerequisite for learning the grammar of the target language. Moreover, Polat (2009) found that the majority of the language students in his study believed that "grammar learning is equal to language learning" (p. 235).

While grammar instruction appears to be perceived as important by both instructors and learners, Schulz' (1996) large-scale study of 916 U.S. instructors and learners of commonly- and less-commonly-taught foreign languages found that students, regardless of the foreign language studied, are in favor of focus-on-form instruction. Conversely, she found that more language instructors than learners believe that role-play activities that simulate real-life contexts are more important than mechanical grammar drills. This view is reiterated by Toth (2004), who stated that second language instruction can be undermined when students focus only on structures rather than on broader discourse goals.

Particularly in recent studies, such as the one performed by Kissau, Algozzine, and Yon (2012), findings suggest that U.S. language instructors believe that grammar instruction should play a secondary and supportive role to communicative-based approaches. While the present body of literature indicates that language educators perceive grammar instruction to be an important part of language learning, some studies point to a changing trend in foreign language instruction from a structural (focus-on-form) approach to a more communicative approach both in the U.S. and internationally (Jean & Simard, 2011; Kissau, Algozzine, & Yon, 2012; Schulz, 1996).

## **Amount of Instruction Delivered in the Target Language**

The final focus of the present study was to examine beliefs and practices regarding the amount of instruction that should be delivered in the target language.

Within the U.S., Wilbur (2007) found that novice teachers tended to shy away from communicative techniques and focus more on grammar instruction because that is how they were taught, especially at the college level. Other reasons why U.S. language instructors avoid teaching in the target language found by Bateman (2008) include: (1) an inability to discipline students in the target language, (2) target language teaching is more time consuming, (3) the difficulty of building rapport with students when instructing in the target language, and (4) the belief that vocabulary acquisition requires code-switching.

While U.S. teacher preparation programs aspire to graduate novice teachers that have attained Advanced Low speaking proficiency, the fact remains that many do not reach this benchmark by graduation (Cooper, 2004; Glisan, Swender, & Surface, 2013; Liskin-Gasparro, 1999; Schulz, 2000; Vélez-Rendón, 2002). Glisan, Swender, and Surface (2013) examined the official ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview scores of 1,957 teacher candidates from 2006 – 2012 and found that 45% of the examinees were unable to reach ACTFL's minimum proficiency recommendation for certification. Schulz (2000) claimed that the failure of teacher preparation programs to help candidates develop acceptable levels of proficiency is a significant problem because foreign language teachers' lack of proficiency causes them to rely on more traditional, but less effective, grammar-focused instruction.

For those teacher candidates who manage to reach the minimum required proficiency level by graduation, there is the matter of keeping up or improving upon their language skills once they graduate. Fraga-Cañadas (2010) stated that almost half of the U.S. Spanish teachers she surveyed felt that their language skills had declined or remained the same since graduation. Horwitz (1996) asserted that foreign language teachers who are nonnative or semi-native speakers of the language they teach are advanced language learners themselves, and thus may exhibit anxiety about speaking in the target language during class. Horwitz (1996) also suggested that high levels of teacher foreign language anxiety may have negative consequences on classroom practices; namely, instructors may subconsciously choose instructional strategies that require little language production, and they may only engage in linguistic interactions that are controlled and predictable.

Therefore, research suggests that U.S. foreign language teachers' lack of proficiency in the target language and/or their language anxiety may result in an inadequate amount of instruction delivered in the target language. According to ACTFL's Proficiency Guidelines for speaking (2012), foreign language teachers who cannot speak at the Advanced Low level (for Spanish and French) do not have the necessary tools to adequately address the three modes of communication in their classrooms, and they are unable to provide sufficient target language input to create an acquisition rich environment for learners to develop their communicative skills in the foreign language.

In an attempt to help improve practices in the U.S., Pufahl, Rhodes, and Christian (2001) surveyed foreign language teachers in 19 countries to determine what works abroad. Some of the innovative international teaching practices noted in their report include: (1) teaching content-area subjects through the vehicle of the foreign language, (2) using communicative language teaching methods, (3) emphasizing language learning strategies, (3) using only the target language in the classroom,

and (4) differentiating instruction based on students' proficiency level. With respect to Spain, the researchers found that focusing on communicative and intercultural learning has "resulted in increased oral and written proficiency for their students" (Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian, 2001, p. 40). The researchers also found that the underlying rationale for using communicative methods is now reflected in textbooks and curricula in Spain.

The European Commission published a comprehensive study on language competencies in 2012 which included data from 14 countries (including Spain) and over 54,000 students, teachers, and administrators from across Europe. Major findings include the following: (1) early language learning results in higher levels of proficiency and a greater number of foreign languages studied, (2) there is a positive relationship between learners' proficiency and their exposure to the target language via media, (3) learners who believe that the target language is useful tend to achieve higher proficiency levels, (4) there is a positive relationship between learners' proficiency and teacher and student use of the target language during class, and (5) differences with respect to initial and continued teacher training among the various educational systems of Europe do not appear to have an impact on students' proficiency.

Pufahl, Rhodes, and Christian (2001) claimed that teacher training is more rigorous in many European countries than in the U.S. and that the teaching profession is held in higher esteem in Europe, which has made an impact on the quality of the candidates who enter the teaching profession. Furthermore, the researchers found that many European teacher preparation programs have study or work abroad components that have contributed to "the high level of language proficiency among foreign language teachers" (Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian, 2001, p. 40). Therefore, teacher proficiency in the target language does not appear to be as significant of an issue in Europe as it is in the U.S.; however, more research is needed comparing foreign language teacher proficiency, the amount of instruction they received in the target language, and teacher preparation requirements between the U.S. and other countries and how these variables may impact student learning.

## **Research Questions**

Given the paucity of research comparing teacher beliefs and practices between U.S. foreign and second language teachers and those in other countries, this study will help fill the gap in the present body of knowledge by addressing the following questions:

1. Do foreign and/or second language teachers in the U.S. and Spain differ in their beliefs about language learning in the following five areas as measured by the BALLI (Horwitz, 2008): (a) foreign language aptitude, (b) difficulty of language learning, (c) nature of language learning, (d) learning and communication strategies, and (e) motivation and expectation?
2. Do foreign and/or second language teachers in the U.S. and Spain differ in their beliefs and practices regarding knowledge and application of language learning standards?
3. Do foreign and/or second language teachers in the U.S. and Spain differ in their beliefs and practices regarding the importance of grammar instruction?

4. Do foreign and/or second language teachers in the U.S and Spain differ in their beliefs and practices regarding the appropriate amount of target language use in their instruction?

## **Method**

### *Participants*

The following demographic information was collected from participants on a survey: (1) the language taught, (2) the number of years of language teaching experience, and (3) the participant's gender. Participants included 33 secondary-level foreign or second language teachers, 18 from the U.S. and 15 from Spain. Although the majority of the survey participants taught Spanish as a foreign or second language, there were also two French teachers—one in the U.S. group and one in the group from Spain—as well as one English as a Foreign Language teacher in the group from Spain. The U.S. language teachers taught at four high schools that were close in proximity to the teacher candidates' home institution. Similarly, the language teachers from Spain taught at an international language school for secondary-level students that was close in proximity to the candidates' study abroad institution in Spain. Among the U.S. teachers, 39% had 1-5 years of language teaching experience, 17% had 6-10 years of experience, and 44% had 11 or more years of experience. The teachers from Spain were fairly well distributed, with 33% having 1-5 years of experience, 33% having 6-10 years of experience, and 34% having 11 or more years of experience. There were 29 females and 4 males in the sample.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

An anonymous questionnaire measuring teacher beliefs and practices was administered to 15 secondary-level foreign or second language teachers from Spain during the summer semester of 2014 and to 18 secondary-level foreign language teachers from the U.S. during the fall semester of 2014. The anonymous survey was created and delivered using the Qualtrics online survey software and platform. Likert scores were totaled for each construct that was measured by the survey and mean scores for each category were subjected to independent samples *t*-tests to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the two groups. All data were analyzed using SAS® 9.2 for Windows software. Data were screened for outliers and the assumptions of the test were checked prior to running the inferential procedures. In addition, the Bonferroni adjustment ( $\alpha = 0.00625$ ) was applied to the set of tests to ensure that the Type I error rate was not inflated.

### *Instrument and Scoring*

Horwitz' BALLI (1985, 1987, 1988, 2008) provided the foundation for the survey instrument. It contains 34 items that are rated on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The (2008) version of the BALLI was employed in the present study and it is presented in Appendix A. For this version of the BALLI, "English" was replaced with "the language I teach" and "I" was replaced with "my students," as was suggested by Horwitz (2008) for administering the survey to students and/or teachers of languages other than English. Items from each of the five categories measured by the BALLI were tallied to arrive at a mean score for each

construct by group. Five constructs were measured by the BALLI as follows: (1) nine items measured beliefs about foreign language aptitude (Questions 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 22, 29, 32, 34); (2) six items measured difficulty of language learning (Questions 3, 4, 6, 14, 24, 28); (3) six items measured the nature of language learning (Questions 8, 11, 16, 20, 25, 26); (4) eight items measured learning and communication strategies (Questions 7, 9, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21); and (5) five items measured motivation and expectation (Questions 23, 27, 30, 31, 33).

Three additional constructs were examined in the present study as follows: (1) three items measured beliefs and practices regarding knowledge and application of language learning standards (Questions 35-37); (2) three items measured beliefs and practices with respect to the importance of teaching grammar (Questions 38-40); and (3) three items measured beliefs and practices regarding the amount of instruction delivered in the target language (Questions 41-43). These additional items were also rated on a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items from each of the three additional categories measured by the survey were tallied to arrive at a mean score for each construct by group. Cronbach's alpha was computed for each of these constructs and the estimates of internal consistency reliability all exceeded 0.70, which is the minimum acceptable value recommended by Nunnally (1978).

In addition, the survey was translated into Spanish by two of the researchers, one of whom is a native speaker of Spanish. The translations were beta tested with three native speakers of Spanish who were tertiary-level Spanish instructors and problematic vocabulary items were reworded and retested prior to delivering the survey in Spain.

Finally, three additional items were added to the survey to elicit demographic information and one semi open-ended item was added to elicit any perceived obstacles to teaching in the target language. The additional survey items (Questions 35-47) are presented in Appendix B.

## Results

### Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory

Mean scores and standard deviations for the five areas that are measured by the BALLI are presented in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for BALLI Constructs by Group*

BALLI Construct	Group	n	Mean	SD
Foreign Language Aptitude (Range 9 – 45)	U.S.	18	31.94	1.10
	Spain	15	28.87	1.22
Difficulty of Language Learning (Range 6 – 30)	U.S.	18	20.83	1.08
	Spain	15	19.00	1.23
Nature of Language Learning (Range 6 – 30)	U.S.	18	18.56	1.14
	Spain	15	18.67	1.28



Learning and Communication Strategies (Range 8 – 40)	U.S.	18	25.67	1.14
	Spain	15	25.07	1.25
Motivation and Expectation (Range 5 – 25)	U.S.	18	20.06	1.13
	Spain	15	21.80	1.30

A visual inspection of Table 1 reveals that the two groups of teachers had very similar mean scores for the five constructs that are measured by the BALLI. To determine if group differences were statistically significant, mean scores for the five constructs measured by the BALLI were subjected to five independent samples *t*-tests with alpha set at 0.00625 for the set of tests. Results were as follows: (1) foreign language aptitude,  $t(31) = 2.66$ ,  $p = 0.01$ , (2) difficulty of language learning,  $t(31) = 1.32$ ,  $p = 0.20$ , (3) nature of language learning,  $t(31) = -0.07$ ,  $p = 0.94$ , (4) learning and communication strategies,  $t(31) = 0.29$ ,  $p = 0.77$ , and (5) motivation and expectation,  $t(31) = -2.24$ ,  $p = 0.03$ . The analyses did not reveal any statistically significant differences between language teachers from the U.S. and Spain as measured by the BALLI when the Bonferroni adjustment was applied.

**Additional Survey Items**

Mean scores and standard deviations for the additional three constructs measured by the survey are presented in Table 2: (1) knowledge and application of language learning standards, (2) importance of grammar instruction, and (3) amount of instruction delivered in the target language.

Table 2  
*Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Additional Constructs by Group*

Construct	Group	n	Mean	SD
Knowledge and Application of Language Learning Standards (Range 3 – 15)	U.S.	18	10.78	2.41
	Spain	15	13.00	1.77
Importance of Grammar Instruction (Range 3 – 15)	U.S.	18	7.56	1.76
	Spain	15	6.20	1.61
Amount of Instruction in TL (Range 3 – 15)	U.S.	18	8.94	2.01
	Spain	15	13.33	1.29

A visual inspection of Table 2 reveals that the two groups of teachers had the closest mean scores for the importance of grammar instruction and the two groups differed most on the amount of instruction delivered in the target language. In order to determine if the group differences were statistically significant, mean scores for each of the three additional constructs examined by the survey were subjected to independent samples *t*-tests with alpha set at 0.00625.

**Knowledge and Application of Language Learning Standards.** Whereas 93% of participants from Spain claimed they either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that CEFR standards guide their curriculum and planning, only 67% of U.S. participants stated that they either strongly agreed or agreed that the ACTFL



standards guide their curriculum and planning. In order to determine if responses between the two groups differed with respect to knowledge and application of language learning standards, data were analyzed using an independent-samples *t*-test. This analysis revealed a significant difference between the two groups,  $t(31) = -2.96$ ;  $p = 0.0059$ . Mean scores were significantly higher for the foreign and second language teachers from Spain ( $M = 13.00$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ) than for the foreign language teachers from the U.S. ( $M = 10.78$ ,  $SD = 2.41$ ), indicating that the language educators from Spain reported greater familiarity with their language learning standards than the language educators from the U.S. The observed difference between the mean scores was  $-2.22$  and the 95% confidence interval for the difference between means extended from  $-3.75$  to  $-0.69$ . The effect size was computed as  $d = 1.03$ . The Bonferroni adjustment was applied with alpha set at 0.00625.

***The Importance of Grammar Instruction.*** Regarding the relative importance placed on the instruction of grammar, a low percentage of participants from both groups reported teaching grammar 70% or more of the time (17% from the U.S. and 7% from Spain). However, only 6% of the U.S. teachers stated that they taught grammar less than 30% of the time while 33% of the teachers from Spain reported instructing grammar less than 30% of class time. Data were analyzed using an independent-samples *t*-test. This analysis did not reveal a significant difference between the two groups,  $t(31) = 2.29$ ;  $p = 0.03$ , indicating that there were no significant differences between the teachers from the U.S. and those from Spain for the emphasis that is placed on the instruction of grammar. The Bonferroni adjustment was applied with alpha set at 0.00625.

***Amount of Instruction Delivered in the Target Language.*** The overwhelming majority of the respondents from Spain (93%) reported teaching 90% or more of the time in the target language while only 17% of the respondents from the U.S. reported doing so. Similarly, 100% of the teachers surveyed from Spain agreed or strongly agreed that “teachers should only speak in the target language during class” while only 39% of the teachers surveyed from the U.S. agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Furthermore, 56% of the U.S. respondents agreed or strongly agreed that testing was an impediment to teaching in the target language while only 20% of the participants from Spain agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. In order to determine if responses between the two groups differed with respect to the amount of instruction delivered in the target language, data were analyzed using an independent-samples *t*-test. The analysis revealed a significant difference between the two groups,  $t(31) = -7.28$ ;  $p < 0.0001$ . Mean scores were significantly higher for the foreign and second language teachers from Spain ( $M = 13.33$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ) than for the foreign language teachers from the U.S. ( $M = 8.94$ ,  $SD = 2.01$ ), indicating that the language educators from Spain reported using the target language for instruction significantly more than their counterparts from the U.S. The observed difference between the mean scores was  $-4.39$  and the 95% confidence interval for the difference between means extended from  $-5.62$  to  $-3.16$ . The effect size was computed as  $d = 2.54$ . The Bonferroni adjustment was applied with alpha set at 0.00625.

## Reported Obstacles to Teaching in the Target Language

A comparison of the responses reported to the semi open-ended survey item about obstacles to teaching in the target language (Question 44, Appendix B) revealed differences between the U.S. and Spanish teachers' beliefs about target language instruction. Whereas 55% of U.S. respondents (10 of 18) selected "the students will not understand me," only 13% of the participants from Spain (2 of 15) selected this option. While no U.S. participants selected the options "my speaking ability in the foreign language" and "my foreign language anxiety," 13% (2 of 15) of the respondents from Spain selected these options. Conversely, while 17% (3 of 18) of the U.S. foreign language teachers selected "lack of support from administrators or parents," no foreign or second language teachers from Spain selected this option. Finally, participants were able to select "other" and list an obstacle to teaching in the target language: 28% (5 of 18) of the U.S. respondents selected this option and 60% (9 of 15) of the participants from Spain selected this option. Responses from the U.S. foreign language teachers included "time," "student motivation," "no parent support," "[Teacher Keys Effectiveness System] TKES," and "heavy grammar curriculum / SLO." Responses to this item were markedly different among the second and foreign language teachers from Spain, as the majority of them listed "*nada*" [nothing] or "*SOLO UTILIZO EL ESPAÑOL*" [I only use Spanish.].

## Discussion

### *Similar Beliefs about Language Learning*

The five BALLI constructs were subjected to inferential procedures because the main purpose of the study was to determine if there were any statistically significant differences between participants from the U.S. and Spain regarding their beliefs about language learning. The results indicated that the two groups of teachers appeared to have very similar beliefs about language learning as measured by the BALLI.

### *Differing Beliefs and Practices*

Regarding beliefs and practices with respect to knowledge and application of language learning standards, the foreign and second language teachers from Spain reported adhering more closely to the CEFR standards for planning, instruction, assignments, and assessments than the foreign language teachers from the U.S. in this study. This finding resonates with Pufahl, Rhodes, and Christian (2001), as their research found that many European countries have a well articulated framework that provides common terminology for lesson planning, instructional materials, assessments, and teacher training. The researchers further claimed that having a well articulated common framework throughout most of Europe has led to greater learning outcomes for foreign language students (Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian, 2001).

Within the U.S., each state has comprehensive, yet different, standards for foreign language learning. All of the respondents from the U.S. were from a rural part of the state of Georgia. The Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) for Modern Languages at the secondary level, which are based on the national ACTFL standards, are subdivided by level of language taught (Levels I – VIII) and are further broken down by the mode of communication addressed (interpersonal, interpretive, or

presentational). Therefore, these Georgia teachers may only focus on the GPS that apply to the specific language courses that they teach. In all four of the local Georgia high schools where the survey was administered, foreign language teachers are required to list GPS rather than national standards on lesson plans. Therefore, it is possible that the Georgia foreign language teachers who participated in the survey had greater knowledge and use of state rather than national standards. While the Georgia teachers were likely aware that the GPS standards are based on the ACTFL standards, they may not have been as familiar with the ACTFL standards because they are not required to work with them on a daily basis. Furthermore, it is also possible that these Georgia teachers were unaware of exactly how the GPS standards align with the national ACTFL standards.

Since there is much variation among state standards within the U.S., foreign language teachers may benefit from more professional development on how state standards align with the ACTFL national standards and proficiency guidelines. It may also be helpful for foreign language teachers to be required to list national standards, in addition to state standards, on their daily lesson plans. Following the European example, a stronger knowledge base and use of the common national ACTFL framework may strengthen foreign language teaching and learning within the U.S.

With respect to the importance of teaching grammar, no significant differences were found between the two groups. It appears that language teachers from Spain and from the U.S. share similar beliefs about the relative importance of grammar instruction within the foreign and second language curriculum. This finding also resonates with current research in the field which indicates that grammar instruction should have a secondary role in the classroom and that it should primarily be used to support communicative-based approaches to language instruction (Jean & Simard, 2011; Kissau, Algozzine, & Yon, 2012; Toth, 2004).

Regarding these teachers' beliefs and practices about the amount of instruction delivered in the target language, there was a highly significant difference found between the two groups of teachers, with the foreign and second language teachers from Spain reporting that they spent more time teaching in the target language compared to their U.S. counterparts. As noted in the findings, an overwhelming majority of respondents from Spain (93%) reported teaching 90% or more of the time in the target language while only 17% of the respondents from the U.S. reported doing so. When asked what prevented them from teaching in the target language, none of the respondents from Spain selected "lack of support from administrators or parents." Moreover, the majority of respondents from Spain (60%) selected "other" and stated that "nothing" impeded them from teaching in the target language. Conversely, the majority of respondents from the U.S. (55%) selected "my students will not understand me" as the biggest obstacle to teaching in the target language. Given this finding, it may be helpful to provide more professional development for U.S. teachers on strategies for facilitating students' comprehension of the target language. Furthermore, as reported in the findings, the U.S. respondents listed a number of obstacles that they perceived as preventing them from engaging in target language instruction; namely, "student motivation," "interest," and a lack of time. In addition, 17% of U.S. respondents selected "lack of support from administrators or parents" as an impediment to teaching in the target language. It appears that concerns over student mo-

tivation and interest as well as concerns over a lack of support from administrators and parents may impede instruction in the target language among these U.S. foreign language teachers. Moreover, the present findings may indicate that perceived negative attitudes about the target language by administrators, parents, and/or students may prevent these teachers from engaging in instruction in the target language. More research will be needed to uncover the motivations behind the responses for this item and whether fears regarding negative attitudes toward the target language play a role in these U.S. teachers' beliefs and practices with respect teaching in the target language.

Furthermore, concerns about teacher evaluation practices were listed as impediments to teaching in the target language among the U.S. participants. One respondent stated that, ". . . We are frequently observed now because of TKES and administrators cannot understand the higher level questions and activities because of the target language." The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) consists of three components: (1) Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS), (2) Student Surveys of Instructional Practice, and (3) Measures of Student Growth and Academic Achievement (i.e. Student Learning Outcome (SLO) tests for foreign languages). The respondent was referring to TAPS, or the four walk through and two formative observations that credentialed administrators are required to perform for each teacher annually in Georgia. It is likely that this participant is concerned that speaking in the target language would adversely affect his or her administrative evaluation.

Another Georgia respondent listed, "heavy grammar curriculum / SLO" as an impediment to teaching in the target language. The SLO tests are also a component of the TKES evaluation system and they are designed to measure student learning at the classroom level as well as a teacher's impact on student learning. It is noteworthy that two of the comments referred specifically to the TKES evaluation system as an impediment to teaching in the target language. As reported in the results, over half of the Georgia respondents indicated that testing prevents them from teaching in the target language. While the survey did not specify whether the tests were chapter exams or SLO tests, it is clear that testing was viewed as an obstacle to teaching in the target language among these respondents. While ACTFL recommends that 90% or more of instruction is delivered in the target language, it appears that compliance with TKES may inhibit teaching in the target language among these Georgia language educators. However, more research is needed to corroborate the findings of the present study before any definitive claims can be made.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

The present study only included 33 participants; therefore, the findings are likely not generalizable across all secondary foreign and second language teachers from the U.S. and Spain. Furthermore, the two groups varied in that the U.S. group had only foreign language teachers, and the Spanish group contained some second language teachers who likely have less resistance to target language instruction among students, parents, and administrators compared to foreign language instructors. Moreover, as noted in the literature review, Quinn Allen (2002) found that teachers' location, membership in professional organizations, gender, and the type

of school in which they teach can impact teachers' knowledge and use of the ACTFL national standards. Therefore, the lack of familiarity with the U.S. national standards for language learning may be unique to this group of U.S. teachers. Future studies that include more second and foreign language teacher participants from diverse areas across the two countries and across a variety of instructional contexts and languages are needed to be able to substantiate the findings of this study.

In addition, future studies could elicit qualitative data and use mixed methods. The present study only employed quantitative methods and qualitative analyses could potentially explain why 83% of the Georgia teachers who participated in this study reported that they did not adhere to the ACTFL guideline of using the target language at least 90% of the time. Similarly, follow-up studies that employ qualitative methods may be able to uncover why the Georgia teachers reported having less knowledge and application of ACTFL standards compared to their Spanish counterparts' knowledge and application of CEFR standards. Moreover, follow-up interviews or focus groups could elicit more detailed information regarding teachers' beliefs, in particular to elucidate the results of the semi open-ended responses concerning SLO tests and TKES evaluations as being obstacles to teaching in the target language.

Furthermore, the present study did not ascertain the teachers' level of proficiency in the target language. While the U.S. teachers reported that their proficiency level was not an obstacle to teaching in the target language, an individual's perceived level of proficiency may not be accurate. Therefore, level of proficiency may have exerted an influence on the amount of instruction that teachers reported delivering in the target language. Similarly, the survey did not query whether the teachers were native or heritage speakers of the languages that they teach. Future studies could address this limitation by determining if there is a correlation between teacher beliefs about target language instruction and teacher proficiency level.

Other limitations of the study include the methodological problems that are inherent to all questionnaires that examine beliefs and attitudes such as sampling, objectivity, and validity (Christison & Krahnke, 1986). Moreover, participants may not have been truthful in their self reports on the questionnaire.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, this study found that language educators in the U.S. and Spain share many similar beliefs about language learning. However, the two groups diverged in their beliefs and practices with respect to knowledge and application of language learning standards and amount of instruction delivered in the target language. The present findings indicate that the respondents from Spain had stronger knowledge and use of the CEFR standards than the U.S. respondents did of the ACTFL standards. Moreover, an overwhelming majority of the language teachers surveyed from Spain reported delivering 90% or more of their instruction in the target language while less than one-fifth of the teachers surveyed from the U.S. reported doing so even though it is a recommendation by ACTFL (2010).

In addition to the findings listed above, the research project described in this chapter enabled U.S. undergraduate foreign language teacher candidates to meet four global competency learning goals that were set forth by the DOE's Internation-

al Strategy (2012-2016). These four learning goals were met through designing the present study, implementing it at home and abroad, analyzing the results, and disseminating the research findings to relevant stakeholders in the field of foreign and second language education. For example, the first global competency learning goal is for learners to investigate the world beyond their immediate environment, which the candidates accomplished by conducting a research study with participants in both the U.S. and Spain. The second global competency learning goal is for learners to recognize their own and others' perspectives. This goal was accomplished two ways; first, candidates were able to uncover both U.S. and international perspectives on language teaching through an extensive review of the relevant literature on the topics under investigation. Second, by designing, delivering, and analyzing the results of the questionnaire, the candidates compared and contrasted teacher beliefs and practices between foreign and second language teachers in Spain, with whom they were not familiar, and local foreign language teachers in Georgia, with whom they were familiar due to the numerous hours the candidates spent in local schools conducting observations and participating in field experiences as part of their teacher preparation program. Finally, the last two global competency learning goals of communicating ideas effectively with diverse audiences and translating ideas into appropriate actions to improve conditions were accomplished through the dissemination of the research findings at state, regional, and national conferences and through formally writing the results in the form of an article to be shared with language teaching professionals in the region and beyond, which could help improve teaching practices at home.

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## Appendix A

### Horwitz' (2008) Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory

Directions: For each item, indicate whether you (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, or (5) strongly agree. For questions 4 and 14, select the number that most closely corresponds to your opinion.

1. It is easier for children than for adults to learn a foreign language.
2. Some people have a special ability for learning foreign languages.
3. Some languages are easier to learn than others.

4. English is:

1. a very difficult language
2. a difficult language
3. a language of medium difficulty
4. an easy language
5. a very easy language

5. People from my country are good at learning foreign languages.

6. I believe that I will learn to speak English very well.

7. It is important to speak English with an excellent pronunciation.

8. It is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English.

9. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.

10. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.

11. It is best to learn English in an English-speaking country.

12. I enjoy practicing English with the Americans that I meet.

13. It's o.k. to guess if you don't know a word in English.

14. If someone spent one hour a day learning a language, how long would it take for them to learn that language very well?

1. less than a year
2. 1–2 years
3. 3–5 years
4. 5–10 years
5. You can't learn a language in one hour a day.

15. I have a special ability for learning foreign languages.

16. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the vocabulary words.

17. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.

18. I feel timid speaking English with other people.

19. If beginning students are permitted to make errors in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on.

20. The most important part of learning a foreign language is learning the grammar.

21. It is important to practice with cassette tapes.

22. Women are better than men at learning foreign languages.

23. I want to speak English well.

24. It is easier to speak than to understand a foreign language.

25. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other academic subjects.

26. The most important part of learning English is learning how to translate from my native language.

27. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have better opportunities for a good job.

28. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.

29. People who are good at mathematics or science are not good at learning foreign languages.

30. People in my country feel that it is important to speak English.

31. I would like to have American friends.

32. People who speak more than one language are very intelligent.

33. I would like to learn English so that I can get to know Americans.

34. Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language.

The version of the BALLI implemented in this study was published in the following text:

Horwitz, E.K. (2008). *Becoming a language teacher: A practical guide to second language learning and teaching*. Boston: Pearson Education.

Special thanks are owed to Dr. Elaine Horwitz for granting permission for the BALLI to be used for this study.

## Appendix B

### Additional Survey Items

#### Knowledge and Application of Language Learning Standards

35. The national ACTFL standards guide my curriculum and planning.

*Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree*

36. Foreign language learners benefit from a curriculum that strictly adheres to the national ACTFL standards.

*Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree*

37. I closely consider the national ACTFL standards when creating and grading assignments and assessments.

*Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree*

#### Importance of Grammar Instruction

38. It is important to teach grammar so that students can translate from the native language.

*Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree*

39. The most important part of my instruction is teaching grammar.

*Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree*

40. On average, approximately what percentage of your class time is dedicated to teaching grammar?

*Less than 30% 30 – 49% 50 – 69% 70 – 89% 90% or More*

#### Amount of instruction delivered in target language

41. Teachers should only speak in the target language during class.

*Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree*

42. My students have to spend so much time preparing for big tests that I don't have time to teach in the target language. (Mirrored)

*Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree*

43. On average, approximately what percentage of your class time is dedicated to teaching in the target language?

*Less than 30% 30 – 49% 50 – 69% 70 – 89% 90% or More*

**Semi Open-Ended Item**

44. What is the biggest obstacle to teaching in the target language?

1. The students will not understand me.
2. My speaking ability in the foreign language.
3. My foreign language anxiety.
4. Lack of support from administrators or parents.
5. Other (please list)

**Demographic Information**

45. What language do you teach?

1. Spanish
2. French
3. German
4. Latin
5. Other (please list)

46. How many years have you taught a foreign language?

1. One year or less
2. 2 – 5 years
3. 6 – 10 years
4. 11 – 15 years
5. 16 years or more

47. What is your gender?

1. Male
2. Female

NB: When the survey was delivered to teachers from Spain, CEFR standards were listed in items 35 – 37.

## Developing and Evaluating Language Learners' Intercultural Competence: Cultivating Perspective-Taking

**Kristin Hoyt**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigates the development of intercultural competence (IC) in a university French conversation class through a course module that features student ethnographic interviews with native French speakers. Data collected from 50 students across three semesters are examined through the lens of Byram's (1997) five domains of IC and used as a framework to identify change in the development of students' IC. This mixed-method study draws on quantitative and qualitative data from pre- and post-questionnaires along with data documenting instructional delivery. Quantitative results indicate significant change in the skills domains of IC (Skills of Interpreting and Relating and Critical Cultural Awareness), and qualitative data point to IC-related attitudes and knowledge associated with perspective-taking. Analysis of findings by interpreting the convergence of quantitative and qualitative data yields implications for language and culture educators with respect to the impact of consciousness-raising pedagogical strategies for advancing IC.*

**Keywords:** *Intercultural competence, ethnographic interviews, pedagogy of culture*

### **Background**

The development of intercultural competence (IC) has come to the forefront in conceptualizing the teaching of languages, literatures, and cultures (Byram, 2008, 2010; Garrett-Rucks, 2013a; Kramsch, 1995, 2008; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2010, 2013; Scarino, 2008b, 2009, 2010). Teaching that is characterized by tenets of IC features learning experiences that go beyond teacher or textbook dissemination of information about cultural practices and products to address multiple cultural perspectives and elicit meaningful cultural comparisons. As such, language learners must have opportunities to investigate the diverse perspectives behind cultural products and practices, from the point of view of natives of the target culture(s). This approach to teaching culture goes beyond teaching a unilateral and fixed culture for a group of peoples and leaves behind the idea of teacher as cultural expert. Moreover, an IC approach to the teaching of culture calls for language learners to deconstruct their own cultural perspectives – to acknowledge their own culture and its influence and impact on their capacity for seeing, understanding, and accepting the “other.” With

these characteristics of IC pedagogy in mind, the present study investigates a module designed to foster opportunities for French language learners to advance their IC in a French conversation course.

There is a long tradition of foreign language (FL) teachers adhering to practices that treat culture as a fifth and supplementary skill. Such approaches typically provide a sampling of products and practices of the culture(s) corresponding to the language of study for beginning levels, and highlight literature and media of the culture(s) for higher levels of study. Notwithstanding the rich portrayals of cultural meaning foregrounding the content of these courses, student assignments predominantly center on acquiring knowledge and information about the exemplified cultures.<sup>1</sup> Nearly four decades ago, Robinson (1978) reproached the profession for its “magic-carpet-ride-to-another-culture” mindset that assumed language study is a key to unlock mutual understanding of cultures. Ineffectual and superficial exposure to culture is underscored by research examining the impact of the national FL standards over the past decade, which found that the cultural framework of the Cultures Goal is notably underrepresented or misrepresented by FL teachers across the profession (Phillips & Abbott, 2011). Indeed, ACTFL’s refreshed national FL standards (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) highlight the IC-aspect of the Cultures standards, reflecting the need for language learners to explore the multiplicity of cultural perspectives shaping practices and inspiring cultural products.<sup>2</sup>

Such is the impetus for the present study, inspired by the work of Robinson-Stuart and Nocon (1996) and Bateman (2002) in their use of interviews in the FL classroom, to foster the development of IC in a university French conversation class where a module featuring student ethnographic interviews with native speakers of French is focused on eliciting the point of view of the interviewees. “The driving purpose of the module is to facilitate learning experiences that hold potential for cultivating intercultural competence in students ...” (Hoyt, 2012a, p. 98). The module comprises an overview of ethnographic interviewing, collaborative development of interview guidelines and question prompts, contacting interviewees and carrying out the one-on-one interviews, and student oral presentations of key findings from their interviews. Within the context of this course module, the course instructor designed and conducted this investigative study to address two research questions:

1. Do pretest / posttest questionnaire quantitative results indicate significant change in student development of IC during an intermediate FL course in an American university setting?
2. What is the nature of both quantitative and qualitative questionnaire results and how might they inform the pedagogy of IC for FL learners?

## **Literature Review**

Using Byram’s (1997) IC framework, the present study is focused on an integrated instructional approach designed to facilitate students’ advancement of IC in a university French course. At the heart of this research is a desire “to organize the classroom and classroom processes to enable learners to develop new attitudes, new skills, and new critical awareness” (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, p. 27). The study is framed with Byram’s (1997) five-goal model of IC (Appendix A) and couched in current views of IC that have emerged over the past twenty-five years as leaders in

the profession expressly articulated a call to revisit our notions of culture and recast our models for teaching culture (Fantini, 2011; Kramsch, 1993, 1995; Schulz, 2007).

Important contributions have introduced FL educators to new ways of thinking about culture. Fronting and guiding these professional dialogues, Kramsch (1993, 1995, 1998) highlighted the natural blend of language and culture and stressed the significance of retaining this amalgam in an integrated approach to language teaching. Drawing from research in Second Language Acquisition, she underscored culture as an integral and embedded aspect of language learning from novice to superior. In her publications, she brought to the fore the prevalent dichotomy between language and culture among language teachers and proposed the theoretical framework of "third place" for teaching language as culture (Kramsch, 1993). Her notion of "third place" as a context or space in the intersection between a FL learner's own and the foreign culture(s) launched noteworthy dialogue in the field and productively advanced the profession's thinking about fostering IC as a dynamic and evolving process of exploration. Kramsch (2008) elaborated on the application of this amalgamated construct of language and culture with her notion of symbolic competence, as an awareness of "...how people use symbolic systems to construct new meanings, and to imagine how the other languages they know might influence the way they think, speak and write" (p. 400). To the extent that language learning is a manifold experience, responsive language teaching necessitates an integrated approach in which teaching fosters language learners' abilities to recognize and make use of symbolic resources – their symbolic competence – to appropriately maneuver and effectively manage social interaction and cultural exchange. Kramsch (2006) calls attention to symbolic competence as an often-overlooked, but key student learning outcome to be addressed across levels in the curricular framework of language programs.

Scarino's (2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2009, 2010) abundant and creative work spanning recent years, both independently and in conjunction with Liddicoat (2010, 2013), contributes prominently to the literature conceptualizing IC and its place in teaching and learning. Paralleling Kramsch's thinking, Scarino spotlights language learners and what they possess in personal linguistic and cultural capital as they interact, make interpretations, and engage in the process of meaning-making. Notwithstanding the teacher's role as facilitator of learning, Scarino's insights into curriculum design, her pedagogical recommendations, and her many concrete examples for the assessment of learning all situate the learner on center stage and emphasize the active and central role of the student in a language learning experience that is infused with interculturality.

Similarly central to the evolving, progressive dialogue on IC in language education are the contributions of Sercu (2002, 2004, 2005). Across her work and professional contributions, Sercu strengthens the case for the integration of language and culture, embedding interculturality into communicative FL teaching à la intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and contributes to the pedagogy of teaching FLs for ICC with her proposals for content, instructional approaches (2002), and assessment (2004). A key emphasis in her work is the metacognitive dimension and the importance of a student-centered autonomous approach in the teaching of ICC. Additionally, in a large scale international study, she investigates the professional profile of FL teachers with respect to thinking and practices as associated with the tenets of IC (Sercu, 2005).



In recent publications, Garrett-Rucks has documented her in-depth bibliographic research on IC (2013b) and recounts her applied research in classroom instruction (2013a, 2013c, 2013d) and assessment of IC (2012). Drawing from a broad base of literature in the field of interculturality and grounded in applied inquiry, her contributions underscore the call for effectively addressing IC in language teaching and learning. Further, she and her colleague spell out implementation steps for the language educator committed to integrating IC into the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of language teaching (Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014).

Amid the ongoing discussion within the profession among these IC scholars and many others, the present classroom-based inquiry on IC yields interesting findings that evoke questions and inspire further investigation. Accordingly, this research report on IC is contextualized within this professional dialogue, framed on and drawing primarily from Byram's (1997) IC five-goal framework.

### **Methodology**

The current study, spanning three semesters of data collection, is a quantitative and qualitative mixed-method study investigating the implementation of an IC module in a university French conversation class taught by the researcher.

### **Participants**

Study participants are students enrolled in a French conversation class. Most of the students are intermediate<sup>3</sup> learners of French as a second or third language. Fifty participants include 10 students declaring French majors and the other 40 declaring various other majors. The learners' profiles are representative of student enrollment in French courses for the institutional context of this study. Since this investigation does not explore connections between participants' demographic profiles and the study outcomes, readers are therefore encouraged to contextualize any application of findings to their own settings.

### **Procedures and Materials**

**The pedagogical intervention.** The course module under study took place during an approximate one-month timespan over the final weeks of the semester and included three major components: in-class and out-of-class tasks in preparation for the interviews, independent conducting of interviews outside class, and presentational reporting of interviews in class. (See Hoyt (2012b) for additional information on the module components.) The first component of interview preparation activities included discussion on the nature of ethnographic cross-cultural interviews, in-class and online iterative assignments associated with developing interview questions, in-class mock interviews, and an instructor-modeled interview presentation. The second component of the module drew upon the preparatory activities as students independently conducted their interviews with francophone individuals outside class. Although the instructor shared information about campus resources for identifying native speakers of French, students individually identified, made contact with, and planned meeting times with their self-selected interviewees. The final major component of the module involved students giving in-class oral presentations on their interviews. Presentations

were guided by criteria outlined in an evaluative rubric; however, students creatively personalized their reports through use of PowerPoint, Prezi, or other visual media. Each oral presentation was followed by an informal Q/A-style class discussion.

Notwithstanding the deliberate sequencing of the three major module components, there was a permeable boundary between the phases of implementation – an iterative ebb and flow mirroring the spiraled patterns of student understanding and skill-development. The instructional approach was accordingly responsive to teachable moments; reflecting a gradual shift from teacher-guided to student-directed activities across the module timeframe. Within the context of the three major module components, the pedagogical intervention occurred primarily during the first phase. Perspective-taking classroom activities, including artifact discovery and image-based activities as well as interview question development, were implemented to evoke metacognitive thinking and elicit consciousness-raising among students.

For the artifact discovery activities, students were called upon to explore the unfamiliar via their lenses of familiarity and to critically examine their evaluations using a technique of juxtaposition. For example, small groups were given an object (e.g., a hand-painted ceramic *tajine*, a set of Chinese fortune sticks, a North African *Djembe* finger drum, Chinese shadow puppets) and prompted to share thoughts on what they believed the object and its purpose to be. Each group subsequently shared a description of their objects and their hypothesis (or knowledge) of what the objects are. With the use of probing follow-up questions, the instructor facilitated a discussion to guide students in deconstructing their suggested hypotheses through the lenses of their personal life experiences and cultural viewpoints. Also, image-based activities, grounded in principles of *Visual Thinking Strategies* (Yenawine, 2013), required students to follow scaffolded steps of observation and interpretation, audit their judgments, and deconstruct conclusive viewpoints that may be otherwise fixed. For this activity, the instructor identified provocative images to potentially elicit divergent viewpoints. For example, an image was shown of a fully body-tattooed and pierced man holding a toddler girl bedecked in pink bows and frills. The child has a locked gaze on the man's face, though he is looking at and engaged with other similarly-garbed men who surround them in an arena-type setting filled with a multitude of darkly-clad persons. Small groups of students worked through the four steps together: describe, interpret, evaluate/judge, deconstruct. As groups shared their ideas with the whole class, the instructor again facilitated further discussion with probing follow-up prompts. In the case of the image example shared here, as with other images that evoke cultural dissonance, students showed a tendency to begin with the second step of interpretation and quickly jump to the third step of judgment. The instructor deliberately drew them back to articulate an intentional description (step one) of what they saw and could objectively identify, which bolstered students' abilities to more objectively ground their interpretations and judgments. Similarly, the instructor played an important facilitative role in guiding students toward perspective-taking as they deconstructed (step four) their interpretations and judgments. In addition to the artifact discovery and image-based activities, students collaborated to develop a bank of potential interview questions. This multi-step recursive activity was instructor-mediated, to support students in their decision-making about content of questions, wording of questions, and the sequencing of questions.

**Data collection and analysis.** Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected over the course of the semester-long class during each of the three semesters. Data collected and analyzed during this three-semester time period are treated as a single data set. The primary quantitative data were collected via a two-form, pre-treatment and post-treatment student questionnaire, administered prior to and following the interview module. Qualitative data used to triangulate findings from the quantitative results included instructor lesson plans, IC-focused classroom activities and assignments, student feedback cards, and researcher field notes. Demographic data were also collected via the pre-questionnaire instrument, and additional qualitative data were collected via the post-questionnaire with open-ended items.

**Quantitative data.** The quantitative data from the two-form, pretest / posttest questionnaire generated results that correspond directly to the first research question: *Do pretest / posttest questionnaire quantitative results indicate significant change in student development of IC during an intermediate FL course in an American university setting?* The student questionnaires were designed and validated in a series of developmental steps described in detail below that include (1) selecting relevant objectives from Byram's IC Model (See Appendix A), (2) drafting items correlated to the selected objectives (See Appendix B), (3) field-testing the instrument with like audiences, and (4) refining the instrument through a pilot study, as reported by Hoyt (2012a).

To design the questionnaire instrument, a selection of relevant objectives was originally determined by identifying 12 objective statements from Byram's (1997) proposed 29 objectives, which correlated most closely with activities included in the ethnographic interview course module. According to item response theory (Hambleton, Swaminathan & Rogers, 1991), items were drafted such that each concept (objective) was repeated three times for reliability in responses received. Content validity of the items was established with expert peer review, and reassurance that the items were meaningful and understandable was established through field-testing with three like groups of university students. Field-testing resulted in the elimination of one concept (three items) that did not prove to be comprehensible for the respondents. Tests to determine the statistical distribution of item scores called for the elimination of an additional concept (three items) that revealed distributional problems. Therefore, following the field-testing and the pilot study, the original distribution of two or three objectives to represent each goal was reduced to two objective statements per each of the five goals. Three items were drafted to correspond to each objective statement, assuring a measurement of internal consistency of the concept under examination, resulting in a 30-item questionnaire. Following this refinement and validation of the survey instrument, Hoyt (2012b) applied the pre- / post-questionnaire instrument in a two-semester investigation conducted with 27 participants. In a previous publication, Hoyt (2012b) includes a graphic that illustrates the correspondence between Byram's five goal domains, the associated objectives selected for the questionnaire instrument and their distribution across questionnaire items (See Appendix B).

The questionnaire was designed as a self-reporting, two-form instrument, administered prior to launching the course module on francophone ethnographic interviews as well as following the implementation of the module, as a pre-treatment

questionnaire and a post-treatment questionnaire. Both pre-treatment and post-treatment forms include the same 30 Likert-scale items that represent six questionnaire items for each of the five IC goal areas. The 30 Likert-scale questionnaire items are set up on a five-point scale with a spectrum of responses as follows: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-don't know, 4-agree, and 5-strongly agree, in response to first-person statements designed to capture the essence of Bryman's five-goal model of IC and effectively measure respondents' self-evaluation of their IC in the five domains. (See Appendix C and Appendix D.) To bolster the interpretation of quantitative results with qualitative data, a section on participant background is included, based on that used by Bateman (2002). Additionally, items included in the post-questionnaire trigger participant feedback about the interview experience and elicit specific cultural learning they have gleaned from class presentational reports on the interviews as discussed in the Qualitative Data section below.

**Qualitative data.** The aforementioned quantitative data, in conjunction with the qualitative data collected from the questionnaire instrument, generated findings to answer the second research question: *What is the nature of both quantitative and qualitative questionnaire results and how might they inform the pedagogy of IC for FL learners?* As described in detail below, lesson plans, classroom activities and assignments, student feedback cards, and field notes were analyzed qualitatively to buttress the questionnaire findings and strengthen their interpretation with respect to understanding how they inform the pedagogy of IC for FL learners.

During the course of the module implementation for this investigation, field notes were logged following class sessions to document instructor / researcher observation of student actions and responsiveness to classroom activities. In addition, student feedback cards were used following specific classroom activities, as well as at the end of class sessions as exit slips, to elicit first-hand student thoughts and reactions. In such cases, students were invited to respond in English. For example, students were given two prompts following the initial teacher presentation on IC where they were asked to write a brief definition of IC based on their personal understanding of the concept as well as to note their general impressions or a specific impression of the IC construct. Following presentation and discussion on the nature of ethnographic interviewing, students completed feedback cards to note any new concept that they encountered related to cross-cultural interviews and something that personally struck them about the ethnographic approach to interviewing. Both of these data sources – field notes and feedback cards – served to inform lesson content and delivery during implementation of the module (responsive pedagogy).

At the culmination of each semester, following completion of the module, class session PowerPoints (lesson plans) were reviewed in conjunction with the field notes and feedback cards to further explore the ways in which the classroom activities evoked student responsiveness toward perspective-taking. These multiple sources of qualitative data were individually and collectively analyzed to identify patterns and emergent themes to expand understanding of the pedagogy of IC (research question two). Findings and interpretation drawn from these qualitative data were considered in light of quantitative data results and documented change in student development of IC, to bolster findings through triangulation.

Findings

With respect to the research questions delineated above, summary responses are provided here, which will be detailed in the narrative that follows. In response to research question one, *Do pretest / posttest questionnaire quantitative results indicate significant change in student development of IC during an intermediate FL course in an American university setting?*, the answer is yes. The second research question, *What is the nature of both quantitative and qualitative questionnaire results and how might they inform the pedagogy of IC for FL learners?* invites a less convergent and more detailed response.

Statistically-significant change from the pre-questionnaire to the post-questionnaire results was the sole criterion used to arrive at a “yes” response to the first research question. As such, statistical testing indicated significant change in two of Byram’s (1997) goal domains (“Skills of Interpreting & Relating” and “Critical Cultural Awareness”). All of the questionnaire items pertaining to each of the selected IC objectives were screened, so that student response differences between the pre- and the post-questionnaires were less than or equal to two. The alpha level (p-value) of 0.05 was used to determine if there was a significant difference or not. Values lower than 0.05 were considered statistically different; values greater than or equal to 0.05 were considered not statistically significant. These descriptive statistics are reported in Table 1 below.

Of the two areas of significant change, results indicating change in the goal area of “Skills of Interpreting & Relating” were statistically significant in both objectives associated with this domain. The two objectives are (a) an ability to identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins, and (b) an ability to identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present. Results indicating change in the goal area of “Critical Cultural Awareness” were statistically significant in one of the two objectives associated with this domain – an ability to make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events, which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria.

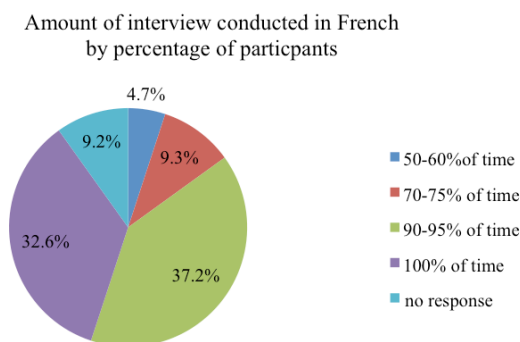
Table 1  
*Descriptive Statistics from Questionnaire Results*

Byram’s Goals	Objectives	n	Mean	SD	T-value	DF	P-value
I.	a.	45	0.0963	0.5441	1.19	44	0.2415
	b.	19	0.2105	0.4852	1.32	45	0.1945
II.	a.	45	0.1075	0.0836	1.28	44	0.2057
	b.	45	0.1037	0.4705	1.48	44	0.1463
III	a.	48	0.1528	0.4662	2.27	47	0.0278
	b.	44	0.1742	0.4741	2.44	43	0.0190
IV.	a.	46	0.1232	0.5724	1.46	45	0.1514
	b.	46	0.0870	0.5939	0.99	45	0.3260
V.	a.	48	0.1736	0.5543	2.17	47	0.0351
	b.	46	0.1522	0.5292	1.95	45	0.0574

Note. Findings approach statistical significance at p<0.05 level.

Additionally, a two-way Anova was performed to determine which factor was significant in its effect on the individual responses. Response averages showed that the concept, semester, and the concept and semester interaction variables had insignificant effects on the responses. Since none of the variables were significant in the effect, it was useful to determine how the non-significant results look through the *Tukey-Kramer Comparison*<sup>4</sup> test. Application of this test revealed two noteworthy clusterings of results and confirms the greatest increase of change from pretest to posttest around the three objectives where statistical change was documented using t-tests. Of interest is a second clustering of results that show increase from pretest to posttest, although not statistically significant, which centers around two objectives. One of those is the second objective associated with "Critical Cultural Awareness" – an ability to interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptances of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The other objective – an ability to elicit from an interlocutor the concepts or values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena – is associated with the "Skills of Discovery & Interaction" goal area. Notwithstanding the statistical results, student questionnaire responses related to self-perception of their IC should be noted. Mathematical averages of student responses for all IC domains largely indicate agreement in both the pre- and post-questionnaire administrations. On the five-point Likert scale (4=agree / 5=strongly agree), these averages ranged from 3.6-4.15 in pre-questionnaire responses and from 4.01-4.29 in post-questionnaire responses.

With respect to how much time they spent conducting their ethnographic interviews and during what percentage of that time they were using French as the language of exchange during the interaction, nearly half (48.8%) of the student respondents reported they spent between 45 minutes to over an hour for their interview exchanges (45 minutes to an hour = 39.5%; more than one hour = 9.3%). Ninety-three percent (93%) of student respondents reported they spent half or more of the interview duration speaking exclusively French. These distributions are detailed in *Figure 1* and *Figure 2* below.



*Figure 1:* Participant self-reporting on use of French during ethnographic interviews (in percentages)

Amount of time spent for interviews by percentage of participants

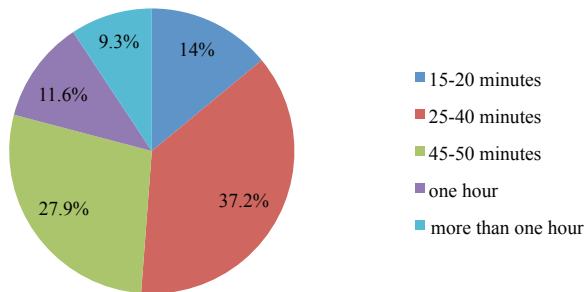


Figure 2: Participant self-reporting on amount of time spent for ethnographic interviews (in percentages)

### Interpretation of Results

**Perspective-taking based in skills.** The most important findings from the investigation are related to change in participants' IC skills. The results pointing to significant change were noted in both ability objectives<sup>5</sup> selected for this study from Byram's third IC goal area, "Skills of Interpreting & Relating" and in one of the selected ability objectives for the fifth IC goal area, "Critical Cultural Awareness." As mentioned earlier with respect to outcomes from the *Tukey-Kramer Comparison* test, the second most-robust clustering of results pointing to increase from pre- to post-test (although not statistically significant) shows up in the fourth and fifth goals areas: "Skills of Discovery & Interaction" and "Critical Cultural Awareness."

Of conspicuous mention is that all of these significant and indicators of change fall into the skills domains, and I argue that these primary areas of change point to the heart of perspective-taking, reflecting the operational definition of IC I have adhered to across this longitudinal study – "a deliberate awareness of differences and similarities and a conscious de-centering that considers others' perspectives without accentuating foreignness or stereotyping" (Hoyt, 2012a, pp. 94-95).

Byram's use of *savoir* in naming the five IC domains aptly captures the skills (or proficiency) aspect of the IC construct. The integral link between and among Byram's goal domains is elucidated here by interpreting *savoir* as "know how to / be able to" and *saviors* as "the whole of (set of) understanding, knowledge, awareness" (*l'ensemble de connaissances*). That is, if IC is summed up as the ability to participate in "effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett, 2008, p. 97) – based on and in response to attitudes and knowledge (*saviors*) – we might also say that IC is comprised of a skill-set, or proficiency to enact perspective-taking in "knowing how to be," "knowing how to understand," "knowing how to learn / do," and "knowing how to interact" (*savoir-être, savoir comprendre, savoir apprendre/faire, and savoir s'engager* respectively).

**Perspective-taking: What the participants say and do.** Qualitative data from the post-questionnaire illustrate the perspective-taking proficiency of participants



and bolster the quantitative findings related to IC skills in response to the second research question. Specifically, the open-ended items, which prompt feedback about the interview experience and elicit specific cultural learning that participants have gleaned from class presentational reports on the interviews, generated comments that elucidate the perspective-taking proficiency of the students.

"Interesting to discuss French way of life and confront typical American stereotypes of French"

"Enjoyed getting French view of Americans"

"I learned about things that seem normal to me, but strange to people from other cultures"

"Learned a lot about the perception of America to foreigners..."

"I learned that life here can be rather hard"

Also extrapolated from participant comments in the post-questionnaire, there is a noted trend of responses associated with Byram's second goal area, a knowledge domain. This is especially observed in student feedback as they address what they learned about both similarities and diversity among francophone peoples and francophone cultures. Comments such as the following reflect the two knowledge domain objectives referencing knowledge of / about "processes ... of socialization" and "the process of social interaction."

"Others ... seem to prioritize their values, putting family / community first instead of profitability / financial independence"

"Language isn't the only way to communicate in francophone places"

"[They] ... are much more reserved yet oddly more affectionate with people they love"

"Differences in way of life, food and its meaning, and the meaning / value of relationships"

"Food is more of a social experience (culture of going to restaurants only for special occasions, for example)"

There is a correspondingly noteworthy trend in open-ended comments about their interlocutors (and the cultures they represent) that are framed by students' readily-made comparisons to Americans and American culture. Respondents reveal personal opinions in their feedback as they report what they learned about Francophones and francophone cultures, caveated with comparisons / contrasts to Americans and American culture.

"Francophone experience varies according to region of world speaker is from. (Western Francophones seem to view Americans very materialistic. African Francophones view Americans as independent.)"

"Many other cultures are more open about sexuality ... reverse to US where religion plays a larger role"

"French are more formal than Americans; have more culture and appreciate the arts"

“Americans norm to rush things not truly appreciate the little things in life”

“I learned how much more business-oriented Americans can be compared other cultures”

“I learned that Americans need a great deal of personal space. I realize how obvious this is to people of other cultures.”

“Americans are very individualistic as a nation. They are more independent and not as much family-oriented as some other peoples.”

“They live in the moment more than we do and take more time for relaxation.”

I propose that these sets of student comments (reported above) reveal a pattern of response that harkens to Byram’s first domain of attitudes, particularly related to the objective “interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one’s own and in other cultures and cultural practices.” However, I would add that these comments may also point to the evolution of participants’ proficiency to enact perspective-taking in “knowing how to be” as they puzzle through and process a “knowing how to understand.”

Coupling the trend in qualitative data results corresponding to IC attitudes are the tallied results documenting how much time participants spent interviewing their francophone interlocutors and how much interview time was spent using French. (See *Figure 1* and *Figure 2* above.) Eighty-six percent (86%) of students reported spending 25 minutes or more to conduct their interviews, and nearly half (48.8%) of the students spent 45 minutes or more. Almost eighty percent (79.1%) of students reported conducting 70 percent or more of their interviews in French, and very nearly all students (93%) reported that 50 percent or more of their interviews were conducted exclusively in French. These compelling percentages may support an attitudinal “willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality” and an “interest in discovering other perspectives” (two objectives of Goal I).

As mentioned among the findings, mathematical averages of student responses related to self-perception of their IC (for all five goal areas) indicate agreement in both the pre- and post-questionnaire administrations. It can be suggested that these numbers reflect respondents’ overall agreement, or personal affinity with statements describing the attitudes, knowledge, and skills associated with IC. Although (mathematical) averages of questionnaire responses do not hold statistical significance, and despite the paucity of a baseline measure for IC, or in fact the impossibility of establishing such a gauge for a multifaceted, complex construct such as IC (Hoyt, 2012a, 2012b), this representation of student agreement to personal statements about IC is informative. Participants self-reported as overall competent, with respect to Byram’s five domains of IC. It may be therefore suggested that this student population arrived in the French conversation class with a baseline presence or indication of IC, especially in attitudinal “curiosity and openness.”<sup>6</sup>

## **Discussion**

### **Cultivating a Mindset of Perspective-taking**

Previously mentioned is the finding that all of the statistically significant and notable indicators of change fall into the skills domains. Yet, the significant changes are noted in skill areas that may not necessarily involve real-time interaction with an interlocutor. Such areas of skill-building that are cultivated in time and space apart from active human interface benefit from enhanced metacognition, wherein the “individual is able to determine their own timescale for interpretations, not constrained by the demands of social interaction” (Byram, 1997, p. 37). Of related interest is that a greater amount of class time focused on preparing students for the real-time interviews, compared to time spent reporting out on interviews and post-interview class discussions, as revealed in the qualitative analysis of the lesson plans associated with the ethnographic interview course module. Moreover, a closer look at the nature of these lesson plans indicates a preponderance of IC-related learning experiences highlighting the “identification of ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explaining their origins” as well as “identification of areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explaining them in terms of each of the cultural systems present” – classroom activities associated with the two highlighted objectives of Byram’s third goal area (“Skills of Interpreting & Relating”). In addition, the pre-interview classroom activities directed specifically toward preparation of interview questions feature several opportunities for students to expand their abilities to “make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria.” This “Critical Cultural Awareness,” yet another skill objective not necessarily associated with real-time cross-cultural interaction, along with the other two objectives mentioned above, represents the third area in which quantitative statistical results noted significant change.

### **Advancing Perspective-taking Behavior**

Various examples of classroom activities, drawn from qualitative data and associated with the ethnographic interview project, illustrate the way in which implementation of the course module featured multiple skill-building opportunities for students, primarily centered on critical perspective-taking apart from real-time face-to-face interaction. For example, the cultural artifact discovery activities elicited students’ engagement with the unfamiliar through their lenses of familiarity and compelled them to critically examine their judgments by means of juxtaposition. The image-based activities obliged students to respect sequenced steps of observation, interpretation, judgment, and deconstruction to foster examination of their viewpoints that may be otherwise fixed.

Additionally, as students engaged in developing a bank of potential interview questions, they grappled with topics of national identity, as well as assumed values and beliefs, in their decision-making about content of questions, wording of questions, and the sequencing of questions. My role as instructor was to step aside and allow students to come to consensus on these decisions in submitting draft questions at each phase of the question-development process. Decisions about the nature of

instructor feedback provided at each stage of question revision were grounded in my intent for students to consider other ways of thinking about and viewing life experiences, and thereby inspire in them a critical perspective on their assumed values and beliefs (Morgan, 2007). Finally, in the context of interview role-play, students collaboratively determined how they would deal with various challenges: linguistic roadblocks in their own language production or in difficulty of understanding their interlocutor; interviewee responses that put them ill at ease; perceptions of socially uncomfortable pauses or silence; and quandaries on the use of formal versus informal forms of address. I suggest that the implementation of such group problem-solving tasks elicited consciousness-raising among students and heightened awareness of the influence of language on their own and their interlocutor's perceptions.

The aspirational goal for these perspective-taking classroom activities was to guide students, though not realistically to full concession, but nonetheless toward analytical scrutiny of their standpoints, as "... an attempt to shift students from being holders of opinions to users of appropriate, theoretically interpreted and structured data to inform considered views of cultural, social and linguistic phenomena" (Byram, 2008, p. 151). It is indicated that the IC-focused elicitation activities integrated into the in-class preparation phase had an impact on students' skill development in Byram's third and fifth goal domains, and the quantitative findings of significant change noted from pre- to post-questionnaire results bear out this interpretation.

### **Limitations**

A key limitation to this study is my influence on the results, in my dual role as instructor and researcher. Nonetheless, there are clear advantages to this type of applied research project that hovers near the border of participatory action research, and allows for a Janus-faced "situated and synergistic [involvement] in my multiple roles and interests in research" (Burgess, 2006, p. 432). Moreover, the qualitative side of this mixed method study called for instructional responsiveness associated with the constant comparative analysis of collected data, underscoring the pedagogy of IC that motivated much of the study. Acknowledging that "all research is embedded within a system of values and promotes some model of human interaction" and that my role as classroom instructor undoubtedly influenced my role as researcher, I strived for a conscious de-centering on my own part – to the extent possible (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire, 2003, p. 11). Especially with respect to quantitative data, I intentionally and carefully collected data and monitored my detachment while students completed questionnaires. I also insisted on anonymity when students completed feedback cards and found ways to have the cards randomly collected and anonymously submitted.

A second important limitation to the study centers around student agency cultivated through reflective practice. The role of learner reflection is fundamental to the advancement of IC in language and culture learners (Byrnes, 1991; Fantini, 2011; Kramsch, 1993; Sercu, 2002). As teachers aspiring to cultivate IC in our students, there is a responsibility to impart opportunities for reflection. Liddicoat and Scarino (2010) emphasize a meta-awareness "as integral to evidencing the intercultural" and also that learners must engage in "the processes of analyzing, explaining and elaborating on their meta-awareness" (p. 66). With respect to the ethnographic interview

module, these analyzing, explaining and elaborating processes are touched upon in the pre-interview classroom activities described earlier; however, reflection on these processes— especially following the actual interview encounter— is largely absent. The interview module comprises a spectrum of conscious-raising and developmental activities. However, guided or independent reflection tasks are missing.

A third limitation of consideration is participant language proficiency. If language skills are not the sole focus of an IC-oriented foreign language curriculum, what is the interplay between language learner proficiency level, the real-time target language interview, and reflection on the interview as an IC-elicitation technique? The purpose of this discussion is not to judge the merit of the interview assignment, but it is worth raising the point of language competence among students who participated in this investigation and the limitations of their proficiency level. Despite expected shortcomings in real-time, cross-cultural target language interaction for intermediate-level students, implementation of the ethnographic interview over time has generated positive and rich interaction among students and their interviewees. Fantini (2010) points out that “Proficiency in a second language at any level enhances all other aspects of intercultural competence [...] grappling with a second language causes us to confront how we perceive, conceptualize, express, behave and interact” (p. 459). Keeping in mind the limitations of this study, the investigation did yield promising results that point to the pedagogy of IC, and it did generate fruitful ideas for further exploration of FL curriculum and instruction to advance IC.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

To the extent that the ability to exercise perspective is a cultivated skill, it is therefore suggested that in the educational context, a pedagogy that fosters the development of perspective-taking is integral to an IC-focused curriculum. But how does one go about *teaching* perspective-taking? It may be suggested here that the nature of the study's results is linked to the content and nature of the module's design and implementation, including the strategic role of the instructor in facilitating pedagogical interventions that cultivate IC in learners. Data sources that support this assertion are class lesson plans and researcher field notes. These qualitative data point to the quantity of class time dedicated to IC-related instructional activities and indicate an increase in class time spent from earlier iterations of this longitudinal investigation. In the previous investigations of the Francophone Interview Module as reported by Hoyt (2012a, 2012b), IC-specific lessons and assignments were implemented exclusively within a one-month time period dedicated to the interview course module. During the three-semester time span of this study, student learning experiences associated with the tenets of IC were integrated into course delivery across each of the three semesters, even prior to the implementation of the ethnographic interview module.

Additionally, researcher field notes and student assignment rubrics point to a transformation in the nature of instructional delivery as the class activities evolved from largely teacher-led tasks to predominantly student-directed tasks. Although these qualitative data cannot be correlationally linked to quantitative findings, they inform understanding of the findings by drawing attention to the potential impact of pedagogy on IC development in language learners. That is, if this student population

of language learners is attitudinally predisposed to IC (“curiosity and openness”), a learning environment that evokes student IC awareness may fruitfully yield student IC development. Moreover, a closer look at the nature of these data— as documented in lessons plans and student assignments— reveals a preponderance of IC-related learning experiences associated with Byram’s third goal (“Skills of Interpreting & Relating”).

### Future Direction

It is unlikely that FL teachers would question the relationship between the oral proficiency of language learners and their capacity to use the target language as they interact in real-time with an interlocutor from a different country / culture. What is unclear and perhaps disputed is the nature of that relationship, be it correlational, associative, or causal. Regardless its nature, if the presence of some such relationship is assumed, what kind of bearing does the quality or depth of a real-time cross-cultural interaction – presumably “boundaried” according to oral proficiency – have on the capacity for IC-development in FL learners? Might one suggest that salient advances in those domains of IC related to real-time interaction are less accessible to language learners of certain proficiency levels, if the cross-cultural exchange occurs in the target language? If so, how would such benchmark proficiency levels be identified, defined, or described? Findings from the present study suggest a proposition that (statistically significant) advances in those domains of IC related to real-time interaction are less accessible to intermediate-level language learners.

Might the gap between the *propositional and non-applied procedural* IC skills and those characterized as *applied procedural and real-time interactional* IC skills be bridged with reflective practice? As mentioned among the study’s limitations, reflection as a purposeful activity carried out by individual language learners is not integrated into the module tasks that participants engaged in. To the extent that reflection calls upon learners to personally probe their own interpretations of the world, to examine their evolving understandings, and to acquire nuanced and critical views of themselves and others, the reflective process will push learners to thoughtfully consider what they are learning about the target language and culture, “to compare cultures, empathize with the points of view of other people” (Byram, 2008, p. 70). Future implementations of the ethnographic interview module will benefit from the integration of reflection tasks where students have not only the opportunity to thoughtfully reflect upon the interview itself, but also the possibility to maximize the before-during-after interview timeframe, as a (multiplied) perspective-taking exercise.

It could be argued that deliberate and focused reflection exercises woven into perspective-taking IC-elicitation tasks yield fertile ground for learners to cultivate critical thinking skills. Reflection as an IC-elicitation strategy pushes students to move beyond passive learner stances, innocently accepting of (isolated) cultural facts or information. Byram (2008) endorses sequenced learning tasks that progress from reception and awareness toward productive cognitive operations, featuring evaluative, divergent thinking “...to incite deep levels of involvement with the cultural *savoirs* offered, and strive for an increase in the complexity of cognitive operations and in the degree of independence in information processing envisaged” (p. 70).

Looking forward, another important consideration is the complex variability inherent in the construct of IC and the many unanswered questions and puzzling

issues related to the assessment of IC. Sercu (2004) reminds us that "a systematic framework for the operationalization of assessment of intercultural competence in foreign language education remains to be developed" (p. 74). Moreover, what can we dependably claim about the developmental process of IC? Educators at all levels and across disciplines will attest to variability in learners that reflects instances of spits and spurts in growth, the examples of slow and steady development, and the cases of noticeable regression. And more specifically as relates to the pedagogy of IC, case studies point to variations among learners' developmental progression related to different contexts of cross-cultural contact and exposure (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006).

Despite general consensus regarding a complex of domains inherent to IC and the interdependent nature of these realms (Bennett, 1993), we do not discount examples of progress centered in one area of growth as actual development, as in the case of the current investigation. There are a host of ways in which we can look at IC, explore its properties as they manifest in our students, and investigate the outcomes of our IC-intentioned pedagogical approaches and instructional applications. Unquestionably, the generative power of such inquiries will give rise to amplified knowledge and understanding over time. Additional exploratory and experimental research, analysis of case studies, and suggested frameworks can certainly serve to advance the profession toward greater understanding of the place and role of IC in the teaching and learning of languages. Scarino (2009) echoes this position in stating our need "...to reference [IC] against a map of other possible, relevant instances representing the scope of the discipline as a whole" to create, as we have in the traditional skills, sets of "interconnected maps of possible instances and development that are not available, as frames of reference for making and justifying judgments" (p. 77).

## **Concluding Comments**

The findings of the present investigation – indicating the impact of perspective-taking assignments on skills-related IC development – point us to the pedagogy of IC, most specifically the nature of an IC-inspired curriculum and the role of the instructor in facilitating IC-infused student learning experiences. In short, this study elucidates an instructional module that meaningfully contributes to our profession's aspiration to amplify and exploit the elicitation of IC in FL learners. The ethnographic interview project represents a multi-step pedagogical module designed to guide language learners through scaffolded in-class activities in preparation for a cornerstone out-of-class activity – a real-time interview with a native speaker. The instructional activities and assignments highlight a four-stage process (describe, interpret, evaluate/judge, deconstruct) that fosters skills associated with perspective-taking, and which expectantly inspires perspectival attitudes that carry forward to the face-to-face interview.

The design of the interview module is aligned with an IC pedagogy that calls us to move away from a teacher-as-purveyor of cultural information approach based on convergent, correct answers toward a student-centered constructivist approach, in which teachers guide learners in the direction of divergent possibilities (Sercu, 2002). The pedagogical approach of the interview module draws learners to the heart of their own IC learning process, as they construct knowledge, consider cultural material, and explore the prism of perspectives on cultural topics.



Another key contribution of this study goes beyond the module template for a pedagogy of IC in a FL conversation course and centers on the evaluation of IC in FL learners. The pre- and post-questionnaire instrument designed for evaluating the impact of the interview module on language learners draws on prior contributions in the field (Robinson-Stuart & Nocon, 1996; Bateman, 2002) and extends the profession's understanding on the assessment of IC in FL learners. The validated questionnaire instrument, based on a seminal IC framework within the field (Byram, 1997), offers prospects for additional applications and promises to generate further insight into the teaching and learning of IC.

As language teachers, we are drawn to the conundrum of defining IC and identifying the discrete elements of the construct, as we strive to evaluate the dichotomized components and thereby gauge IC in our students. Accordingly, we are reminded that conceptualizing IC is complex and multifaceted. Those committed to integrating IC into their language curricula are likely beyond questioning their motivation and rationale for an IC-infused curriculum. However, as has been pointed out by others, abstracting the construct of IC for the purposes of instruction and assessment is another matter (Cushner & Mahon, 2010; Schulz, 2007). Sercu (2002) suggests that "...developing detailed guidelines as a concrete basis for course development is not yet possible" but we are unquestionably able "...to put forward a series of more or less abstract criteria by which course planners can observe to select cultural contents and culture learning tasks" (p. 65). Following Sercu's prompting and extending Scarino's (2009) idea of "interconnected maps," I suggest that findings from the present study nominally inform the drafting of an IC roadmap, although more work lies ahead in realizing well-defined roadways. The present study offers a detailed instructional module and a validated assessment instrument as useful tools in the profession's quest toward an effective pedagogy of IC.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Readers interested in earlier approaches to culture in the teaching of FLs should consult the work of Seelye (1974, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> Cultures: Interact with cultural competence and understanding

**Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied

**Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives:** Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied

<sup>3</sup> Students enrolled in this course typically perform in the intermediate-mid / intermediate-high range of oral proficiency in their use of French language, according to ACTFL levels.

<sup>4</sup> The Tukey-Kramer Comparison statistical test measures lines for Least Square means of concepts.

<sup>5</sup> Byram (1997) clarifies he is not using this term in the sense of performance objectives and competence-based curricula (p. 72).

<sup>6</sup> The range of nearly half-way between "I don't know" and "Agree" and solidly "Agree" responses for the pre-treatment questionnaire and the robust "Agree" metric for the post-treatment questionnaire do tell us something about student participants in this study and possibly the student population in future sections of this same or similar courses. It should be clearly noted however, that only additional, repeated applications of the study would confirm reliability and support generalizations of this suggested hypothesis.

## Appendix A

Byram's (1997) comprehensive model for teaching, learning and assessment of intercultural competence comprises five goal areas and twenty-nine objectives. The five goal areas and associated 10 objectives addressed in the present study are listed here.

**I. Attitudes** (*savoir-être*): curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.

Objectives:

- a. willingness to seek out or take up opportunities to engage with otherness in a relationship of equality, distinct from seeking out the exotic or to profit from others
- b. interest in discovering other perspectives on interpretation of familiar and unfamiliar phenomena both in one's own and in other cultures and cultural practices

**II. Knowledge** (*savoirs*): of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction.

Objectives (knowledge of / about):

- a. the processes and institutions of socialisation in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country
- b. the process of social interaction in one's interlocutor's country

**III. Skills of Interpreting & Relating** (*savoir comprendre*): ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.

Objectives (ability to):

- a. identify ethnocentric perspectives in a document or event and explain their origins
- b. identify areas of misunderstanding and dysfunction in an interaction and explain them in terms of each of the cultural systems present

**IV. Skills of Discovery & Interaction** (*savoir apprendre/faire*): ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes, and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction.

Objectives (ability to):

- a. elicit from an interlocutor the concepts or values of documents or events and develop an explanatory system susceptible of application to other phenomena
- b. use in real-time an appropriate combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact with interlocutors from a different country and culture taking into consideration the degree of one's existing familiarity with the country, culture, and language and the extent of difference between one's own and the other

**V. Critical Cultural Awareness** (*savoir s'engager*): an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

Objectives (ability to):

- a. make an evaluative analysis of the documents and events which refers to an explicit perspective and criteria
- b. interact and mediate in intercultural exchanges in accordance with explicit criteria, negotiating where necessary a degree of acceptances of those exchanges by drawing upon one's knowledge, skills, and attitudes

## Appendix B

Distribution of questionnaire items corresponding to 10 selected objectives from Byram's five goal areas

Byram's Goals	Selected Objectives	Questionnaire Items
I	A	7, 12, 23
	B	8, 14, 28
II	A	6, 19, 27
	B	9, 13, 21
III	A	2, 17, 26
	B	5, 15, 22
IV	A	10, 20, 30
	B	3, 11, 29
V	A	4, 18, 24
	B	1, 16, 25

Previously published in Hoyt (2012b, p. 38).

## Appendix C

### Pre-Questionnaire

Demographic Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Native Language: \_\_\_\_\_

1. In your opinion, what is the level of your French? (*circle one*)  
 poor      fair      good      very good      excellent
2. How good would you say you are at school work in general? (*circle one*)  
 poor      fair      good      very good      excellent
3. How much experience with foreign language(s) have you had?  
 In French  
 \_\_\_\_\_ none before attending this university  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 1–2 years in middle / high school  
 \_\_\_\_\_ over 2 years in middle / high school

- ☐ one or more college classes  
☐ visited French-speaking country  
☐ lived in French-speaking country  
☐ French was / is spoken in my home  
☐ other \_\_\_\_\_

In other languages (which? \_\_\_\_\_)

- ☐ none before attending this university  
☐ 1–2 years in middle / high school  
☐ over 2 years in middle / high school  
☐ one or more college classes  
☐ visited [other language]-speaking country  
☐ lived in [other language]-speaking country  
☐ [other language] was / is spoken in my home  
☐ other  
☐ other

4. Why did you decide to study French?
5. How many friends and / or acquaintances do you have that are native speakers of French?
- |      |     |     |      |         |
|------|-----|-----|------|---------|
| none | 1-2 | 3-5 | 6-10 | over 10 |
|------|-----|-----|------|---------|

*Please mark you responses according to the following scale:*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	don't know	agree	strongly agree

*Note: You may notice some redundancy in questions.*

1. I am predisposed to mediate in intercultural exchanges.  

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
2. I can identify bias in an event related to a different culture.  

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
3. My interpersonal skill enables me to interact in a cross-cultural setting.  

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
4. I can assess particular cultural perspectives in an event.  

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
5. I can explain the cultural basis of a cross-cultural disagreement.  

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
6. I interact with people according to their various backgrounds.  

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
7. In an intercultural exchange, I rarely defer to my own culture's norms for human interaction.  

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
8. I am interested in understanding perspectives on events in cultures including mine.  

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---
9. I am aware of the process of social interaction in a culture different from mine.  

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---



10. I can perceive cultural norms during intercultural interactions.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*If you marked "strongly agree" or "agree" on item 10, answer the related question a. below. If not, go on to item 11.*

a. I can relate these cultural norms to everyday events.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

11. I am able to apply my cross-cultural experience during intercultural exchanges.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

12. In an intercultural encounter, my approach toward others is independent of my cultural norms.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

13. I am conscious of the process of social interaction related to a different culture.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

14. I can accommodate other views on events in various cultures including mine.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

15. I am able to understand reasons behind an intercultural misunderstanding.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

16. I can navigate favourable acceptance of two different cultures.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

17. I am able to interpret ethnocentric views in an event.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

18. I have strategies to evaluate cultural perspectives in events.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

19. I can relate with people from various backgrounds.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

20. I have the ability to draw out one's values during an intercultural exchange.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

*If you marked "strongly agree" or "agree" on item 20, answer the related question a. below. If not, go on to item 21.*

a. I have the ability to apply those values to other situations.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

21. I know how social interaction works in another culture.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

22. I can comprehend cultural misunderstandings based on cultural differences.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

23. It is comfortable for me to exercise impartiality when engaging with others in a cross-cultural interaction.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

24. I can distinguish cultural perspectives in an event.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

25. I can intercede in an intercultural exchange situation to improve acceptance of others.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

26. I can relate a narrow-minded event that is based on another culture to my culture.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

27. I am aware of the general processes of human interaction in another culture.  
1            2            3            4            5
28. I endeavour to discover perspectives for interpreting phenomena in various cultural practices, including mine.  
1            2            3            4            5
29. The differences that exist amongst individuals from diverse countries do not hinder my ability to interact in a cross-cultural setting.  
1            2            3            4            5
30. I can interpret cultural values during an intercultural encounter.  
1            2            3            4            5

If you marked "strongly agree" or "agree" on item 30, answer the related question a. below.

- a. I can then apply those values.  
1            2            3            4            5

## Appendix D

### Pre-Questionnaire

#### Demographic Information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Native Language: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How many interviews did you conduct with your interviewee? \_\_\_\_\_  
interview(s)

For each interview, please share the date and place where the interview took place:

Interview 1 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview 2 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Approximately how long was each interview?  
Interview 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Minutes:            Interview 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Minutes
3. Approximately what percentage of the time did you speak French in the interview? \_\_\_\_\_%
4. How would you rate the person you interviewed as a good source of cultural information for this project? (*circle one number*)  
poor source of information    1    2    3    4    5    excellent source of information
5. How much did the interview project improve your understanding and respect for French speakers?  
not at all    1    2    3    4    5    very much
6. How much did the interview project increase your desire to speak French?  
not at all    1    2    3    4    5    very much
7. How would you rate the value of the interview project to you personally?  
not at all valuable    1    2    3    4    5    very valuable
8. Would you recommend that the interview project be required in future French classes?  
not at all    1    2    3    4    5    highly recommend

*Please respond to the following open-ended items:*

What did you learn about the French-speaking people and cultures from listening to other students' presentations?

What did you learn about American culture from listening to other students' presentations?

What other comments, if any, do you have about the project?

*Please mark your responses according to the following scale:*

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	disagree	don't know	agree	strongly agree

*Note: You may notice some redundancy in questions.*

1. I am predisposed to mediate in intercultural exchanges.  
1      2      3      4      5
  2. I can identify bias in an event related to a different culture.  
1      2      3      4      5
  3. My interpersonal skill enables me to interact in a cross-cultural setting.  
1      2      3      4      5
  4. I can assess particular cultural perspectives in an event.  
1      2      3      4      5
  5. I can explain the cultural basis of a cross-cultural disagreement.  
1      2      3      4      5
  6. I interact with people according to their various backgrounds.  
1      2      3      4      5
  7. In an intercultural exchange, I rarely defer to my own culture's norms for human interaction.  
1      2      3      4      5
  8. I am interested in understanding perspectives on events in cultures including mine.  
1      2      3      4      5
  9. I am aware of the process of social interaction in a culture different from mine.  
1      2      3      4      5
  10. I can perceive cultural norms during intercultural interactions.  
1      2      3      4      5
- If you marked "strongly agree" or "agree" on item 10, answer the related question a. below. If not, go on to item 11.*
- a. I can relate these cultural norms to everyday events.  
1      2      3      4      5
  11. I am able to apply my cross-cultural experience during intercultural exchanges.  
1      2      3      4      5
  12. In an intercultural encounter, my approach toward others is independent of my cultural norms.  
1      2      3      4      5
  13. I am conscious of the process of social interaction related to a different culture.  
1      2      3      4      5

14. I can accommodate other views on events in various cultures including mine.  
1            2            3            4            5
15. I am able to understand reasons behind an intercultural misunderstanding.  
1            2            3            4            5
16. I can navigate favourable acceptance of two different cultures.  
1            2            3            4            5
17. I am able to interpret ethnocentric views in an event.  
1            2            3            4            5
18. I have strategies to evaluate cultural perspectives in events.  
1            2            3            4            5
19. I can relate with people from various backgrounds.  
1            2            3            4            5
20. I have the ability to draw out one's values during an intercultural exchange.  
1            2            3            4            5

*If you marked "strongly agree" or "agree" on item 20, answer the related question a. below. If not, go on to item 21.*

- a. I have the ability to apply those values to other situations.  
1            2            3            4            5
21. I know how social interaction works in another culture.  
1            2            3            4            5
22. I can comprehend cultural misunderstandings based on cultural differences.  
1            2            3            4            5
23. It is comfortable for me to exercise impartiality when engaging with others in a cross-cultural interaction.  
1            2            3            4            5
24. I can distinguish cultural perspectives in an event.  
1            2            3            4            5
25. I can intercede in an intercultural exchange situation to improve acceptance of others.  
1            2            3            4            5
26. I can relate a narrow-minded event that is based on another culture to my culture.  
1            2            3            4            5
27. I am aware of the general processes of human interaction in another culture.  
1            2            3            4            5
28. I endeavour to discover perspectives for interpreting phenomena in various cultural practices, including mine.  
1            2            3            4            5
29. The differences that exist amongst individuals from diverse countries do not hinder my ability to interact in a cross-cultural setting.  
1            2            3            4            5
30. I can interpret cultural values during an intercultural encounter.  
1            2            3            4            5

*If you marked "strongly agree" or "agree" on item 30, answer the related question a. below.*

- a. I can then apply those values.  
1            2            3            4            5

## Teaching Pragmatics with the *Mi Vida Loca* Video Program

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### *Abstract*

*This exploratory study examines the potentially beneficial role of utilizing an interactive video program (BBC's Mi Vida Loca) in aiding second language learners of Spanish to enhance intercultural competence via pragmatic training. The results of a discourse completion task shows that students who watched MVL significantly improved their performance in a series of tasks that are appropriate for a Spanish context such as ordering food, giving directions, etc., while the control group did not. Based on our findings, we believe that MVL is a tool that would lend itself readily towards fostering their intercultural and pragmatic competence to help students prepare for future encounters with native speakers of Spanish in the U.S. and abroad. Pedagogical implications on the integration of pragmatic training with authentic native speaker input are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Mi Vida Loca, pragmatic competence, speech acts, videos, discourse completion task*

### **Background**

Many institutions of higher learning have stated that one of their main goals is to turn students into interculturally competent citizens in order to help them address the challenges of an increasingly global society. This trend is evidenced in the mission statements of many universities across the country. For instance, the authors' own institution, the University of Memphis, highlights as one of its core objectives "to address the challenges of our global society" (University of Memphis Strategic Plan: Defining our Future, 2015). The trend is also reflected in the *World-readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), which state that learners should be able to communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world. There are many efforts in which universities engage to help students develop this type of competence (i.e., the ability to function in an intercultural and international community, which includes being able to communicate and act ap-

propriately in accordance with other cultures' practices and unique world views). In particular, we believe language departments can play a key role in shaping students' awareness of others, not only in terms of language, but more importantly in terms of developing an understanding of the issues that emerge at the interface between language and culture. One of the main challenges we face as foreign language educators is to prepare learners to successfully navigate daily encounters once immersed in the target culture. For some students, this could partially have to do with low proficiency and a lack of mastery of the linguistic tools necessary to function in a conversation with native speakers (e.g., DeKeyser, 2010). However, in our view, part of this failure to carry on conversations in a natural way can also be attributed to their lack of awareness of pragmatic strategies in the L2; that is, their inability to communicate in a way that is culturally appropriate or relevant, thus falling short of the national readiness standards.

This problem has been attributed in part to two factors. First, there is a mismatch between the dialogues that students are presented in the classroom, which is where our study takes place, and the way conversations take place in real life (Bardovi-Harlig, et al., 1991; Myers-Scotton & Bernstein, 1988) particularly due to inadequate teaching materials (Vellenga, 2004; Wong, 2002). Second, pragmatic training tends to happen during study abroad but we feel that not enough emphasis is put on pragmatics before students encounter native speakers. There is a breadth of research that shows that studying abroad has beneficial effects for the development of pragmatic competence (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig & Bastos, 2011; Barron, 2003, 2007; Bataller, 2010; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Félix-Brasdefer, 2004; Kinginger & Blattner, 2008; Kinginger & Farrell, 2004; Reynold-Case, 2013; Schauer, 2006, 2007; Shively, 2011; Shively & Cohen, 2008; Taguchi, 2008, 2011). However, our research places the problem before that stage and attempts to find ways to equip students with pragmatic skills in the classroom before facing real-life interactions with native speakers.

Therefore, as foreign language educators, we continually strive to find ways to bridge this gap between the language of the classroom and the language outside of the classroom via training through different types of resources. Some, for instance, are exploring telecollaborative exchanges between students in different countries as a solution for this problem (O'Dowd, 2005). In our study, we turn to the use of interactive videos and, particularly the BBC's video program, *Mi Vida Loca (MVL)*, as a way to bring naturalistic and pragmatically sound language use into the foreign language classroom. Specifically, we investigate the effects of *MVL* on students' pragmatic development. This online video series, produced by the BBC, casts students as the main character and asks them to engage with the video in various ways — such as speaking or clicking — in order to proceed with various contexts simulating real-world encounters — such as ordering food or purchasing tickets for public transportation. In particular, our study aims to explore novice students' ability to acquire the linguistic and behavioral skills necessary to interact in a pragmatically and culturally appropriate manner with native speakers in typical daily encounters, either after being exposed to interactive videos or using more traditional activities in class.

## Literature Review

### Pragmatics and Second Language Learning

Pragmatics is key to communicating appropriately with those from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Bardovi-Harlig (2013) provided informal definitions of pragmatics, “the study of how-to-say-what-to-whom-when,” and L2 pragmatics, “the study of how learners come to know how-to-say-what-to-whom-when” (p. 68-69). Similarly, Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) defined L2 pragmatics as an area that “explores the ability of language users to match utterances with contexts in which they are appropriate” (p. 1). Particularly, they acknowledged several areas within L2 pragmatics: speech acts, conversational structure, conversational implicature, conversational management, discourse organization, and sociolinguistic aspects of language (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003, p. 1). In this study, we will focus on speech acts.

With the current widespread use of communicative teaching methodologies (Beacco, 2007; Rifkin, 2003), pragmatics has in fact become a key aspect of second language teaching and learning. In their seminal paper, Canale and Swain (1980) defined communicative competence as having four sub-categories: grammatical competence (i.e., the ability to use the grammar and vocabulary of the L2), sociolinguistic competence (i.e., the understanding of the sociolinguistic rules of the L2 speech community), discourse competence (i.e., being able to provide coherence and cohesion to a text) and strategic competence (i.e., the ability to use verbal and non-verbal strategies to overcome communication failures). Pragmatics is particularly important for both sociolinguistic and strategic competence. Thus, it is at the center of what the authors think (as instructors or researchers who believe in a communicative approach to language teaching) students should be able to do in the L2.

Additionally, pragmatics is a crucial component of intercultural competence. The ACTFL Global Competence Position Statement (2014) supports the notion that “[t]he ability to communicate with respect and cultural understanding in more than one language is an essential element of global competence.” Thus, we believe that in order for students to be able to communicate and behave respectfully and in a culturally-sensitive way, the development of pragmatic strategies (such as apologizing or requesting in the correct manner) is absolutely essential. In fact, the ability to participate appropriately and effectively in foreign communities with empathy and understanding of cultural differences is reflected through language to a great extent. Therefore, the development of pragmatic strategies should be at the core of foreign language instruction since they can help students move beyond classroom language use and towards competence in the 5 C’s (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) that are central to the World-Readiness Standards (NSFLEP, 2013).

Despite the important role that pragmatics plays in communicative methodologies and intercultural competence, explicit teaching of pragmatics is rare in the L2 classroom (Kasper, 1997; Bardovi-Harlig, 2013). There is evidence that in the absence of explicit instruction students either acquire pragmatic competence slowly or fail to acquire this aspect of language (cf. Barron, 2003; Hoffman-Hicks, 1999;



Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985). Several researchers confirm the benefits of introducing explicit pragmatic instruction in the L2 classroom (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001; Cohen, 2012; Jeon & Kaya, 2006; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Koike & Pearson, 2005; Rose & Kasper, 2001). These studies focus mainly on the teaching of speech acts, conversational management and conversational implicature: the conveying of meaning that is suggested, but not overtly stated, in an utterance. In general, these studies suggest that pragmatics is indeed teachable, that explicit teaching is more effective than implicit teaching and that pragmatics can be taught at beginning levels (Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012; Wildner-Bassett, 1994; Tateyama et al., 1997).

### **Bridging the Gap through *Mi Vida Loca***

Researchers have long called for the use of videos in the foreign language classroom (Chung, 1999, 2002; Moore, 2006; Kramsch & Andersen, 1999; Herron et al., 1999; Herron et al. 2000; Herron et al., 2002; Markham, 2000-2001; Weyers, 1999). However, technological advances have allowed educators to use more sophisticated learning tools in the last decades (Salaberry, 2001). We aim to revitalize the discussion around this topic by focusing on a different type of video, interactive videos. As mentioned, we believe *MVL* is a video program that can aid teachers with bringing into the classroom pragmatically sound language samples. In this section we describe the program, present a previous article addressing *MVL* as a pedagogical tool and address some work on related areas (interactive video and gaming).

*MVL* is a mystery video series created by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). The series can be accessed via the BBC website (<http://bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/mividaloca/>) for free. The goal of *MVL* is to teach Spanish to non-Hispanophones and, due to its structure, it can be easily used as a self-learning tool. It consists of 21 episodes, each about 10 minutes long. The story is set in Spain. The video can be accompanied by subtitles both in English and Spanish. The one aspect of *MVL* that encouraged us to start this project was the interactive nature of the video program: something that, to our knowledge, is rare in this type of platform. In the video series, the viewer becomes the protagonist of the story. Not only is the whole story seen through the viewer's eyes (due to the perspective offered by the camera) but the learner has to engage with the video in different ways by responding to questions through clicking, dragging, or answering out loud in order to progress. This is a technique that allows the student to more fully identify with the story and prompts the learner to engage while watching the videos. The videos are presented by a narrator, who explains in English what is happening. Additionally, there is an interactive phrase book that either introduces or reinforces the vocabulary of the episode. Apart from this, there is a learning section that includes different types of activities related to the grammar and vocabulary of the lesson (e.g., fill in the blanks, matching exercises, crosswords).

The other advantage we consider *MVL* to have over other video programs is its authenticity; both because of the way language is used and because of the way culture is presented. The way the characters talk, while somewhat slower than natural speech, is typical of phrases and expressions Spaniards use in their daily lives, as judged by one of the co-authors (a native of Spain). The student is also faced with daily activities, like paying for a cab or finding an apartment. This introduces stu-

dents to Spain in a realistic way since they become familiar with the layout of Spanish cities, the system of public transportation, the different types of houses, *etc.* In our view, *MVL* is the epitome of what many have advocated for decades: the use of realia in foreign language classrooms (e.g., Smith, 1997), in this case through actual video footage of the sights and sounds of Spain. To date, Thomas (2011) is the only study we have found on the effectiveness of *MVL* as a language learning tool to promote listening comprehension. In that study, two groups of students at two different proficiency levels (Spanish 2 and Spanish 4) watched some of the *MVL* videos, which were integrated as part of the curriculum. The videos were followed by homework assignments and questions about the videos were included on the tests. Although Thomas found no correlations between *MVL* homework completion and higher test scores, he did find that the video series was engaging and that students were interested in watching it.

Earlier research (Gray, 1992; Watkins, 1991) describing a similar interactive program on video disc entitled *À la rencontre de Philippe* found that this program encouraged students to develop comprehension of both written and spoken French and to react appropriately to items simulating authentic cultural artifacts. In this series, the viewer is asked by the protagonist, a French journalist named Philippe, to help him move out of his apartment after a fight with his girlfriend. Students could view the video on a TV screen or projector, read additional cultural and situational information on their computer screens, and affect how the story progresses by replying to questions or choosing between options on their computers to indicate what action they wanted to take next. The program aimed to help students develop their “ability to cope with the French culture” (Watkins, 1991) by consulting culturally-appropriate content such as a clickable map of Paris, a floor plan in French of a typical apartment, phone messages with natural-sounding speech, or rental ads from a newspaper (Gray, 1992). Both articles speak highly of the program, *À la rencontre de Philippe*, however, no study was found exploring the effectiveness of this video series on students’ acquisition of French or their cultural competence.

These interactive videos share certain important characteristics with newer forms of communications that have been explored in SLA research, such as the ones that take place in online gaming (Thorne, Black & Sykes, 2009). Some common points are the facts that (i) the student is an active participant in the storyline (either via an avatar, or through other channels), (ii) the student has the ability to manipulate the storyline, (iii) these types of environment create a high level of motivation in students. In fact, the benefits of online gaming have been recognized by the teaching community to the extent that publishing companies are starting to develop videogames specially designed for language learning purposes such as McGraw Hill’s Practice Spanish: Study Abroad ([http://www.mhpractice.com/products/Practice\\_Spanish](http://www.mhpractice.com/products/Practice_Spanish)).

Research supports the advantageous role of interactions via virtual environment for the development of pragmatic skills. In particular, Sykes (2008) explored the use of pragmatics in second language learners of Spanish through the use of croquet ([www.opencroquet.org](http://www.opencroquet.org)), an open-source platform that allows instructors and researchers to create virtual worlds in which users can interact with others as if they were talking in person. The findings of this qualitative investigation confirmed

the positive impact of this type of interaction in the development of appropriate requests and apologies. Additionally, Sykes & Cohen (2009) supported the findings of the previous study by confirming that interactions in virtual environment resulted in significant improvement of metapragmatic strategies. Sadler (2012) described a number of ways the 3-D virtual world Second Life has been and can be geared specifically towards language learners, including islands he created in which users can practice their target language through interacting with native speakers or others learning the L2 (p. 65) and a marketplace where students must use their pragmatic skills to play the role of a vendor who is selling their classmates a list of culturally-appropriate virtual products — as determined by the instructor or the students themselves — or the role of a buyer who must negotiate prices to “purchase” these items (p. 135). Other examples of environments in Second Life propitious for L2 learners include virtual language schools designed specifically for students which sometimes (but not always) have “brick and mortar” equivalent (Sadler, 2012: 119) and recreations of famous locations in Real Life, such as the La Sagrada Familia cathedral in Barcelona or Mont-Saint-Michel in Normandy, that users can visit and interact with others as virtual tourists (p. 123).

Although the virtual interactions analyzed in the previous articles are of a different nature than those that emerge from the interactive video program referred to in this chapter, the similarities among these virtual environments and interactive videos pointed out earlier led us to predict that *MVL* could also represent an advantage for the development of pragmatic skills.

### Speech Acts

Central to the notion of pragmatic skills is that of speech acts, the focus of our study. The theory of speech acts originated in the works of Austin (1962). He distinguished three levels with respect to speech acts: (i) locutionary act: the act of saying something, (ii) illocutionary act: the act performed by uttering a sentence and (iii) perlocutionary act: the effect or consequence produced by the utterance. His student Searle developed the concept of illocutionary acts by looking into finer distinctions of this concept (Searle 1965, 1969, 1975, 1976; Searle & Vanderveken, 1985). Throughout his work, he proposed a taxonomy of illocutionary acts (also known as speech acts). In the current project we focus on three types: representatives or assertives (e.g., stating, asserting), directives (e.g., requesting, ordering) and expressives (e.g., greeting, thanking). Given that we are testing novice learners, we will focus on fairly simple pragmatic functions such as ordering food or asking for directions. Wildner-Bassett (1994) describes these types of functions as “pragmatic routines,” which she defines as “words or phrases whose occurrence is closely bound to specific recurrent situations (p. 4).” These routines, despite often being unanalyzed chunks in the learner’s mind, are essential for succeeding in basic intercultural communication as well as the subsequent development of more advanced pragmatic functions. In the next section, we describe why and how we decided to evaluate pragmatic routines via the video program *MVL*.

## The Study

### Research Questions

Given the many benefits that we believe this video program presents, research is needed to ascertain the validity and the functionality of this tool and its applications for L2 learners. A video program such as *MVL* might address the above-mentioned deficiencies that students present in the pragmatic sphere and offer effective ways to compensate for the lack of authenticity that abounds in the foreign language classroom. Consequently, this study focuses on the following research questions:

1. Can pragmatics be learned through targeted instruction?
2. Is teaching pragmatics via video tools more effective than via traditional methods?

### Participants

Fifteen learners enrolled in a second-semester Spanish summer course at a Southeastern research university participated in this study. All participants in the study were native English speakers. The lower-division program follows the tenets of the communicative approach: students prepare grammar and vocabulary at home while class time is mostly devoted to communicative activities. The textbook used is *Vistas* (Blanco & Donley, 2012) and this specific course covers chapters six through 10. The control group in this study consisted of eight volunteer participants from one section of the course, while the experimental group had seven members from another section of the same course. The use of a control group serves as a baseline by which to compare progress made by participants, in order to judge whether or not it was the treatment (*MVL* activities) that was responsible for any gains. This addresses what we see as a shortcoming in Thomas' (2011) study of *MVL*, in which there was no control group and all students used *MVL*. Additionally, both classes were taught by the same instructor, which minimized the effect that the teacher might have on the results of the project.

### Instruments and Procedure

**Pretest.** The week before starting lessons for the study, the volunteer participants attended a pretest session outside of class time during which they completed a background questionnaire and a recorded pretest. The background questionnaire (Appendix A) included questions about socio-demographic information as well as questions regarding the language/s spoken by participants and asked them to rate their proficiency. Lastly, the questionnaire also focused on items that had to do with the specific pragmatic functions practiced in the study (e.g., how comfortable do you feel ordering food and drinks in Spanish?). The pretest was an oral discourse completion task — also known as closed role play (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013) — which consisted of a simulated dialogue that the student had to perform in a computer lab with a pre-recorded voice. They had 30 seconds to reply to each question. Instructions were given orally before starting the study. A sample task is presented below. Each recording was approximately four and a half minutes long, with eight prompts eliciting responses involving some simple pragmatic functions, presented in Table 1. Students made the recordings in order for the researchers to assess their pragmatic competency at the onset of the study.

Table 1  
*Classification of Pragmatic Functions Tested in the Study*

Pragmatic function	Illocutionary act (speech act)
1. Giving participants' name	Assertive
2. Spelling the name	Assertive
3. Expressing hunger	Expressive
4. Giving directions	Assertive
5. Ordering food	Directive
6. Asking for the check	Directive
7. Giving directions a second time	Assertive
8. Leave-taking	Expressive

The following excerpt, Pretest Example, shows the portion of the pretest during which functions 5 and 6 were elicited from participants.

Pretest Example:

**Examinador:** Aquí está el menú. ¿Qué quieres? *Examiner: Here is the menu. What would you like?*

[Examples below are to appear in a box.]

Burritos      Nachos      Quesadilla      Bebidas Postres  
De pollo De queso      De queso      Coca cola      Empanada de manzanas  
De ternera      De pollo De frijoles      Té      Churros  
De pescado      De cactus      Agua

**Estudiante:** [se graba]

*Student: [records]*

**Examinador:** Yo una quesadilla de cactus y un té. ¿Pides la cuenta?

*Examiner: For me, a cactus quesadilla and a tea. Can you ask for the check?*

**Estudiante:** [se graba]

*Student: [records]*

**Pedagogical Intervention.** After taking the pretest, participants completed lessons covering several pragmatic functions (such as ordering food or giving directions) either via video (MVL) or via worksheets (see Table 1 above for specific functions). Participants were in one of two groups. The experimental group saw the first five episodes of MVL, spaced out evenly so there would be one video shown every four days of class. The videos were each shown once in class with subtitles in English and Spanish, given the reported beneficial effect of captioning for foreign language listening (Winke, Gass, and Sydorenko, 2010). No rewinding was allowed to create consistency. When MVL asked students to answer the video, the instructor randomly selected a student to answer the question out loud. This was done to encourage participation

of all students. Although *MVL* includes a wide variety of activities, the only activities performed in class were those that corresponded to the worksheets that the control group completed (described in more detail below). That is, both groups practiced the same vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatic functions and the format of the activities in the worksheets resembled as closely as possible the format of the activities in *MVL*. Therefore, the only manipulated variable was the delivery of instruction: either via video or via paper-based activities. This design ensured that the effects of the video were not overestimated due to this group completing extra practice.

The five *MVL* episodes watched for this study, as outlined on the website <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/mividaloca/syllabus.shtml>, covered these main language functions:

- Episode 1: Essentials (simple social situations, saying ‘yes, no,’ and saying ‘I don’t understand.’)
- Episode 2: Ordering at a café (masculine and feminine)
- Episode 3: Basic directions (understanding simple directions, reading street and metro signs, using numbers 0-3)
- Episode 4: Meeting and greeting (saying hello and your name, simple questions about nationality, name spellings)
- Episode 5: Ordering tapas (reading a menu, asking for the restroom, asking for the bill)

For example, in Episode 5, the goal is to learn how to order in a restaurant. The student imagines s/he is the main character sitting in a restaurant with friends, Merche and Jorge, and has to decide what to order. By interacting with the video, the student confirms that s/he has understood that an order needs to be placed, has looked at the items on the menu to make a decision, and places the appropriate order with the waiter. A menu is shown in the video, and the user can click on each item to hear how it is pronounced and see the English translation.

**Example 1.** *MVL* Dialogue from Episode 5

**Merche:** *¿Pedimos unas tapas para compartir?*

*Merche: Shall we order some tapas to share?*

**Jorge:** Vale. Yo quiero... pulpo a la gallega.

*Jorge: Ok. I'd like... Galician-style octopus.*

**Merche:** Vale, yo, pimientos de Padrón. Pide tú una.

*Merche: Ok, I'd like Padrón peppers. You pick one.*

**Narrator:** She's asking you to pick one. Let me help you with the menu. “Raciones” means “portions.” Click to find out what they are, then select the one you want, practice saying it, then click “Next”

**Merche** [to the waiter]: Queremos unas tapas para compartir.

*Merche: We'd like some tapas to share.*

**Jorge** [to the waiter]: Una de pulpo a la gallega.

*Jorge: A portion of Galician-style octopus.*

**Merche** [to the student/video viewer]: Una de pimientos de Padrón. ¿Y tú?

*Merche: A portion of 'Padrón' peppers. And you?*

[Video stops for main character to answer]

The control group did not watch the videos, instead devoting the same amount of class time to practice the same pragmatic functions by completing worksheets with classmates. The worksheets were based on the *MVL* storyline, and the activities were modeled after those that appeared in the video. Activities were contextualized, with students receiving information related to the simulated situation for that activity. The instructor explained to students that the purpose of these worksheets was to learn how to say practical things in Spanish so that they could manage everyday situations, such as ordering food or asking for directions, in a Spanish-speaking country. The worksheets are structured in the following way:

- A statement providing the overall context for the activity
- Presentation of the vocabulary
- A vocabulary activity
- Details about the context for the dialogue and roleplay
- A model dialogue
- A main activity, which was more communicative in nature such as roleplaying.

The students worked in pairs for the vocabulary activity and the main activity. The model dialogue was read by the instructor and one or more students, depending on how many roles each dialogue had. This method is based on Bardovi-Harig and Mahan-Taylor (2003), who structure pragmatic training in a series of steps: (i) awareness activities, (ii) authentic language samples used as examples or models and (iii) interpretation or production activities completed by the learners. Each *MVL* video includes these same activity types, although due to the interactive nature of the videos and their storyline, the order of these elements can vary depending on the episode.

In Example 2, we present the counterpart of the example presented in Example 1. The goal of this lesson was ordering food at a restaurant, and the activity replicates the corresponding activity in *MVL*. Students were provided with the vocabulary and expressions that would allow them to successfully order at the restaurant, as in the video. However, in this case, instead of interacting with the video, the student is reading a model dialogue and practicing writing and reading their dialogue aloud with a partner via a role play.

### **Example 2. Control Group Activity**

Ashley, Merche y tú vais de tapas a un restaurante en Madrid.

*Ashley, Merche and you go to get tapas in a restaurant in Madrid.*

### **Vocabulario**

Quiero...	I want
Una caña	A beer
Un vino de la casa	A house wine



Una tapa	A tapa (small plate of food)
Una ración	A big plate of food (for sharing)
Albóndigas con tomate	Meatballs with tomato
Pimientos de Padrón	Peppers
Pulpo a la gallega	Octopus with paprika and potatoes
¿Para beber?	What do you want to drink?
¿Para comer?	What do you want to eat?
El servicio	The restroom
Al fondo	In the back

1) Une los dibujos con la palabra o expresión adecuada.

*Match each picture with the right word or expression.*

Ashley, tú y vuestra amiga Merche estáis listos/listas para pedir.

*Ashley, you and your friend are ready to order.*

**Merche:** ¿Pedimos algo para compartir?

*Merche: Shall we order something to share?*

**Ashley:** Vale.

*Ashley: Ok.*

**Camarero:** ¿Qué quieren para comer?

*Waiter: What would you like to order?*

**Ashley:** Yo quiero pulpo a la gallega.

*Ashley: I'd like Galician-style octopus.*

**Merche:** Yo pimientos de padrón. Pide tú una.

*Merche: I'd like Padrón peppers. You pick one.*

**Tú:** Yo quiero albóndigas con tomate. [...]

*You: I'd like meatballs in tomato sauce. [...]*

Ahora crea un diálogo entre un cliente y un camarero usando la carta de este restaurante.

Now create a dialogue between a client and a waiter using the menu of this restaurant.

**Camarero:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cliente:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Camarero:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cliente:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Camarero:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cliente:** \_\_\_\_\_

### *Posttest*

One to two days after finishing the classroom portion of the study, participants completed the posttest and the exit survey. The posttest, a recorded discourse completion task, was identical in form and content to the pretest that participants completed. This methodology differs from that used by Thomas (2011), who determined progress by looking at homework and test grades, both of which could be affected by other factors not directly related to learning coming from the activities used in the study. In the current study, use of the recorded pretest and posttest made it possible to gauge participants' performance on the exact same discourse completion tasks before treatment (the *MVL* activities or paper-based lessons) and after.

**Exit Survey.** While the pretest and posttest aimed to measure students' ability to perform certain pragmatic functions, the purpose of the exit survey (Appendix B) was to get some subjective impressions from participants with regard to the videos or worksheets. Participants in the study were asked to give their reaction to *MVL* in part to follow up on the finding from Thomas (2011) that students reported the series to be interesting and engaging.

### **Procedures for Data Analysis**

Two raters (the authors) independently scored all of the recordings. Since the current study is looking specifically at participants' pragmatic performance, the scale evaluates what Weyers (1999) called the "effectiveness of message" (p. 343): not the internal linguistic accuracy (such as grammar and vocabulary) of an utterance, but rather whether or not the underlying speech act would have been correctly understood by a native speaker. For our analysis, we considered the appropriateness of the utterance for the given situation as opposed to counting the number of errors, since accuracy is not necessarily required for a successful speech act.

Therefore, for each of the eight prompts on the recordings, a score was assigned to determine how successful participants were in completing the task. The following scale was used:

- 0—the subject did not answer the question or the answer was completely irrelevant or incorrect
- 1—the answer was partially correct
- 2—the answer was appropriate and relevant.

The scores for the prompts were added to obtain a total score out of 16 points for each of the two discourse completion tasks, the pretest and the posttest.

**Interrater reliability.** Before comparing between- and in-group scores, the totals were compared between raters to judge the consistency of scoring. Due to the small sample size for the exploratory study and the uneven number of participants in the two groups (seven participants in the experimental group and eight in the control group), non-parametric tests were chosen for analysis. Interrater reliability was confirmed to a highly significant level ( $p < 0.01$ , two-tailed) for both the pretest (Kendall's tau\_b .733, Spearman's rho .876) and posttest (Kendall's tau\_b .917, Spearman's rho .977). According to these measures, there was a strong level of correlation between the scores given by raters using this scale.

## Findings

Data obtained from the pretest and posttest were analyzed between groups in order to compare any differences in pragmatic performance between the *MVL* and traditional groups at the beginning and end of the study, as well as within groups, so as to detect any progress each group made after completing their respective lessons. The results from these analyses are presented below.

### Pretest Scores between Groups

Students in the *MVL* group scored higher on the pretest overall than those doing the paper-based activities. Those who were in the class that watched *Mi Vida Loca* had a mean score of 9.29 out of 16 possible points on the pretest, versus 5.00 out of 16 for the control group. Significance was reached on both the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test ( $Z = -2.207$ , Asymp. Sig. .027) and Sign Test (Exact Sig. .031). The difference between the groups was statistically significant prior to treatment. Based on these results, we cannot say the two groups were at the same level of pragmatic proficiency at the onset of the study; students in the *MVL* group scored a little over four points higher than the control group. This result must be taken into account when comparing groups, and will be explored further in the discussion section.

### Posttest Scores between Groups

After the five in-class sessions, participants took the test a second time, the posttest, to gauge what progress, if any, had been made in their pragmatic abilities after completing the video series or paper-based activities. The *MVL* group once again scored higher ( $\bar{x} = 11.57$ ) on its recordings than the traditional group ( $\bar{x} = 5.88$ ), this time by over five points. Significance was reached on both the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test ( $Z = -2.207$ , Asymp. Sig. .006) and Sign Test (Exact Sig. .012). As with the pretest, the groups' mean scores differed. In this case, however, the gap between the two groups was larger on this second measure (5.69 on the posttest) as compared to the pretest (4.29). On average, students in the *MVL* group again scored higher than the group who had done traditional activities. A look at the difference within each group between the pre- and posttest sheds more light on the possible effect of the use of the *MVL* videos during the study.

### Pretest versus Posttest Scores, within Groups

Additional analysis was carried out to compare the performance of each group on the two measures to see the difference in their pragmatic competence between the pretest and posttest. When examining the results within the *MVL* group, the mean score obtained on the posttest ( $\bar{x} = 11.57$ ) was over two points higher than that on the pretest ( $\bar{x} = 9.29$ ). Significance was reached for this result on both the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test ( $Z = -2.207$ , Asymp. Sig. .027) and Sign Test (Exact Sig. .031). Participants who used the videos in class saw a significant improvement in performance between the pretest and posttest. Conversely, students in the traditional group scored less than a point higher on the posttest ( $\bar{x} = 5.88$ ) than they did on the pretest ( $\bar{x} = 5.00$ ). The difference for the control group did not approach statistical significance on the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test ( $Z = -1.633$ , Asymp. Sig. .102) or

Sign Test (Exact Sig. .375). Unlike the *MVL* group, there was no significant gain in performance for the students in the traditional group between the pre- and posttests.

The results from the current study are presented below in Table 2 and can be summarized as follows:

The *MVL* group began with a higher mean score on the pretest ( $\bar{x} = 9.29$ ) than that of the control group ( $\bar{x} = 5.00$ ).

Students who participated in the *MVL* group also scored higher overall on the posttest ( $\bar{x} = 11.57$ ) than participants completing the more traditional activities ( $\bar{x} = 5.88$ ).

Progress made by the *MVL* group by the end of the study (an increase of over two points out of 16 possible) was statistically significant, while that of the control group was not (less than one point).

Table 2  
*Pretest and Posttest Pragmatic Competence Scores*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Pretest—Mi Vida Loca	7	9.29	2.289	6	13
Posttest—Mi Vida Loca	7	11.57	2.878	7	15
Pretest—Traditional	8	5.00	1.927	2	8
Posttest—Traditional	8	5.88	2.232	3	10

Discussion

In light of these results, we can now discuss how participants’ performance relates to the research questions stated earlier, as well as what the implications of this study are for developing intercultural competence in the L2. Some future avenues of research will also be explored.

The first research question — Can pragmatics be learned through targeted instruction? — can be answered affirmatively for these participants. The *Mi Vida Loca* group gained over two points ( $\bar{x} = 9.29$  to  $\bar{x} = 11.57$ ) between the pretest and posttest after performing tasks for the study, which represents a statistically significant improvement. After five lessons of the video program included as part of students’ coursework, participants were able to achieve higher scores on a measure testing their pragmatic competence, that is, their ability to respond appropriately during a simulated conversation with a native speaker. Another consideration is not only whether or not participants using the *Mi Vida Loca* video program increased their pragmatic abilities, but how any improvement would compare to students who instead completed paper-based activities.

This leads us to our second research question: Is teaching pragmatics via video tools more effective than via traditional methods? The group performing more traditional paper-based activities covering the same material did not see the same gains

by the end of the study as those participating in the *MVL* group. While there was a slight improvement in scores ( $\bar{x} = 5.00$  versus  $\bar{x} = 5.88$ ) in the control group, their performance was not significantly better at the end of the study than at the beginning. Considering the second research question then, we can once again answer in the affirmative: the students who participated in the interactive video series in this study saw their pragmatic competence in responding appropriately in the L2 improve, while those in the traditional group saw no significant gains.

These results contrast with those of Thomas (2011), who found no language improvement for students using *MVL*. As discussed earlier, Thomas considered homework and test scores to try to evaluate listening skills (which does not seem to us to be a valid way to directly assess listening) instead of an instrument designed specifically to assess the specific skills being targeted in his study (in our case, pragmatic competence). For this reason, it is difficult to compare his results directly with those of the current study.

There are several factors that may explain why the *MVL* group improved significantly by the end of the study while the control group did not. Our results are in line with previous views in the literature (e.g., Weyers, 1999) emphasizing the benefits of videos and particularly interactive videos (Watkins, 1991) as related to language learning. Participants in the *MVL* group were able to see and hear the language being used and think of appropriate responses for the given situations, as opposed to simply learning about and manipulating forms on paper. In the case of *MVL* specifically, the videos also simulate the types of interactions students encounter in the target culture. Several articles (Bardovi-Harlig, et al., 1991; Myers-Scotton & Bernstein, 1988) have suggested that conversations by native speakers that more closely resemble natural speech set in an authentic cultural setting may reduce the existing mismatch between traditional classroom activities and real-life situations.

Furthermore, the setting of the video, which places the learner in the role of an active participant in the story, more closely addresses L2 pragmatics than paper-based and even other less interactive video programs that may contain exchanges that are incomprehensible or lack authenticity (Vanderplank, 1993). Each of the elements of L2 pragmatics described by Bardovi-Harlig (2013) and summarized earlier, is addressed by the *MVL* series:

- How to say (via expressions modeled in the video)
- What (learner responses using these expressions for situations in the storyline)
- To whom (characters students hear, see, and interact with virtually)
- When (at selected moments in the video).

The setting of *MVL*, shot in Madrid and showing authentic sights and sounds of the city, immerses the student in the same sorts of situations they can encounter in the target culture. In our view, the results of the study support the notion that the *MVL* series allows students to become aware of situations and practices that are different from those in their native culture and learn appropriate ways of communicating effectively in everyday interactions in the target culture.

While traditional exercises can teach students about these considerations, an interactive video program such as *MVL* puts them into practice, creating a simulated

immersion environment that engages students beyond traditional classroom activities. The approach of *MVL* allows students to practice how they would interact with native speakers through some of the basic functions (giving one's name, expressing needs, leave-taking) typically needed in real-world situations. The engagement, interactivity, and authenticity of the experience provided by *MVL* may be key factors in fostering pragmatic competency.

### Limitations

In spite of these promising outcomes, the current exploratory study has several limitations that should be noted. First, the relatively small and uneven number of participants in each group (eight students in the control group and seven in the experimental group) limits the strength of the statistical analyses. In view of this, our discussion was also limited to the overall scores assessing pragmatic ability, as opposed to a finer-grained analysis of individual speech acts.

In addition, one factor that could not be controlled for was previous ability in Spanish. As described above, the participants from the two groups were not identical in terms of abilities prior to the start of the study. Because the scores obtained on the pretest show that the *MVL* group started at a higher level ( $\bar{x} = 9.29$ ) than the traditional group ( $\bar{x} = 5.00$ ), it is possible that some of the difference in progress detected is related to the fact that the groups were at somewhat different base levels at the start of the study. For this reason, our results simply suggest that the *Mi Vida Loca* program helped increase students' pragmatic ability. We can state that participants in the *MVL* significantly improved their level after completing the study, while the control group did not improve significantly. Since the pretest and posttest assessments involved listening, the fact that the *MVL* group performed tasks during the study that involved listening (the audio from the videos) may have had an impact on their performance, as compared to the control group who used more traditional paper-based writing tasks as the primary medium of instruction.

Lastly, the study was run during the summer semester, as opposed to a regular full-semester course. For this reason, lessons were given over a short period of time: once every four class days. It is possible that students completing the video or traditional lessons over a longer period of time might perform differently. Additional research will be needed to confirm these findings and will aim to address these limitations.

### Further Research and Conclusions

With these caveats in mind, the results of this exploratory study still have important implications. First, our study suggests that students at beginning levels of acquiring Spanish may benefit from interactive video lessons such as those in *MVL*. Beginning language students generally acquire pragmatic competence slowly (as students in our traditional activities group) or fail to do so at all (cf. Barron 2003; Hoffman-Hicks, 1999). In spite of this, students benefit from being trained in such skills at beginning levels (Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen, 2012). Involving students early on in the pragmatic applications of the language should make language learners more proficient in interacting in the L2, showing them how the linguistic features they are

learning can be applied to situations they will encounter, and allowing them to deal successfully and appropriately in new settings. Those who wish to study abroad are often unprepared to interact in real-life situations (e.g., DeKeyser, 2010) in spite of linguistic training in the classroom. Many studies have explored the effects of study abroad in L2 learners' pragmatic development (e.g., Bataller, 2010; Cohen & Shively, 2007; Reynold-Case, 2013; Shively & Cohen, 2008). Although these studies generally report on the beneficial aspects of the study abroad on learners' pragmatic awareness and language use, they also highlight that there are a series of factors having to do with the learner (e.g., proficiency, previous experience with the language), the environment (e.g., quality and quantity of input) and the relation between the learner and the context (e.g., amount of interaction with native speakers, percentage of daily use of the L2) that need to be explored further. With over 60% of undergraduates indicating a desire to study abroad (Committee for Economic Development, 2006), improving students' intercultural competence and helping them learn strategies for navigating the types of interactions they would encounter prior to traveling may both prove to be important factors in encouraging student participation in study abroad programs, facilitating the success of those who spend time in the target culture or who interact with native speakers in any context, whether in the U.S. or abroad. Since varieties of Spanish vary from country to country and community to community, as is the case with other languages, any tools and strategies would need to be assessed for their appropriateness for the specific situations students would encounter.

Future research is needed to increase the generalizability of the results of this initial study. Specifically there is a need for a delayed posttest with more participants to track students' long-term retention and use of the skills they have learned using *MVL*. Additional populations to explore include true beginners, as opposed to the second-semester students assessed in the current research. Additional research is needed on similar video series, such as *À la rencontre de Philippe* or other series which may exist, with students taking other languages and preparing for the pragmatic need of communicating appropriately in other cultures. With the availability of free or inexpensive tools to create and publish content, it is also possible for researchers or instructors to develop their own video programs aimed at increasing students' overall pragmatic competence, or specifically targeted towards destinations in the target culture where students may be likely to travel (e.g., a city where an exchange program has been established). Research on the optimal design of pragmatic training video series is still needed. Also important would be an investigation into how best to build upon the opportunities provided by the interactive video series: how related activities such as classroom simulations and role plays could be used to enhance instruction and address different social variables (such as age, gender, relationship between interlocutors) that can also be key to successful speech acts.

This study provides preliminary evidence that interactive video programs, such as *MVL*, that engage students through a virtual immersion in the target culture might help increase second language learners' intercultural competence as compared to more traditional types of activities. Since the development of pragmatic skills provides an essential toolkit to navigate in target cultures, we believe this type of training will help students bridge the gap between the language they encounter in



the classroom and the conversations they will have to face when traveling abroad or trying to communicate with native Spanish speakers in the U.S.

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## Appendix A

### Beginning Spanish Study — Background questionnaire

A) Please answer the following questions. Your responses will be kept completely confidential.

1) What is your **name or participant number**? \_\_\_\_\_

2) What is your **gender**? \_\_\_\_\_

3) **What year in school** are you at the University of Memphis? (Please select one)

Freshman      Sophomore      Junior      Senior

Other (please explain: \_\_\_\_\_)

4) What do you consider to be your **native (first) language**? \_\_\_\_\_

5) What **language(s) do you speak or have you learned/studied**? Please give the following information for English, Spanish, and up to 2 other languages in order of fluency. Please list NA (not applicable) if you've never spoken or studied/learned the language.

Language	When you started learning it	What place(s) you learned it (in high school, at home, online, etc.)
a) English		
b) Spanish		
c) _____		
d) _____		

6) For the languages you listed on #5, please rate your **ability to write informally**, with a friend for example.

1 = poor      2 = fair      3 = good      4 = very good      5 = excellent

a) English \_\_\_\_    b) Spanish \_\_\_\_    c) Language c \_\_\_\_    d) Language d \_\_\_\_

7) For the languages you listed on #5, please rate your **ability to write formally**, for a term paper or business for example.

1 = poor      2 = fair      3 = good      4 = very good      5 = excellent

a) English \_\_\_\_    b) Spanish \_\_\_\_    c) Language c \_\_\_\_    d) Language d \_\_\_\_

8) For the languages you listed on #5, please rate your **ability to speak informally**, with friends for example.

1 = poor      2 = fair      3 = good      4 = very good      5 = excellent

a) English \_\_\_\_    b) Spanish \_\_\_\_    c) Language c \_\_\_\_    d) Language d \_\_\_\_

9) For the languages you listed on #5, please rate your **ability to speak formally**, with a professor or for business for example.

1 = poor      2 = fair      3 = good      4 = very good      5 = excellent

a) English \_\_\_\_    b) Spanish \_\_\_\_    c) Language c \_\_\_\_    d) Language d \_\_\_\_

10) Are there other languages you speak or have studied/learned besides those you mentioned above? If so, please list them and mention your fluency briefly. If not, please write NA (not applicable).

---

11) In **what country** were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

12) **Have you ever visited or lived in a country** besides the one you mentioned in #11? (Please select one) YES / NO

If yes, please indicate **which country/countries**, **when** you went, and **for how long** you were there.

a) Country 1: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Country 2: \_\_\_\_\_

c) Country 3: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: If you've lived in or visited other countries, please continue your list below. If not, please write NA (Not applicable)

---

13) Please indicate any other personal or professional experience with languages or foreign countries that you have that you didn't provide above.

---

*B) Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being lowest and 5 being highest.*

1. How comfortable would you feel talking to a native Spanish speaker in Spanish?

1            2            3            4            5

2. How comfortable would you feel traveling to Spain (or another Spanish-speaking country)?

1            2            3            4            5

3. How comfortable do you feel introducing yourself in Spanish?

1            2            3            4            5

4. How comfortable do you feel ordering food and drinks in Spanish?

1            2            3            4            5

5. How comfortable do you feel asking directions in Spanish?

1            2            3            4            5

6. How comfortable do you feel spelling names in Spanish?

1            2            3            4            5

7. How motivated are you to go to a Spanish-speaking country?

1            2            3            4            5

8. How motivated are you to learn about the culture of Spanish-speaking countries?

1            2            3            4            5

**Thank you for your participation!**

## Appendix B

### Exit Survey

#### *Mi Vida Loca Group*

1. Do you think the videos were: (choose all that apply)
 

a. Entertaining	h. Uninteresting
b. Interesting	i. Hard to understand
c. Easy to understand	j. Unhelpful
d. Helpful	k. Confusing
e. Straightforward	l. Impractical
f. Practical	m. None of these
g. Boring	
2. Do you like these videos better or worse than the ones you have watched in other foreign language classes? Why?

*Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being lowest and 5 being highest.*

3. How comfortable would you feel talking to a native Spanish speaker in Spanish after watching these videos?  
           1          2          3          4          5
4. How comfortable would you feel traveling to Spain (or another Spanish-speaking country) after watching these videos?  
           1          2          3          4          5
5. How comfortable do you feel introducing yourself in Spanish?  
           1          2          3          4          5
6. How comfortable do you feel ordering food and drinks in Spanish?  
           1          2          3          4          5
7. How comfortable do you feel asking directions in Spanish?  
           1          2          3          4          5
8. How comfortable do you feel spelling names in Spanish?  
           1          2          3          4          5
9. How do these videos motivate you to go to a Spanish-speaking country?  
           1          2          3          4          5
10. How do these videos motivate you to learn about the culture of Spanish-speaking countries?  
           1          2          3          4          5
11. Please add any additional information in the space below.

#### *Pragmatic Training Group*

1. Do you think the worksheets lessons and activities you did for this study were:



- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Entertaining       | h. Uninteresting      |
| b. Interesting        | i. Hard to understand |
| c. Easy to understand | j. Unhelpful          |
| d. Helpful            | k. Confusing          |
| e. Straightforward    | l. Impractical        |
| f. Practical          | m. None of these      |
| g. Boring             |                       |

2. Do you like these lessons and activities you did for this study better or worse than the ones you have used in other foreign language classes? Why?

*Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being lowest and 5 being highest.*

3. How comfortable would you feel talking to a native Spanish speaker in Spanish after completing the lessons and activities for this study?

1            2            3            4            5

4. How comfortable would you feel traveling to Spain (or another Spanish-speaking country) after completing the lessons and activities for this study?

1            2            3            4            5

5. How comfortable do you feel introducing yourself in Spanish?

1            2            3            4            5

6. How comfortable do you feel ordering food and drinks in Spanish?

1            2            3            4            5

7. How comfortable do you feel asking directions in Spanish?

1            2            3            4            5

8. How comfortable do you feel spelling names in Spanish?

1            2            3            4            5

9. How much do these videos motivate you to go to a Spanish-speaking country?

1            2            3            4            5

10. How much do these videos motivate you to learn about the culture of Spanish-speaking countries?

1            2            3            4            5

11. Please add any additional information in the space below.

(Endnotes)

1 Because *Mi Vida Loca* is set in Spain, *vosotros* (you pl.) is the most commonly used form to refer to you plural instead of *ustedes* as is the case in other Latin American countries. For that reason, the worksheets also include the *vosotros* forms. The instructor made students aware of the difference between *vosotros/ustedes* at the beginning of this project.

2 While a student on his or her own would be able to rewind video, having the instructor play the video only once in a whole-class setting ensured that all students were exposed to each segment one time. In this way, any gains in competence could not be said to result from the number of times students viewed or completed the task.

## Service-Learning: Overcoming Fears, Connecting with the Hispanic/Latino Community

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### **Abstract**

*This chapter explores the reasons why adult Spanish language students claimed to be hesitant to participate in the local Hispanic/Latino community in a recent study on 25 students enrolled in a 400/500-level Spanish class with a service-learning component at a Southeastern university. Data come from student reflection papers, written four times over the course of the semester, analyzed through thematic content analysis. Findings indicate that students held specific fears about participating in the local Hispanic/Latino community, including fear of interacting with the community and insecurity about their ability to communicate with native speakers. The analysis of the reflection papers revealed that service-learning helped many students to overcome these fears. Pedagogical implications that consider ways in which service-learning can help learners overcome their hesitance to participate in the local Hispanic/Latino community are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *service-learning, Spanish, foreign language teaching, fears, Hispanic community*

### **Background**

In my 17-year career as a Spanish teacher, I have often been disappointed by students' hesitancy to spend time in the local Hispanic/Latino community. Of the hundreds of students I have taught, very few have made an effort to interact with local Hispanics/Latinos. Even Spanish majors, who commonly have a passion for the language and culture, tend to simply ignore their greatest resource—native speakers in the local community with whom they can practice speaking and from whom they can learn about target cultures firsthand. For this reason, I investigated the underlying reasons for the apparent hesitancy of Spanish students to participate in the Hispanic/Latino community and explored how service-learning might help address the problem.

In this chapter, I first present findings on the fears the student participants reported about spending time with Hispanics/Latinos, primarily the participants' fear of interacting with the community and their insecurities about their ability to communicate with native speakers. Understanding the reasons for student reluctance to participate in the Hispanic/Latino community is essential to effectively targeting and addressing the problem. I then discuss the potential for service-learning to help students overcome their fears by providing a gentle push into the Hispanic/Latino community, while at the same time offering support and guidance to make the experience a successful one that students likely will endeavor to seek out again in the future.

## Overview of Literature

In recent years a growing number of Spanish language educators have begun to incorporate service-learning experiences into their curriculum (Nelson & Scott, 2008). These experiences are invaluable because they provide students the opportunity to interact with local Hispanics/Latinos, an experience they may not otherwise seek out on their own. In fact, research suggests that, for many students, a service-learning placement represents their first time interacting with the local Hispanic/Latino community (Pellettieri, 2011; Plann, 2002; Varas, 1999; Weldon & Trautmann, 2003). According to Bringle, Clayton and Hatcher (2013, p.6)

...service learning involves the integration of academic material, relevant service activities, and critical reflection and is built on reciprocal partnerships that engage students, faculty/staff, and community members to achieve academic, civic, and personal learning objectives as well as to advance public purposes.

It is clear from this definition that service-learning goes beyond traditional community service in that it weaves classroom content into the experience and requires substantial reflection. Thus, service-learning offers several advantages in foreign language learning. Service-learning provides an authentic, real-world setting in which students can practice their language skills and learn academic content-related concepts. At the same time, it offers students a space to reflect upon the experience and themselves on an intellectual, interpersonal and personal level.

Service-learning is also an effective means of achieving global competence, as articulated by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) *Global Competence Position Statement* (2014), offering the student an opportunity to communicate with others in their native language, while acquiring knowledge of different cultures. It follows the Position Statement's recommended practice of "Reflect(ing) on one's personal experiences across cultures to evaluate personal feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and reactions" (p.2).

In recent years a growing body of research has emerged addressing service-learning in the postsecondary Spanish as a foreign language context (Barreneche, 2011; Beebe & DeCosta, 1993; Caldwell, 2007; Carracelas-Juncal, 2013; Hale, 1999; Hellebrandt & Varona, 1999; Kaplan & Pérez Gamboa, 2004; Lear & Abbott, 2009; Long, 2003; Morris, 2001; Nelson & Scott, 2008; Pellettieri, 2011; Plann, 2002; Tancelosky, 2008; Tilley-Lubbs, 2004; Vázquez, 2014; Weldon & Trautmann, 2003; Zapata, 2011). These investigations have shed light on many of the potential benefits of service-learning, including positive language acquisition outcomes, especially increased proficiency and improved language learning attitudes, meeting the ACTFL *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), and cultivating deeper cultural understanding, positive attitudes toward Hispanics/Latinos, an appreciation for diversity, and a sense of civic responsibility.

However, none of these investigations focused specifically on the topic of student fears and the role of service-learning in helping students overcome them. A handful of these studies mentioned student fears in passing, mostly in the context of student reflections and comments. In research focusing on advanced Spanish language learners, the fears mentioned include fear of making errors and fear of not

knowing what to expect (Barreneche, 2011), fear that the students will not be accepted by the Hispanics/Latinos with whom they work, and fear of not being linguistically well prepared (Plann, 2002). In research on intermediate Spanish language learners, the fears identified were fear of not speaking Spanish “properly” and fear that the student’s lack of fluency will “impos[e] on [the] time and patience” of native speakers (Pellettieri, 2011, p.295) and fear that the student’s proficiency is inadequate to help Spanish speakers (Tacelosky, 2008). Note that the majority of these fears (five out of seven) were language-related.

One study (Pellettieri, 2011) also considered language-related fears as part of a broader investigation of Spanish students’ willingness to communicate and service-learning. This study looked at linguistic self-confidence, “a construct that combines a learner’s perceived L2 competence and speaking apprehension” (p. 291). Results indicated that students’ linguistic self-confidence was increased in both areas through their participation in service-learning. That is, students reported higher perceived L2 competence in Spanish and lower speaking apprehension.

The topic of language anxiety has also been well investigated (Aida, 1994; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Krashen, 1987; MacIntyre, 1995a, 1995b; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Phillips, 1992; Rodriguez, 1995; Young, 1986), though not in the specific context of service-learning. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), “Language anxiety can be defined as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (p.284). The majority of research on this topic has focused on the negative effects of language anxiety, concluding it is detrimental to language acquisition or learning. Native speaker anxiety, anxiety related to interacting and speaking the foreign language with native speakers, is one common type of anxiety experienced by foreign language learners (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986).

Anxiety has been studied in research on intercultural competence, as well. Gudykunst (1993, 1998) asserted that high levels of anxiety are detrimental to communication and intercultural adjustment. His *Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Model* is based on the premise that, in order for effective communication and cultural adjustment to take place, the non-native speaker must learn to manage anxiety and uncertainty. Gudykunst discussed the important role that mindfulness plays in this process, helping the foreigner to shift out of “automatic pilot” (his/her instinctual, natural response) in order to develop a way of thinking characterized by heightened awareness and openness to considering different perspectives.

The present study seeks to fill a gap in the existing literature by contributing data on student fears related to participating in the local Hispanic/Latino community and considering the beneficial role service-learning might play in helping students overcome these fears. This issue is of particular importance to language educators and policy makers. If we hope to engage students in the local Hispanic/Latino community, it is critical that we are first able to identify the obstacles that interfere with this engagement—specific fears students hold that keep them from participating in the community. With this information in mind, we can design service-learning curricula that help students work through these particular fears effectively. In this way, the service-learning experience becomes more productive by addressing student apprehension from the start.

## Methodology

### *The Setting/Context*

The data presented here come from students enrolled in a combined upper-division undergraduate and graduate level course entitled *Spanish in the United States*, taught at a public research university in the Southeast with a student body of approximately 15,000. The course explores the varieties of Spanish spoken in the U.S. and the various communities of Hispanics/Latinos who speak these varieties from a sociolinguistic perspective. Students learn about the (im)migration experiences and reception of different Hispanic/Latino nationality groups (Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Salvadorans, etc.), as well as the unique features of the dialects spoken by each group. They also learn about typical bilingual language behaviors, including code switching, code mixing and borrowing, and about language maintenance. As part of the course, students are required to participate in a service-learning experience in which they observe and reflect on the aforementioned phenomena, while volunteering in a local Hispanic/Latino organization. The goal is for students to experience firsthand the topics from their course readings, notes and class discussion in an authentic setting, while at the same time getting to know and serving Hispanics/Latinos in their local community. Student reflections and observations constitute an important part of class discussion and are also the basis for four reflection papers.

Students spent a minimum of 10 hours total taking part in service-learning. They were instructed to evenly distribute their service-learning hours over the course of the semester so that they were able to gather the necessary information to write each reflection paper. Students were responsible for keeping track of their own hours—they were not officially verified.

The Hispanic/Latino community near the university is small, but growing. Hispanics make up 4.3% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The largest group is Mexicans (73%), followed at a distant second by Puerto Ricans (4%) and Hondurans (3%). While there are several Mexican restaurants and Hispanic/Latino-owned businesses in the area, there are few places where one could go to be immersed in a Hispanic/Latino, Spanish-speaking environment. The notable exception to this is a handful of Hispanic/Latino churches that offer Spanish-language services: one Catholic church, one Seventh-Day Adventist church, one Baptist church and one evangelical Christian church. These churches are unique in that they provide an authentic Spanish-speaking community environment—a family-like setting, in which the Spanish language and Hispanic/Latino culture are maintained and highly valued. They were therefore selected as ideal service-learning sites.

Beginning in 2013 I established a relationship with two of these churches, both of which have served as our community partners since then. When I initially contacted the pastors of each church and invited them to serve as community partners, both were excited about the opportunity. Since then the relationship has been fruitful and mutually beneficial. Both church communities have welcomed our students and provided a supportive and encouraging environment in which students can practice their Spanish language skills and engage in academic learning. The church community members, in turn, have commented that they enjoy our students' presence in their church. They have expressed appreciation for the students' service, as

well as for the students' enthusiasm for the Spanish language and Hispanic/Latino culture. The pastors are pleased with the arrangement and have extended an open invitation for new service-learning students to be placed in their churches at any time.

The majority of students carried out their service-learning experiences in one of these two community partner churches. However, the option was also given to select an alternate service-learning site, so long as it met the basic requirement of providing a Spanish-speaking community environment that was open to receiving service-learning students. A few students chose the latter option; two selected other churches and one chose a Hispanic/Latino community organization near her home far from campus.

Students served in a variety of roles, including as ushers, childcare or nursery workers, teacher assistants, office assistants, translators, and healthcare outreach representatives. Some were simply asked to serve informally as conversation partners for members of the congregation who were working to improve their English.

### *The Participants*

The participants were 25 students enrolled in either the Summer 2013 or Spring 2015 session of the course. The majority of participants (22) were undergraduate students taking the course as part of their Spanish major. All were juniors or seniors and most were 20-24 years old. The remaining three participants were graduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts in Teaching Languages (MATL) program who were specializing in the Spanish-emphasis track of the degree. While most participants (21) were non-native speakers of Spanish, three were heritage speakers and one was a native speaker who was born and raised in Mexico. Three students were male and 22 were female. Pseudonyms are used throughout the study to protect the anonymity of the participants.

### *Research Questions*

Based on previous research and my experience as a foreign language educator, preliminary research questions were developed. These questions were refined over the course of the semester, resulting in the following:

1. Why are students hesitant to participate in the local Hispanic/Latino community?
2. Which particular fears keep students from participating in the local Hispanic/Latino community?
3. Does service-learning help students to overcome these fears?
4. (How) does service-learning change students' perceptions of local Hispanics/Latinos and themselves?

In this investigation the term 'fear,' referenced above, will be used broadly to refer to feelings of fear, anxiety, insecurity, nervousness, worry, etc., expressed by students. This term was selected because it is comprehensive, encompassing a variety of fear-related phenomena.

The answers to these questions provide valuable data regarding the specific fears Spanish students hold about participating in the Hispanic/Latino community. Recognizing and identifying these fears is important because, until they are addressed, students are likely to continue to avoid interacting with Hispanics/Latinos, missing out on an invaluable opportunity. Yet, if these fears can be confronted

and overcome through service-learning, students will gain access to an incredible resource—a community of native speakers with whom they can practice speaking, while at the same time learning relevant academic content knowledge. Furthermore, the experience has the potential to be truly transformative, offering students the opportunity to reflect upon their perceptions of Hispanics/Latinos and themselves.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Data come from 100 student reflection papers. Each student submitted four three-page reflection papers written in Spanish. Student reflection papers were based on assigned writing prompts (see Appendix). The due dates for the papers were evenly distributed over the course of the semester. Students were instructed to complete at least 2.5 service-learning hours prior to writing each reflection paper. Reflection papers were evaluated based on academic content, depth of reflection, grammar and mechanics. For undergraduate students the papers counted for 25% of the overall grade, while for graduate students they counted for 20% of the overall grade. The writing prompts asked students to discuss their expectations and perceptions, but did not specifically ask students to discuss their fears.

The data analysis procedure took a mixed-methods approach. Student reflection papers were analyzed as follows. First, the reflection papers were coded and analyzed through thematic content analysis. Holsti (1969) explains that content analysis involves the coding of data according to categories for the purposes of hypothesis testing. In this investigation the categories were the themes indicated in the research questions. Themes included 'reasons for not participating in the local Hispanic/Latino community,' 'fears about participating in the local Hispanic/Latino community,' 'how service-learning helped the student overcome his/her fears,' and 'how service-learning changed the student's perceptions of Hispanics/Latinos and/or him/herself.' Any passage of data pertaining to a particular theme was coded accordingly. Then, the themes were broken down further into subthemes. Subthemes included:

Fears about participating in the local Hispanic/Latino community:

1. Fear of interacting with the community
  - a. fear Hispanic/Latino community members would be unwelcoming
  - b. fear Hispanic/Latino community members would see the students as invaders and not want them there
  - c. fear of the church/religious environment
  - d. fear Hispanic/Latino community members would be shy or afraid of outsiders
  - e. fear of not knowing what to expect when entering the community
2. Insecurity about their ability to communicate with native speakers
  - a. fear of speaking
  - b. shyness or lack of self-confidence
  - c. fear of not comprehending
  - d. fear of making errors

The coding procedure was based on the occurrence of key words. For instance, within item number two, 'insecurity about their ability to communicate with native



speakers,' the subtheme a) 'fear of speaking' was coded when, in discussing fears in his/her reflection paper, the student wrote the word 'speaking' (or some closely related term), while b) shyness or lack of self-confidence was coded when the student wrote the word 'shyness' or 'lack of confidence' (or some closely related term). Differentiating between these types of communicative insecurities is important, as each represents a particular type of challenge the student must work to overcome and not all communicative insecurities are present in all students. For example, a student may be apprehensive of speaking Spanish, although her personality is neither shy nor lacking in self-confidence. In cases in which more than one subtheme was present in a student comment, the comment was coded for all applicable subthemes.

The coding process, in turn, informed the generation of hypotheses. Each hypothesis was numerically coded, recorded on a spreadsheet and tested by calculating the number of students for whom it held true. For example, the following hypothesis was generated: 'many students fear that Hispanic/Latino community members will be unwelcoming.' For this hypothesis, the variable 'fear that Hispanic/Latino community members will be unwelcoming' was coded for each participant on a 0-1 scale, where 0 indicates 'participant does *not* hold a fear that Hispanic/Latino community members will be unwelcoming' and 1 indicates 'participant holds a fear that Hispanic/Latino community members will be unwelcoming.' The number of students coded as 1 was then calculated, revealing that slightly over half of the participants (10/19) who held a fear of interacting with the community feared Hispanic/Latino community members would be unwelcoming, thus supporting the validity of the hypothesis.

## Findings

### *Overview*

Results supported previous research findings that many students were, in fact, reluctant to participate in the local Hispanic/Latino community. In their reflection papers students discussed several fears that kept them from spending time with Hispanics/Latinos. The two most common fears discussed were fear of interacting with the community and insecurity about their ability to communicate with native speakers. Student comments also demonstrated that service-learning helped them to overcome, or at least confront, these fears and to transform their perceptions of Hispanics/Latinos and themselves.

### *Hesitancy to Participate in the Hispanic/Latino Community*

Comments from student reflection papers revealed that, for the majority of participants (20/25), this service-learning experience was their first time spending time in the local Hispanic/Latino community. Although the students were all Spanish majors with an assumed passion for the language and culture, many confided that they had been afraid to seek out this type of experience on their own. Students offered a number of reasons for not participating in the local Hispanic/Latino community, including never having thought of it and ignorance of the fact that a substantial Hispanic/Latino community existed near campus. However, the most common reasons given were fear of interacting with the community and insecurity about their ability to communicate with native speakers.

### *Fear of Interacting with the Community*

The most common fear students expressed in their reflection papers was fear of interacting with the community (19/25). Undergraduate students (17/22) held this fear more often than graduate students (2/3). Two of three heritage speakers held this fear, as did the one native speaker.

Of these fears, the most frequently mentioned (10/19) was fear Hispanic/Latino community members would be unwelcoming. For example, Liliana, a heritage speaker, commented, "I imagined that in the church they would be serious and bitter if they did not like you."<sup>1</sup> Jamesha, a non-native speaker, said, "...my first visit I was shy and nervous because I did not know if they would welcome me and accept me within their church." Surprisingly, the native speaker also held the same fear. María explained that she felt very uncomfortable attending a pan-Latino evangelical church. She worried that, as a Mexican Catholic, she would have little in common with the church members and that they, therefore, would not help her to feel welcomed. She commented, "I had the impression that Latinos do not help each other...I thought that there were very few things that were shared between Central Americans and Mexicans."

The second most common fear (6/19) in this category was fear Hispanic/Latino community members would see the students as invaders and not want them there. For example, Margaret commented, "At first it was pretty uncomfortable for me to go to a church and observe the community. It seemed rude and invasive of their community and culture." Eva recounted, "I thought that they were going to think that I was a strange outsider who had come to judge them. I thought that they would not like that I was in their church."

The remaining fears were mentioned by a smaller number of students. Fear of the church/religious environment was discussed by 3/19 participants. These fears were primarily motivated by students' own previous experiences with churches. For instance, Owen, a homosexual young man who had faced terrible discrimination in the church in which he was raised because of his sexual orientation, said:

I learned that I have too much fear of the Christian church and I used to judge all of the Christians of the world by the actions and beliefs of the worst Christians from the most rural place in [this Southeastern state].

Although this fear is not specifically related to the Hispanic/Latino community, it is valuable for instructors considering service-learning placements in a church to bear in mind that it may be a significant fear for some students.

Of those who held a fear of interacting with the community, 2/19 students feared that Hispanic/Latino community members would be shy or afraid of outsiders, and therefore not like them. Andrea said, "[I thought that] the people were shy and they didn't like foreigners [non-Hispanics/Latinos]." Of those who held a fear of interacting with the community, 2/19 expressed fear of not knowing what to expect when entering the community. Emma shared the following:

I was so very nervous the first time I visited [the church], because I did not know what to expect...I learned a lot about how I feel and other Americans feel about the Hispanic population. It is interesting for me that prejudice is still here...

*Heritage speakers, native speakers and graduate students.* A commonality existed amongst heritage and native speakers concerning their fears of interacting with the community. Of the three heritage/native speakers who held a fear of interacting with the community, all shared the fear that Hispanic/Latino community members would be unwelcoming. Although they themselves were Hispanic/Latina, it is clear from their comments that these students felt like outsiders entering an unknown culture. In their reflection papers, each student focused on the differences between herself and the church members, discussing religious differences—Catholic versus Protestant—and cultural differences—pan-Latino culture versus her own native culture. Amongst graduate students there were no such commonalities.

#### *Insecurity about the Ability to Communicate with Native Speakers*

The second most common fear students cited was fear surrounding their ability to communicate with native speakers. Over half of participants (14/25) reported having this fear. While none of the graduate students held this fear, nearly two-thirds (14/22) of undergraduates did. Two of three heritage speakers held a fear related to their ability to communicate with native speakers.

Within this category there were four primary subcategories which students reflected on in their papers: fear of speaking, shyness or lack of self-confidence, fear of not comprehending, and fear of making errors. Students most frequently (10/14) mentioned having a fear of speaking. For example, Heidi said, “Sometimes I felt ashamed to speak with the people.” The second most common fear (7/14) expressed was related to students’ shyness or lack of self-confidence. For example, Sarah commented, “I learned about myself that the shyness with which I speak Spanish is paralyzing my learning experience.”

The third most frequently cited fear (6/14) was fear of not comprehending. Victoria, a heritage speaker, remarked, “When I went the first time, I was nervous because I did not know if I would understand the people, if it would be something difficult for me.” Fear of making errors was discussed by 5/14 of the participants. For example, Sandra reflected, “...my greatest obstacle to acquiring fluency in this language never really was the lack of people available to practice with me, but my fear of making errors when speaking aloud.”

A number of student reflections (8/14) incorporated more than one of the abovementioned subcategories. For example, the following excerpt from Margaret’s paper weaves together several fears related to ability to communicate with native speakers: “I am still afraid of initiating conversations with people in Spanish. I am afraid of making errors or failing to understand what the other person says. I don’t want to be rude or an ignorant American.”

*Heritage speakers, native speakers and graduate students.* While the native speaker student did not hold a fear related to their ability to communicate with native speakers, two of the heritage speaker students did. Both shared a common fear of not comprehending. While Liliana and Victoria spoke fluent Spanish and had no problems comprehending in the classroom setting, in their papers each reflected self-consciously about her lack of complete mastery of the Spanish language. Rather than focusing on the language skills they possessed, both students discussed the skills they were lacking and expressed concern that they might not understand dialectal differences or religious terminology.

Common among the graduate students was the fact that none held a fear of ability to communicate with native speakers. This result is not surprising, given that one of the students had been raised in Mexico, the second had lived abroad for a significant period of time, and the third had been married to a Spanish-dominant Colombian.

### *Overcoming Fears through Service-learning*

Because of the abovementioned fears, most students (20/25) were wary of service-learning at the outset of the experience. However, as they spent more time in the community, students became increasingly comfortable and conveyed that they were appreciative of the opportunity. Some remarked that they were grateful for the "push" that service-learning provided, making it possible for them to get to know the local Hispanic/Latino community, an experience they never would have sought out on their own.

In their reflection papers many students (16/25) emphasized the role that service-learning had played in helping them overcome their initial fears of both the community and of communicating with native speakers. In each of the comments that follow, the student reflected on his/her initial fears and concerns and explained how he/she was able to overcome them through the service-learning experience. The following are two representative comments with respect to overcoming a fear of interacting with the community. Sandra recounted:

I was very nervous about entering the church the first time. All of my fears were alleviated quickly once I entered and everyone was very nice and helpful...now I see various members of the congregation as friends that I enjoy visiting regularly.

Vera said:

I thought that they did not want us there taking notes and observing. I was wrong...they seemed enthusiastic about our presence in their service. Also, they were willing to communicate, interact and share their community with us...If I would not have been able to overcome my fears and anxiety about religion, I would have missed a great opportunity to be part of the [local] Latino community.

With regard to overcoming insecurity about their ability to communicate with native speakers, many students offered reflections similar to this one from Margaret:

I am still afraid of initiating conversations with people in Spanish... But this project obligated me to work against these fears. I like that I had to initiate conversations and ask people personal things that I usually would not have the confidence to ask. I learned a lot that will help me with understanding different accents and dialects.

*Overcoming fears through service-learning.* Another means by which students were able to overcome their fears was through acquiring academic content knowledge and skills. As students gained linguistic knowledge and honed their observational skills, they began to feel more competent. This, in turn, increased their self-confidence and helped them to feel more at ease in the service-learning setting.

In their weekly assignments students were tasked with identifying different di-

alects of Spanish they heard in the community and noting corresponding linguistic features, including phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical features. They were also asked to observe and record instances of code switching, code mixing and borrowing and trends of language use amongst speakers of different generations. Student comments on their progress in these areas clearly illustrate a self-perceived growth in their linguistic knowledge and observational skills. For instance, Margaret said, "My abilities to recognize different dialects and listen for characteristics of each dialect when they are being spoken have improved...After a lot of practice in the church I can understand more easily." Liliana remarked, "The pastor used a lot of code switching when he was speaking with us. This surprised me because I had never noticed it before [we studied it in class]."

In their reflections students often expressed feelings of confidence and pride in their accomplishments. Jamesha said, "During my recent visits to the church and in reviewing the previous chapters about the differences in the ways Hispanics speak Spanish, I have developed an ear for many linguistic characteristics...I am very proud to have this ability." Mateo similarly remarked:

It is becoming easier and easier to hear specific linguistic characteristics that differentiate one cultural group from another. I am a little surprised about how well I am progressing in this aspect. It seems evident that the combination of the service-learning practice and our textbook are responsible for this progress.

### *Transforming Perceptions of Hispanics/Latinos and Themselves*

Not only were students able to overcome their fears through participating in service-learning, but it is clear that the experience has also transformed their perceptions of Hispanics/Latinos, the local Hispanic/Latino community and themselves. A shift in perspective is evident in students' final reflections, especially.

The following comments participants offered on transforming their perceptions of Hispanics/Latinos and the local Hispanic/Latino community are particularly inspiring. In each, the student reflects on his/her initial expectations and explains how these have changed after taking part in service-learning. Each of these reflections reveals substantial growth in the student's level of cultural awareness and understanding.

For Emma, the service-learning experience helped her to uncover and address her own prejudices, as well as those of her community:

I learned a lot about how I feel and other Americans feel about the Hispanic population. It is interesting for me that prejudice is still here and this experience has helped to demonstrate that it is unnecessary in any case. The Hispanic population [here] is incredible and very diverse.

Kate and Andrea were able to progress to a new level of cultural understanding and empathy. Both initially perceived Hispanics/Latinos in their community as outsiders who were different from them and wary of strangers. However, through their service-learning experience, these two students came to view Hispanics/Latinos as more like themselves. Kate said:

Something I learned about this community is that it is an open and caring community. This community is not afraid of strangers or those who speak English...This experience taught me that...Hispanics are like us, they just speak a different language.

Andrea commented:

[I thought that] the people were shy and they didn't like foreigners [non-Hispanics/Latinos]...Now I know that the people are very nice and love when [other non-Hispanic/Latino] people visit the church. I know that the community is like a big family, like many of the churches I know.

María, the native Spanish speaker from Mexico, was surprised by the bonds that existed between Hispanics/Latinos of different nationality groups. She came to appreciate the sense of helpfulness and harmony amongst Hispanics/Latinos, which she encountered during her service-learning experience. She remarked:

Before I had the impression that Latinos do not help each other, but I think that I was a little bit wrong. I thought that there were very few things that were shared between Central Americans and Mexicans...I was very wrong—to maintain strong ties, it is not necessary to have the same traditions...to share and respect those traditions can also create unifying ties which are necessary for a harmonious life in your environment and with yourself.

Other comments illustrate a change in students' perceptions of themselves. Participants reflected especially on their personality traits and themselves as language learners. Deborah and Sandra discussed the ways in which their shyness, hesitancy and fear of making errors have impeded their Spanish language fluency in the past. With increased awareness and confidence gained from their service-learning experience, both feel equipped to take the necessary steps to progress and become more fluent in Spanish. Deborah reflected:

I also learned that I am shyer than I thought. I learned that I must make an effort if I want to speak Spanish fluently. It is going to require more from me, like talking to strangers, not thinking too much and not trying to speak perfectly every time that I open my mouth. I need to be patient with myself and understand that learning another language is a marathon, not a sprint.

Sandra said:

The most important thing that I have learned about myself from this experience is that my greatest obstacle to acquiring fluency in this language [was]...my fear of making errors when speaking aloud. I think that now that I have given this experience more thought, I hope that I will be capable of overcoming this fear and begin to speak more in a way that tries to send a content message instead of being grammatically correct all the time.

Heidi learned that, although her Spanish was not perfect, she was able to effectively communicate with native speakers and that, to her surprise, she could actually be understood. She commented:

Before visiting the church in [the local community], I felt very nervous because I did not know what I would find, how I should behave,

what would happen when the people asked me things and I could not respond...But they were impressed when a person could speak and no one placed a great importance on if the Spanish was correct or not. Communication and the feeling of being able to be understood is of great value.

## Discussion

The findings of this investigation reveal that, on the whole, students were hesitant to participate in the local Hispanic/Latino community and that they held specific fears about spending time with local Hispanics/Latinos. The most common fears expressed were fear of interacting with the community and insecurity about their ability to communicate with native speakers. Fears of interacting with the community included fear Hispanic/Latino community members would be unwelcoming, fear Hispanic/Latino community members would see the students as invaders and not want them there, fear of the church/religious environment, fear Hispanic/Latino community members would be shy or afraid of outsiders, and fear of not knowing what to expect when entering the community. Insecurity about their ability to communicate with native speakers encompassed fear of speaking, shyness or lack of self-confidence, fear of not comprehending, and fear of making errors. Service-learning was beneficial in helping students overcome both their fear of interacting with the community and insecurity about their ability to communicate with native speakers. The experience also helped students to transform their perceptions of Hispanics/Latinos and themselves.

These findings are consistent with previous research. Several of the fears uncovered in the present study are also corroborated by Plann's (2002) investigation. Within the fear of interacting with the community category, fear Hispanic/Latino community members would be unwelcoming is similar to a fear expressed by one of Plann's participants: "I was worried that the students wouldn't welcome me or like me" (p.334). Fear Hispanic/Latino community members would see the students as invaders and not want them there was reported by another participant who said, "*Me sentí como una intrusa* [I felt like an intruder]" (p.334). In the insecurity about their ability to communicate with native speakers category, a third participant commented, "I was quite nervous about entering into an entirely different culture with my bumbling Spanish, ill-equipped to maneuver well in this environment" (p.334). Fear of making errors was also cited by Barreneche (2011) and Pellettieri (2011) as a fear held by their participants. Consistent with Pellettieri's (2011) findings regarding linguistic self-confidence, participating in the service-learning experience did increase my students' overall linguistic self-confidence and helped them to overcome their language-related fears.

While the findings of the present study clearly demonstrate that implementing service-learning helped students to overcome their fears and transform their perspectives, which particular features of the experience are responsible for this result? It seems that the combination of authentic interactions with Hispanics/Latinos and the practice of ongoing reflection may have been the most influential features for this particular group of students. Further research in this area would be needed to establish a stronger link between specific service-learning pedagogies and student outcomes.



As Gudykunst's (1993, 1998) research suggests, effectively managing anxiety and uncertainty requires the cultivation of mindfulness, helping the foreigner to shift out of "automatic pilot," in order to develop awareness of his/her own perspectives and openness to other perspectives. The student reflection papers provided students a space to do exactly this. In writing their reflections students were compelled to name and describe their own perspectives, as well as to open themselves to reconsidering those perspectives in light of what they actually observed and experienced in the service-learning placement. Essentially, the written reflection practice encouraged students to slow down their thought process, to become more mindful of the types of fears they held, and to work through those fears through facing, acknowledging and problematizing them, resulting, in many cases, in a shift in perspective.

Recall that ACTFL, likewise, advocates the practice of reflection as an effective means of exploring cross-cultural perspectives in the Global Competence Position Statement: "Reflect(ing) on one's personal experiences across cultures to evaluate personal feelings, thoughts, perceptions, and reactions" (ACTFL, 2014, p.2). Undoubtedly, understanding one's own perspectives is a precursor to developing empathy toward and appreciation of the perspectives of others.

### Limitations

While the findings of this investigation provide rich qualitative data on the topic of student fears and service-learning, its small participant pool and lack of random sampling limit the generalizability of the results. Fruitful directions for future research include studying the topic of student fears through a quantitative approach with a larger participant pool and a random sampling procedure in different types of universities and programs across diverse geographical regions and communities.

The study could have also been enhanced by the collection of more specific data regarding students' intercultural communicative competence. Future research might consider student fears and service-learning within the framework of Gudykunst's (1993) *Anxiety/Uncertainty Management (AUM) Model* and intercultural adjustment training (Gudykunst, 1998). One potential direction for this research would entail providing students intercultural adjustment training prior to their participation in the service-learning experience, in order to examine the impact of this training on student fears, anxiety management, and the development of intercultural communicative competence.

### Implications and Conclusion

The findings of this investigation have important implications for language educators and policy makers who endeavor to engage students in the local Hispanic/Latino community. As educators, an awareness of student fears is beneficial in informing our service-learning curriculum design. Knowing that students will likely come to the service-learning experience with some fears, we can structure the curriculum to provide a time and space for students to voice these fears, incorporating activities such as targeted reflection prompts, class discussions, readings, and sharing comments from students who have previously held and overcome similar fears. Introducing a more formalized pre-service-learning training such as intercultural

adjustment training (Gudykunst, 1998) may also be helpful, depending on time constraints and learner needs.

It is important to take into consideration the learners' proficiency level and learning context in selecting which activities to include, as student fears will undoubtedly vary to some degree based on these factors. For instance, beginning or intermediate Spanish language learners educated in a traditional foreign language classroom may fear that they will be unable to help native Spanish speakers at all, because of their limited language proficiency. In this case, the teacher could address this particular fear by ensuring that he/she had arranged service-learning placements appropriate to the learners' proficiency level and by implementing class discussion and role play of practical strategies students could use to make sure they were understood.

For advanced learners studying a particular academic content area, on the other hand, their primary fear may be that their speaking skills are imperfect and that they therefore will be judged harshly by native speakers. In this circumstance, an exploration of what it means to achieve communication versus perfection would be appropriate. Students could be asked to reflect on their own reactions to non-native English speakers they have encountered who could communicate, yet made some errors. The teacher might also invite a contact person from the service-learning community to class to share his/her perspective on the topic. While it is unlikely that students will enter the service-learning experience with no fear at all, taking these important steps can help students work through and overcome their apprehension more quickly and effectively.

Educational policy makers can help better prepare students to become engaged, globally-minded citizens by integrating service-learning more fully into the university curriculum. While most foreign language programs strongly advocate or require study abroad, few have a service-learning requirement. Yet, the Hispanics/Latinos students will most often encounter in their future lives and careers are those living in their local community. As the findings of this investigation suggest, service-learning has the potential to play a powerful role in helping students to transform their perspectives and cultivate a desire to interact with and serve the local Hispanic/Latino community.

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## Appendix

### Reflection Paper Writing Prompts

#### *Reflection 1:*

- Describe the site. Imagine that you are describing it to a person who has never visited. What is the physical space like? What is the atmosphere like? What is the purpose of the site/organization?
- Describe the people in detail. Imagine that you are describing them to someone who has never met them. What is their age, gender, nationality, place of origin, socioeconomic status, educational level, occupation, general background, etc.? Do they have children?
- What is your role at the site? How do you feel about this role?
- What were your expectations before arriving at the site? Have they changed after your first visit? How or why?
- Was there something about the visit that surprised you? What? Why did it surprise you?
- What impressions would you like to convey to the other students at our university or the residents of our city about this community/site?

#### *Reflection 2:*

- Which dialect(s) of Spanish do the people speak? How do you know? Which specific linguistic features do you observe that are associated with this/these dialect(s) of Spanish, according to our textbook? Give specific examples of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical characteristics.
- Which language(s) do the people speak with you? Amongst each other? With the leader of the organization/site? Which language(s) does the leader speak with you? With the other people?
- What are the easiest and most difficult parts of working at this site for you?
- Other observations/impressions?

#### *Reflection 3:*

- Which dialect(s) of Spanish do the people speak? How do you know? Which specific linguistic features do you observe that are associated with this/these dialect(s) of Spanish, according to our textbook? Give specific examples of phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical characteristics.
- Choose one person from the community who has made a positive or negative impression on you. Describe that person. How or why has he/she impressed you?
- (How) has your perspective of the local Hispanic community changed because of this experience?
- How has your perspective of yourself, our city or society in general changed because of this experience?
- Other observations/impressions?

*Reflection 4:*

- Do you observe language mixing or code switching? Give specific examples.
- If there are multiple generations of people (grandparents, parents, grandchildren), which language(s) do the people of different ages speak with one another?
- What were your initial expectations of the community? Have they changed since your first visit? How or why?
- What surprised you most about this experience? Why?
- Which parts of the experience did you like the most? The least? Why?
- What did you learn from this experience about this particular community or the local Hispanic community in general?
- What did you learn from this experience about yourself?
- Other observations/impressions?

**Endnote:**

<sup>1</sup> This and all other quotes have been translated from the original Spanish by the author. All student names are pseudonyms.

## Web 2.0 Use to Foster Learners' Intercultural Sensitivity: An Exploratory Study

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### *Abstract*

*This chapter reports on a qualitative investigation on the development of adult Spanish language learners' intercultural sensitivity while using Web 2.0 technologies to explore living abroad. Comments provided by 33 participants on wikis, Pinterest, and journal entries were analyzed using a line-by-line interpretative approach (Charmaz, 2006). Data analysis revealed that while investigating studying and living abroad using Web 2.0 technologies, learners often remained in an ethnocentric stage of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993). However, upon the completion of reflective activities, many learners began to progress in their intercultural sensitivity, demonstrating a shift away from ethnocentric thinking.*

**Key words:** *Web 2.0 technology, Pinterest, Wiki, Intercultural Sensitivity, Spanish*

### **Introduction**

Within the past several decades, foreign language education has been impacted by the increase in globalization around the world (Kramsch, 2014). Blommaert (2010) describes globalization as the rapid growth in the dispersing of “capital, goods, people, images and discourses around the globe” (p. 13). As a result of this dispersion, today's world consists of blended cultures and peoples. Additionally, with all of the technological advancements in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people are able to connect with one another around the globe on a daily basis. Therefore, it has become increasingly important for foreign language education to focus not only on developing learners' communicative competence but also their interculturality. Intercultural competence (IC) is necessary so that learners may become “viable contributors and participants in a linguistically and culturally diverse society” (Moeller & Nugent, 2014 p. 1).

A concept such as IC, however, can be difficult to operationalize in the foreign language classroom for several reasons. First of all, research in the field points to the difficulty of actually defining such a complex notion as culture, which is at the core of understanding IC (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). Another aspect that adds to the complexity of cultivating IC in foreign language learning is the rapid pace of change that is characteristic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With instant access to information in a technologically advanced world, the concept of interculturality and how to develop it constantly changes (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). Finally, the broad concept of intercultural learning and multiple frameworks used to assess IC add to the difficulty



of operationalizing it in the classroom. There is “no common yardstick” being used to currently measure the concept, thus making replication more difficult (Garrett-Rucks, 2014, p. 2). In consideration of the aforementioned difficulties, the purpose of this study is to provide insight into the implementation of Web 2.0 pedagogical interventions intended to foster learners’ intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993).

## **Review of Literature**

### *Developing IC in Instructed Language Learning*

In terms of developing learners’ IC in the foreign language classroom, previous literature frequently pointed to the use of various pedagogies focused on student interactions with native speakers. Examples included implementing virtual exchanges via telecollaboration (e.g. Ducate, Lomicka-Anderson, & Moreno, 2011; Ducate & Steckenbiller, 2013; Lee, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Lee & Markey, 2014; Schenker, 2013), service-learning projects (Bloom, 2008), or long-term ethnography projects (Robinson-Stuart & Nocon, 1996) to name a few. Unfortunately, interaction with native speakers has not always been possible inside the foreign language classroom (Abrams, 2002). Previous research showed IC often developed or increased most in advanced-level language courses or when studying abroad. However, the majority of U.S. foreign language learners never take part in either of these experiences (Garrett-Rucks, 2013). The development of learners’ interculturality is still vital though considering the necessity of being interculturally competent in today’s globalized world. In order to address this need for intercultural learning within the four walls of the classroom and at all levels, it is important to develop pedagogies that incorporate meaningful cultural instruction. In studies conducted by Abrams (2002) and Schulz (2007), cultural portfolios exposed learners to diverse cultural perspectives. In particular, learners in Abrams’ (2002) study created Internet-based culture portfolios, and by using the Internet, they were exposed to cultural perspectives, “bring[ing] insider’s views of other cultures into the L2 classroom” (p. 141). Schulz (2007) suggested a similar methodology in using portfolios but focused on tasks that were not necessarily Internet-based, yet still guided learners in a process of learning about culture. Both scholars focused on developing learners’ cultural awareness as a result of exposing them to the complex notion of culture within the foreign language classroom.

### *Culture in Foreign Language Learning*

The concept of culture has been a hot topic of debate with the last several decades of foreign language learning (Kramsch, 2003). Most recently, focusing on *which* culture to teach, as well as *when*, *where*, *how*, and *why* to teach it has been under examination (del Valle, 2014). Kramsch (2014) has long claimed that an emphasis on cultural instruction fosters learners’ deeper understanding of complex environments that are characteristic of the globalized 21<sup>st</sup> century in which we now live. Schenker (2013) revealed that by focusing on culture in the foreign language classroom, learners become more interested in their foreign language studies (Schenker, 2013).

It has long been established that culture instruction, as learning of any type, must be relevant to learners (Greenstein, 2012; Kramsch, 2014). In today’s world, many learners are digital natives who desire to learn about culture in a way that is

applicable to their everyday lives (Dechert & Kastner, 1989; Prensky, 2001; Schenker, 2013). Considering that these digital natives spend thousands of hours in the digital realm, it seems natural to tap into this interest in the foreign language classroom as well. Not only does a pedagogically sound use of digital technologies make learning more relevant and interesting, but it also develops 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, increases global competence, and provides opportunities for meaningful interaction with authentic cultural content (Galileo Educational Network, 2011; Greenstein, 2012; Kramsch, 2013; Paily, 2013).

### *Developing IC through a Digital Approach*

Incorporating Web 2.0 technology in the foreign language classroom has numerous benefits. If used appropriately, technology can provide access to foreign languages and cultures like never before, allowing students to delve into a new and unknown world (Kern, 2014). The use of technology can not only create an engaging environment for learners, but it can also provide exposure to diverse cultural perspectives. Rather than reading about a cultural fact or acquiring cultural knowledge from a textbook, the digital realm allows learners to become autonomous in their learning (Paily, 2013).

When considering Web 2.0 technologies, any type of website that is dynamic, interactive, and allows users to create, edit, and change content on a regular basis falls into this category (Chartrand, 2012; Paily, 2013). The concept of Web 2.0 applications developed out of the idea that online users and consumers desired to be active participants who contribute to the creation of content on the Web, thus cultivating a more socially driven and connected environment (Paily, 2013). Inside the educational setting, Web 2.0 applications afford learners opportunities to create new knowledge through active participation with content individually or collectively. Specifically, these types of applications allow for learners to develop a sense of community where they communicate with one another, share information, and work together toward a goal. The main emphasis when using Web 2.0 technologies is on “the construction of knowledge with the others for the others” (Paily, 2013, p. 44), and the focus is on the “collective intelligence” (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007, p. 666) of multiple users. As McLoughlin and Lee (2007) noted, this type of cooperative and collaborative learning environment can produce more productive results than an individual working alone or without joint knowledge from others. Therefore, in the educational setting, these applications provide avenues for learners to actively engage in productive, collaborative environments where they use the language to create and develop new information (Paily, 2013).

In the field of foreign language learning, researchers have reported positive results from Web 2.0 use in formats such as podcasts (Lee, 2009), blogs and microblogging (Borau, Ullrich, Feng, Shen, 2009; Lee, 2009, 2010a, 2011, 2012; Lee & Markey, 2014), and wikis (Ducate et al., 2011; Ducate & Steckenbiller, 2013; Lee, 2010b). These studies demonstrated that Web 2.0 technologies exposed learners to authentic cultural artifacts and subsequently increased learners' cultural awareness. As Garrett-Rucks (2013) noted, technology can be used to encourage learners to “prepare for the challenges posed by our increasingly multicultural and global societies” (p. 206).

This study investigates the ways in which the incorporation of two different Web 2.0 technologies—wikis and Pinterest—might foster learners' intercultural sensitivity development in an introductory Spanish language course. While previous studies incorporated the use of wikis in foreign language learning, there have not been many studies in the field focused on the incorporation of Pinterest to develop learners' intercultural sensitivity. The present study seeks to add to the body of knowledge on pedagogical practices incorporating Web 2.0 technology that can be used to deepen learners' cultural awareness. The central questions of investigation are:

- (1) How do collaborative cultural projects completed on wikis and Pinterest affect the development of learners' intercultural sensitivity in the foreign language classroom?
- (2) How does the use of Web 2.0 technologies—wikis and Pinterest—compare to the use of reflective activities (i.e. journal entries) in the development of learners' intercultural sensitivity?

## **Methods**

This chapter reports on the findings from a study conducted in two separate sections of the same accelerated introductory Spanish language course at a large Southeastern university. While learners did not communicate or collaborate with one another across sections, project topics that learners received in each section were identical. The goal of the present study was to assess learners' intercultural sensitivity during their engagement in Web 2.0 cultural projects—one on a wiki and one on Pinterest. Learners enrolled in the two sections of this study did a majority of the same assignments as students enrolled in typical introductory Spanish sections at the university of investigation. However, I adapted the curriculum in the last two months of the semester to account for the cultural projects. Usually, coursework centered exclusively on the textbook and any supplemental materials provided by the instructor. For the purpose of this study, learners worked in groups of four to five students and researched cultural information on the Internet as it related to the theme of their particular project. Learners collaborated by adding, editing, and finalizing all content on the Web 2.0 application. In each project they set their Web 2.0 application to "private" or "hidden" to maintain privacy.

### *Cultural Projects*

The data used in this chapter is part of a larger study that investigated the effect of culturally focused pedagogies on learners' cultural awareness. In this current chapter though, I focus on how the use of wikis, Pinterest, and reflective activities such as journals entries affect learners' intercultural sensitivity. Specifically, I look at two different cultural projects that learners completed.

In each section where the study took place, one group of learners completed a wiki or Pinterest board at a time. In their production of the Web 2.0 tool, they also created discussion questions, and the other classmates answered a discussion question after all content was posted online. Then, all learners wrote individual journal entries in English in order to reflect on the cultural content on the Web 2.0 tool. Overall, for the purpose of this chapter, I analyze two wikis, two Pinterest boards, the discussion boards on each Web 2.0 tool, and learners' journal entries from each project.

As for the Web 2.0 tools used, I selected them based off of Ducate et al.'s (2011)

and Lee's (2010b) studies. Specifically, I used wikis and Pinterest as methods to develop learners' linguistic skills (in particular their writing skills) while at the same time cultivating their cultural awareness through the exploration of the target culture. As for the topics of the cultural projects, I based them off of studies conducted by Abrams (2002) and Schulz (2007). In particular, I created projects where learners envisioned living in the target culture.

In the first project (Appendix B), I provided learners with a context where they imagined they were going to study abroad in Central America. The context I gave them said that they needed to develop a wiki for their friends and family where they described a study abroad program of their choice. In this project, students described (in Spanish) the country, city, and university where the study abroad program was. Then they also provided images and/or videos to accompany their descriptions.

In the second project (Appendix B), learners imagined they were going to return and live in the same country where they had studied abroad, but they needed to find their own housing. Therefore, they envisioned themselves participating in the popular television show, *House Hunters International*. In this project, students described the country, the city, and the housing in that city in Spanish (Mitchell, 2015).

**Wikis.** At the onset of the study, learners used wikis, which are blogging websites that allow users to collaborate, write and edit content (Evans, n.d.), to explore diverse cultural perspectives. According to Ducate and her colleagues (2011), previous studies most often used wikis to develop learners' writing skills, but others (Evans, n.d.; Lee, 2010b; Pellet, 2012) have also incorporated them to develop intercultural competence, give tests, and develop L2 content knowledge.

After investigating different online wiki platforms, I selected the PBWorks (pbworks.com) platform due to its accessibility, ease of use, and free services offered to educators and students. On PBWorks, learners created free user accounts, divided into their pre-assigned groups, and collaboratively conducted research.

**Pinterest.** The second Web 2.0 technology used in the study was Pinterest. Pinterest is an online curating website where users create a free account, set up various types of "pinboards," and attach different visuals (e.g. images or videos from the Internet) to their pinboard (Pinterest, n.d.). The name Pinterest is indicative of the function of the site – users pin what is interesting to them. As with the project completed on the wiki, learners received a contextualized scenario and worked in pre-assigned groups to complete their cultural project.

In both projects, to encourage further collaboration, the project instructions indicated that learners were to edit each other's work on the wiki and Pinterest before finally submitting it to their instructor.

**Discussion posts.** The group of students who was in charge of creating the wiki or Pinterest board also wrote discussion questions in Spanish on their boards or wiki pages. These students posted their questions in Spanish and focused on topics they discussed on the Web 2.0 tool. The other students in the course who did not create the wiki or Pinterest board then read the content on the Web 2.0 tool and posted to the discussion board in Spanish with 50 words or more (Appendix C). There was no requirement for the number of questions that needed to be answered on the discussion board. Instead, the only requirements were a minimum amount of words and a time limit of when they had to complete their posts (two full days). In order to al-

low learners to freely express their opinions, discuss the target culture, and respond openly, I only monitored the discussion boards to ensure that learners completed them. However, I did not intervene in any other capacity as to avoid any influence on learners' perspectives.

### **Participants**

During the spring semester, 33 students (18 females, 15 males) participated in the study. All participants were students enrolled in two accelerated introductory Spanish courses, but all volunteered to participate. One course contained 15 students and the other had 18. The study took place during the Spring semester, which is why the enrollments for these courses were lower than usual (typical enrollment is 25 students at the introductory level). At the university of study, enrollments for this accelerated course are always higher in the Fall semester than the Spring.

All participants reported on a background survey (Appendix A) that they were originally from the United States. Thirty-two participants reported that they were native English speakers while one declined to comment on his native language. Two participants reported that had studied abroad in Germany, Honduras, and/or the Dominican Republic while 31 had no prior study abroad experiences. As for experience traveling abroad, 10 participants reported they had visited countries such as Mexico, countries in Latin America, Canada, or some countries in Europe and Asia such as Ireland, Spain, Japan, and China.

### **Description of Courses and Curriculum**

The two courses under study were accelerated introductory courses designed for learners who had completed approximately two to three years of Spanish language study prior to beginning their university studies, excluding heritage language learners (who are only allowed to enroll in upper-level courses at the university of study). These accelerated courses are an intensive review of Spanish and are one semester of language study. The course covers first- and second-semester university-level study and completes the university requirements for language study. Students placed into the accelerated course based off of their score on a university placement test or based off of their previous number of years of study. Classes met face-to-face three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) for 50 minutes and course outcomes emphasized the development of learners' communicative competence and general knowledge about culture across the Spanish-speaking world.

### **Instruments**

In order to gain further insight into the development of learners' intercultural sensitivity throughout the completion of the cultural project, I used the following instrument to collect data after learners completed each project.

**Journal entries.** After completing the cultural projects online, learners continued with the contextualized scenario (Appendix D) and composed a journal entry in English on the topic being covered. Considering that learners were at the novice level, they completed their journals in English so they would be able to reflect more deeply on the relationships between the cultural perspectives and cultural products and practices (Sandrock, 2015). They completed and submitted their entries via their

online course management system already being used in their course. The purpose of the follow-up journal entries was to continue learners' progression of cultural understanding throughout the duration of the projects. As Moeller and Nugent (2014) pointed out, in order to develop learners' cultural awareness, educators must prepare activities in the foreign language classroom that allow for "cultural exploration and discovery" (p. 2). Thus, the cultural projects provided the time and space for learners to explore, and the journal entries encouraged them to discover and "to reflect on language and language use" (Kramsch, 2014, p. 306).

In their entries, learners imagined that they were writing an email to their family or friends about the scenario they had just researched. In project #1, learners wrote an email to their family and friends in which they compared and contrasted the university where they would study abroad with their current home university. In project #2, they imagined they were writing an email to a friend in which they were trying to convince him or her to live abroad and help share housing expenses.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

To gain a more holistic perspective of learners' intercultural sensitivity during their engagement with the cultural projects, I first conducted a line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006) of all data produced in learners' wikis and Pinterest boards. I searched the data specifically for ethnorelative or ethnocentric comments as related to the target culture and then tallied the total number of comments in each aforementioned category. I then derived more specific themes to further clarify the categories. Within the ethnocentric category, themes centered on touristic attractions, housing, and general information about the country. As for the ethnorelative category, themes centered on housing, daily life, and general information such as climate, food, and geography.

Next, I conducted the same type of line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006) for all the data produced in learners' journal entries. I again searched for ethnorelative and ethnocentric perspectives as expressed in learners' comments about the target culture. I subsequently created categories and then developed more specific themes. In the ethnorelative category, themes that emerged centered on learners' desires to immerse in the culture and on comments where they conveyed that interaction with the target culture can broaden their perspectives. As for the ethnocentric category, the themes I derived represented either no desire to go abroad, a desire to only go abroad as a tourist, or an interest in studying abroad for pragmatic purposes only (i.e. to improve language skills or become a more marketable employee).

Finally, once I established the categories and themes, I then analyzed all of the data according to the different levels of Bennett's (1993) DMIS to determine learners' level of intercultural sensitivity throughout the completion of the cultural projects. Bennett's model consists of six different stages, ranging from ethnocentric (denial, defense, minimization) to ethnorelative stages (acceptance, adaptation, integration). A brief description of each stage is provided below:

- (1) Denial: No understanding of cultural difference
- (2) Defense: Some understanding of cultural difference but often attended to from a negative viewpoint, i.e. negative stereotyping or through the expression of cultural superiority

- (3) Minimization: Acknowledgement of cultural difference but cultural understanding is understood only through one's own cultural lens
- (4) Acceptance: Acknowledgement and appreciation of cultural difference
- (5) Adaptation: Frame of reference shifts to understand different cultural perspectives
- (6) Integration: Integration of more than one frame of reference into cultural identity

## Findings

The findings below report written and oral comments produced by learners. As seen in the data and interpretation below, many learners progressed in their intercultural sensitivity throughout the duration of the study, demonstrating a shift from “avoiding cultural difference” to “seeking cultural difference” (Bennett, 2004, p. 63).

### *Learners' Approach to Culture via Web 2.0 Technologies*

In the following sections, I provide an analysis of data as produced in learners' wikis and Pinterest boards. This data (which learners wrote in Spanish) include all cultural content that learners posted online as well as all content from the discussion boards. Tables 1 and 2 show the categorization of their responses on each Web 2.0 platform:

Table 1

#### *Perspectives Found in the Web 2.0 Technologies*

<i>Platform</i>	<i>Total Ethnocentric comments</i>	<i>Total Ethnorelative comments</i>
Pinterest	52	25
Wiki	59	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>46</b>

In both cultural projects, learners more dominantly expressed an ethnocentric viewpoint on their wiki and Pinterest. In total, 111 comments pointed to perspectives in the defense and minimization stages of Bennett's (1993) DMIS. Conversely, only 46 total comments found on the Web 2.0 applications expressed a perspective that aligned with an ethnorelative viewpoint, specifically in the acceptance stage. This data support Bloom's (2008) findings that most learners at the beginner level of foreign language study often demonstrate perspectives in the denial, defense, or minimization stages of Bennett's (1993) DMIS. Tables 3 and 4 show the more specific themes of learners' perspectives when researching the target culture via Web 2.0 technologies.

Table 2

#### *Explanation of Perspectives in the Web 2.0 Technologies*

<i>Type of comment</i>	<i>Total Ethnocentric comments</i>	<i>Total Ethnorelative comments</i>
Touristic attractions	65	0
Housing/Living arrangements	29	12
General country information	17	9
Daily lifestyle	0	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>46</b>



A majority (111) of comments on both the wiki and Pinterest reflected an ethnocentric perspective. In particular, 65 different comments centered on touristic attractions through which learners expressed interest in visiting a country but had no desire to actually immerse in the culture. Representations of the minimization stage were especially prevalent in these comments as learners wished to study or live abroad because of "*muchas excursiones que puedes hacer*" [many excursions you can do]. For instance, learners often remarked that they would love to study or live abroad in Costa Rica because it would give them the opportunity to experience "*los lugares más populares en Costa Rica*" [the most popular places in Costa Rica] and participate in excursions such as "*nadar, hacer kayak la costa, y también tirolina sobre los árboles*" [swimming, kayaking on the coast, and also zip lining on top of the trees]. For these learners, they acknowledged cultural difference, but, they often applied their own cultural understanding to the target culture by describing it as "*exótico*" [exotic].

Twenty-nine comments also indicated that while learners would want to live or study abroad, it must be on their own terms and provide the everyday comforts of their home. Learners often revealed a desire to live in a hotel because "*es perfecto*" [is perfect] and "*no cuesta mucho y está en una buena ubicación*" [it doesn't cost much and is in a good location]. Comments in this category typically expressed learners' desire to have "*tres cuartos, dos baños completos, y dos baños medios. También tiene un extra parte con una cocina, un baño y sala para invitados de la casa. Por fin, la casa tiene mucho espacio para aparcas sus coches*" [three rooms, two complete bathrooms, and two half baths. It also has an extra part with a kitchen, a bathroom, and a living room for house guests. Finally, the house has a lot of space to park your cars]. These remarks demonstrate a viewpoint that is characteristic of what learners in the United States are typically accustomed to, perspectives that represent the minimization stage. In other words, learners' understanding of what housing accommodations should be like in other countries guided their approach to culture.

The final 17 comments that demonstrated an ethnocentric perspective were present in learners' comments about general information about the country. For these learners, even though their research had shown them typical customs of the country, they preferred not to take part in these customs because it was not what they were used to. Additionally, after commenting that they were not comfortable with a certain type of custom, learners then provided an alternative that was representative of their own culture. For instance, one student commented that "*montar una bicicleta por todas partes sería horrible*" [riding a bike everywhere would be horrible] but instead, he or she would use a shuttle service because "*es la mejor forma de transportación [...] cuesta \$125 dólares americano*" [it is the best form of transportation [and] costs \$125 American dollars]. Another student provided a picture of a bus that is typically used by people living in the country and commented, "*¡No me gustaría viajar en esto porque me daría miedo que se vendría abajo! Se ve muy viejo*" [I would not like to travel in this because I would be scared it would collapse. It looks very old]. It is also worth noting that learners often reported the price of transportation and hotels in American dollars rather than converting the price to the local currency. Through all of these comments, learners demonstrated perspectives still in the defense and minimization stages because they either displayed a stance of cul-

tural superiority (defense) or applied their own cultural understanding to the target culture (minimization) (Bennett, 2004).

As seen in Table 2, a total of 46 comments revealed an ethnorelative perspective. Upon analysis of these comments, data revealed that learners demonstrated a worldview in the acceptance stage of Bennett's (1993) DMIS. In their comments, they acknowledged that living or studying abroad would provide a different cultural experience, and they desired to take part in this experience and grow to appreciate another culture.

Twelve comments centered on different housing types and showed a desire to fully immerse in the culture by living with a host family while abroad. For these learners, this type of opportunity was interesting to them because "*se puede pasar un rato con ellos y se conoce amigos magníficos mientras aprender mucho*" [you can spend time with them and meet magnificent friends while you learn a lot]. Twenty-five other comments focused on daily life in a Central American country. Learners often remarked that participating in typical daily events and customs while abroad would give them experiences "*con la cultura de Costa Rica y también les da una experiencia universitaria diferente que los Estados Unidos*" [with the culture of Costa Rica and also give them a university experience different than the United States]. The final nine comments centered on general information about the country. Learners in this category commented on the food usually eaten in Central American countries, such as "*gallo pinto [que] es muy delicioso*" [gallo pinto (that) is my favorite] and "*mi favorito*" [my favorite]. Other comments in this theme centered on the type of climate, the geography of the area, or information about the city, as seen in this learner's remark – "*Elegí San José, Costa Rica, porque he visitado Costa Rica antes y me encanta el país. San José es la capital de Costa Rica y es la ciudad más grande del país*" [I chose San José, Costa Rica because I have visited Costa Rica before and I love the country. San José is the capital of Costa Rica and is the largest city of the country]. Through their research, they learned about different traditions and customs and subsequently acknowledged these cultural differences. Furthermore, their comments revealed not only an awareness of difference, but they also demonstrated a desire to experience these differences.

### **Learners' Understanding of Culture through Reflective Activities**

Upon the completion of each cultural project, learners also wrote journal entries in English based off of the same contextualization. While the aforementioned data in Table 2 showed that a majority (111) of comments initially conveyed ethnocentric perspectives, many comments later (86) revealed a shift toward a deeper cultural understanding when writing their reflective journal entries. As learners reflected on what they had learned, they began to connect the cultural practices and products to cultural perspectives, which in turn broadened their understanding of the target culture. Tables 3 and 4 provide an outline of learners' comments from their journal entries.

Table 3

*Ethnorelative Perspectives Expressed in Journal Entries*

<i>Type of comment</i>	<i>Total # of comments</i>
Immersed in/part of culture	58
Being abroad expands perspectives	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>

The development of learners' intercultural sensitivity became apparent as 86 different comments indicated an ethnorelative perspective, specifically viewpoints in the acceptance and adaptation stage of Bennett's (1993) DMIS. Learners' remarks showed that they began "to imagine other cultural frames of reference," "seek to explore differences," and their frames of reference began to shift to understand different cultural perspectives (Bennett, 2004, p. 63). A breakdown of these comments is as follows.

Fifty-eight comments conveyed a viewpoint that learners desired to be immersed in the culture and become a part of it while they were living or studying abroad. For them, living abroad would allow them to "dive into their culture." Specifically, learners desired to "live with a local family to truly experience like [sic] as a Costa Rican" and expressed excitement for being able to become partakers in the target culture as seen in this comment: "I don't think it can be overstated how wonderful it can be to experience the differences in culture that can be understood from studying abroad."

The next 28 comments focused on how studying or living abroad can expand perspectives and provide opportunities to "broaden my horizons," learn about a "wholly new perspective," and "make you a more well rounded person because of new exposures." These comments indicate that studying or living abroad is advantageous because "you will be able to be exposed to a different culture" and "see what else is out in the world." For one learner in particular, "Studying abroad would be an amazing experience to have. It would be a great way to learn about a different country's culture." Other learners expressed the same sentiment by stating that "studying abroad offers new experiences" that can be "incredibly enriching" and that it "will only expand our minds." As a result of this increased cultural awareness, learners began to understand and explore cultural differences.

While these comments showed a progression to ethnorelativism in many learners, 99 comments still pointed to an ethnocentric approach to the culture (Table 4) and conveyed the same sentiment that was seen in learners' comments made on the wiki and Pinterest boards. Even though these comments continued to represent an ethnocentric perspective, it is worth noting that many of them did begin to express a desire to go abroad, which points to a progression in their cultural awareness.

Table 4

*Ethnocentric Perspectives Expressed in Reflective Activities*

<i>Type of comment</i>	<i>Total # of comments</i>
No desire to study/live abroad	20
Go abroad but only as tourist	48
Go abroad but only for pragmatic purposes	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>

Twenty comments indicated learners did not desire to live or study abroad at all because their life at their home university was more enjoyable and more comfortable. For example, they believed studying abroad “never made financial sense and it would have hamper [sic] my ability to graduate this soon.” Others echoed this sentiment by stating that they would rather stay at their home university because “I understand the culture here and I don’t have to adapt to anything like I would have to studying abroad.” This type of perspective was commonly illustrated in these learners’ comments, as they saw studying abroad as “very difficult” because of “fall[ing] behind on credits,” “cultural differences,” and “you have to leave your life back home.”

In the ethnocentric category, those who did want to go abroad only wanted to participate in the target culture as a tourist (48 comments) or for pragmatic purposes (31 comments). For these learners, studying or living abroad for a short amount of time “gives you the opportunity to live in a different country without the commitment.” Through their comments, it is evident that learners understand that the target culture is different, but they often still attend to it from an outsider’s perspective. One student reinforced this notion by stating that while he or she wants to go abroad, he or she “would bring an American bought car because the cars there kinda [sic] look run down and not too safe.”

Learners also remarked that they only desired to study or live abroad for pragmatic purposes because it “could really help me improve my Spanish skills” and be “very helpful in my future.” Other students said they would want to visit different places in Central America such as the Panama Canal because “there is so much history behind the canal that involves the United States.” These comments show that learners in this category often sought to change the culture or only experience it as it related to their cultural comforts in the United States. They often lacked an understanding that would lead them to respect and value difference. Thus, these learners typically identified with the defense stage considering that their comments expressed a type of negative stereotyping and cultural superiority. However, it is worth noting that they were beginning to visualize themselves as going abroad, which is a step toward seeking cultural difference (Bennett, 2004).

## Discussion

As the data show, when investigating and researching cultural information using Web 2.0 applications, learners in general expressed an ethnocentric perspective. During their investigation, they often struggled to make connections between the cultural perspectives and the products and practices, which subsequently led them

to objectify the target culture. However, while their perspectives were limited when using Web 2.0 technologies, the advantages of incorporating technology into the process of learning about culture were numerous. As their demographic information indicated, 31 out of 33 participants had never studied abroad before, and the exposure to cultural information via Web 2.0 technologies, thus, provided access to foreign cultures. By incorporating these types of projects, learners were able to expand their cultural knowledge through a more in-depth investigation using the Internet (Kern, 2014).

In both projects (wiki and Pinterest), as learners spent additional time learning about the culture, many began to shift and develop an ethnorelative perspective. With the reflective journals, the data show that learners generally began progressing in their intercultural sensitivity because they expressed perspectives that were open to perceiving differences (Bennett, 2004). As a result of developing a more reflective pedagogy, like Kramsch (2014) suggested, learners were able to not only see relevancy in their language learning, but they connected with it and began to deepen their cultural awareness. Thus, relevant and interesting cultural learning afforded students opportunities to expand their perspectives and reflect on the dynamic and complex concept of culture. Albeit they did not progress to the highest level of intercultural sensitivity in Bennett's (1993) DMIS, learners did begin on their journey of becoming an intercultural individual, which is a realistic expectation for a college-level introductory language course. In light of the findings of this study, it can therefore be concluded that Web 2.0 applications have positive implications for developing cultural awareness inside the four walls of the foreign language classroom. These applications engaged learners because they are relevant and applicable to their everyday lives, and they provided an avenue for learners to explore the target culture in an authentic manner that interested them.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

Learners indicated that they "learned more about culture" by participating in these cultural projects because they did not have "to cram for a test" but rather used "what they already know," which allowed them to focus more on using the language to learn about culture. One learner in particular commented that the projects required them to "investigate their own knowledge," and another reiterated this notion by stating that the cultural projects allowed them to learn "different aspects of different cultures around the world." However, while students indicated that learning about culture with Web 2.0 technologies was more interactive than a textbook, technology should not be the only tool that develops their linguistic and cultural knowledge. In this study, the cultural projects centered heavily on the development of the Web 2.0 tools with an added reflective component at the end. Instead of focusing primarily on uploading content to the Web 2.0 tool like these projects did, it would be more beneficial in future projects to use the technology platform as a facilitator of student research and investigation. After completing their research, students can then use the information they collect to complete written activities and/or oral activities that align with the project themes. By implementing these types of activities into the projects, learners are able to further progress in their intercultural sensitivity as a result of reflecting even more deeply on what they learned. Additionally, writ-

ten and oral activities that continue with the project contextualization would also enhance learner collaboration. Within the projects for the present study, learners cooperated with one another on their Web 2.0 platform and worked together to add and edit information. However, they did not collaborate in the sense of creating and producing information together as a group. Instead, the mentality was more “divide and conquer” than collaborate together. Therefore, by adding activities to the cultural projects where learners create and develop an actual product, collaboration becomes a more central component of the assignments. For project #1 that focused on studying abroad, ideas for other activities could include creating a flyer or website to advertise for the university where they imagine themselves studying. Learners could use the information they gather on the Internet to develop their flyer or website, and then for an oral activity, they could make a promotional video. As for project #2 that centered on *House Hunters International*, learners could create mock written scripts and audition videos as their application to be on the show (Mitchell, 2015).

Another implication of this study centers on increasing learner motivation and engagement. While they did use Web 2.0 applications as a part of their cultural learning, learners did not publicly share their products, which were their wikis and their Pinterest boards. Based off of feedback from learners in their journals and from previously conducted research, they are more motivated when they are creating and producing content for an audience (Conole & Alevizou, 2010). Therefore, suggestions for future projects would be to make the content on Web 2.0 applications public so that motivation increases. By making their content public, the expected outcome is that learners will take more ownership of what they create because they are producing content that someone outside of their foreign language class will read and view. In conclusion, the incorporation of additional reflective activities in tandem with the cultural projects and journal entries can strengthen learners’ cultural awareness and prepare them to be successful global citizens of the 21st century because they have even more opportunities to make connections between cultural products, practices, and perspectives (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

### **Study Limitations and Conclusions**

To conclude, I discuss three different categories of limitations of this study. First, I consider the design of the study, specifically focusing on the order in which learners completed activities. I also include suggestions for future research in this section in order to clarify how projects could be better structured in future endeavors. Second, I review the discussion boards and posts and the limitations incurred with these. Third and finally, I discuss how to increase validity and reliability in future research.

First, it should be noted that the progression of activities in this study were as follows: learners completed activities on wikis or Pinterest and then wrote a journal entry. With this outline of activities in mind, a limitation is that learners received more time to process cultural differences since they completed their journals after their research on the Internet. Thus, it is not unusual to find that in their journal entries, they displayed more ethnorelative perspectives. One way to address this limitation would be to include opportunities for more guided reflections on the Web 2.0 applications rather than separating learners’ exploration of the target culture from

their reflection like the present study did. This conclusion also leads into the second limitation of the study, which centers on the discussion boards of the project. Learners created each of the discussion board topics on the Web 2.0 technologies, and thus, the discussion boards did not include the Comparisons Standard (4.2) that was later found in the journal entry. This limitation also ties into suggestions for future research. The journey of cross-cultural exploration typically begins with a subjective reflection (Knutson, 2006), and therefore, future projects could include some form of journal entry before learners explore the target culture via Web 2.0 technologies.

Finally, the third limitation of this study centers on validity and reliability. Realizing that the findings were subject to my own opinions and interpretation (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003), future research could increase inter-rater reliability by having a different researcher outside of the investigation identify and categorize statements. In doing so, the data would reflect a more objective interpretation.

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## Appendix A

### Background Survey

1. Name (your information will remain confidential):
2. Are you originally from the United States? Yes/No
3. If you answered 'No' to question #2, please list your country of origin.
4. Sex: Male/Female
5. Who is your current Spanish 103 instructor?
6. Do you speak more than one language? Yes/No
7. If you answered 'Yes' to question #6, please list the language(s) that you speak.
8. If you answered 'Yes' to question #6, please explain where you learned another language(s).
9. Have you ever studied abroad (for a month or more)? Yes/No
10. If so, where?
11. Have you ever traveled outside of the United States? Yes/No
12. If so, where?

## Appendix B

### Instructions for projects #1 and #2

#### **Project 1: Studying Abroad**

##### *Instructions for creating your wiki post*

Congratulations! You received a scholarship to study abroad! You are going to study abroad for two months in the summer.

Before you leave, you need to explain what a study abroad program is to your friends. You need to create a WIKI in which you describe the best programs to study abroad in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, or Panama (you can choose the country you want from the three provided). You are going to provide information through Internet images and complete phrases that describe the programs using your own words.

Step 1: Decide on the country where you want to study (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, or Panama) (mlsa.org and cea.org are good websites with a lot of information. There are more on the Internet.).

Step 2: Describe the selected program in your own words. You should include the following information:

- City and region of the program
- The university that has the program
- Lodging - Are you going to live in a student residence, in a house with a host family, or in an apartment?
- Available classes
- Available excursions

Step 3. Search the Internet for information that illustrates your selections. You should include

- photos, images, videos of:
- The city and the university
- The types of lodging
- The classes available in the program
- The excursions available through the program

**\*\*You should also cite the websites you use in the WIKI.**

Step 4: Write descriptions of the program that you choose. Each person should write at least 150 words in Spanish. You should use your own “username” on the WIKI to write your part. Use the vocabulary from the current chapter in your book and think about these things:

Why did you choose this city? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose this university? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose this program? \_\_\_\_\_

Think about the subjects that a person can learn in this program. What are they?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think that the excursions are fun or boring? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Step 5: Finally, you should create a discussion forum to facilitate discussion about the study abroad programs between your classmates. Think about what you just posted to your wiki and each person should create one question for the forum for your classmates to answer and discuss. Some examples are:

- What do you think about studying abroad? Does it interest you? Why or why not?
- Out of the described programs, which is the most interesting in your opinion? Why?

## **Project 2: House Hunting**

### *Instructions for creating your Pinterest board*

In project 1, you received a scholarship to study abroad. You loved studying in Central America and so you want to go back another time. After studying abroad, you decided that you want to live in Central America.

Now you need to find the perfect home and to do this, you want to participate in the show *House Hunters International*. To do this, you have to investigate where you want to live ... in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, or Panama? Also in order to participate in the show, you have to write to the producers and explain why you want to live in the place that you choose and explain why you should be chosen as participants in the show. You should compare your home in your current town with the type of house that you want in Central America. You are going to create a Pinterest board in which you explain why you should appear in the show and where you want to live. You are going to provide information through Internet images and complete phrases describing the above information.

Step 1: Decide on the country where you want to live (Costa Rica, Nicaragua, or Panama)

Step 2: Describe the following things:

- Country and city/region where you want to live
- Your current home (Is it similar or different than the home that you want in Central America?)
- Home - Are you going to live in an apartment, a house, or something different?  
*As a requirement of the program, House Hunters International, you have to give 3 options of a possible home.*
- Why you should be chosen for the program

Step 3. Search the Internet for information that illustrates your selections. You should include photos, images, videos of:

- The country where you want to live
- The specific city where you want to live
- Possible homes (3 different types)
- Regions/Areas surrounding the homes (i.e. the neighborhood)

\*\*You should also cite the websites you use on Pinterest.

Step 4: Write descriptions of the homes that you choose. Each person should write at least 150 words in Spanish. Use the vocabulary from your current chapter and think about these things:

Why did you choose this country and city? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you choose these types of homes? \_\_\_\_\_

In your opinion, which is the best home? The worst? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the price of each type of home? \_\_\_\_\_

Where are the homes? In the city? In the countryside? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the characteristics of the homes? Are they furnished? Do they have parking? \_\_\_\_\_

Step 5: Finally, you should create a discussion forum to facilitate discussion between the producers (your classmates). Think about what you just posted to Pinterest board and each person should post one question to guide discussion between your classmates. Some examples are:

- What home is most interesting? Explain your answer.
- What are some important characteristics in a home?

## Appendix C

### Instructions for Posting to the Discussion Board

#### *Project 1: Studying abroad*

Once project #1 is complete and posted to the wiki, the rest of the class has two days to read the information on the wiki and post to the created discussion board. The posts that you write should be in Spanish and should be at least 50 words.

- In your responses, you can respond to:
- The questions written by the group AND/OR
- The content on the wiki

#### *Project 2: House Hunting*

Once project #2 is complete and the Pinterest board is posted, the rest of the class has two days to read the information on the board and post comments on the pins. The posts that you write should be in Spanish and should be at least 50 words.

In your responses, you can respond to:

- Any questions written by the group AND/OR
- The content of the pins

## Appendix D

### Journal Prompts

#### *Project 1: Studying abroad*

##### *Your reaction*

At the end of project 1, write a reaction in your journal. The reaction should be in English and should include 300-350 words.

There is a possibility of studying abroad next semester but before deciding, your parents and friends have a lot of questions about the foreign university and your home university. In your reaction, you need to write an email to your family and friends to describe the similarities and differences between the two universities.

FIRST, think about all that you read in the wiki about the study abroad programs and the foreign universities.

THEN, use the following questions to guide you when you write. Think of the comparison between studying abroad and studying at your home university.

- What are some advantages of studying abroad?
- What are some advantages of only studying at your home university?
- What are some disadvantages of studying abroad?
- What are some disadvantages of only studying at your home university?
- What is the best place to study in your opinion? Why?
- What are some similarities between the two options (the university described in the wiki and your home university)? Think about the classes, lodging, and the excursions.
- What are some differences between the two options (the university described in the wiki and your home university)? Think about the classes, lodging and the excursions.

#### *Project 2: House Hunting*

##### *Your reaction*

At the end of project 2, write a reaction to the Pinterest research in your journal. The reaction should be in English and should include 300-350 words.

There is a possibility of living in Central America in the future, but it is expensive to do alone. Thus, you need a roommate to help with the rent or mortgage, but your friends don't feel like living in Central America. Now you have to explain your perspective to your friend. You should write an email in order to explain why living in a Central American country is a good idea and explain the similarities and differences between Central American life and life in your current town.

FIRST, think about all that you read in on Pinterest about homes in Central America.

THEN, use the following questions to guide you when you write.

- What are some advantages of living in Central America?
- What are some advantages of living in your current town?
- What are some disadvantages of living in Central America?
- What are some disadvantages of living in your current town?
- What is the best type of home in your opinion? Why?
- What are some similarities in between a home in Central America and a home in your current town? Think about the types of homes, the price of homes, and the characteristics of the homes.
- What are some differences in between a home in Central America and a home in your current town? Think about the types of homes, the price of homes, and the characteristics of the homes.
- Why (or why not) should your friend move to Central America?



## Investigating Products, Practices, Perspectives in a Simulated Moving Abroad Project

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### Abstract

*This classroom action research explores discipline-based inquiry and learner assessment of intercultural competence in a simulated “Moving Abroad” project that is part of an undergraduate English-language survey class required of all world language majors and minors at a large public university in the Southeast. The project tasks students to adapt the ACFTL Three Ps framework (Products, Practices, and Perspectives) through simulated intercultural encounters. The study seeks to assess the ways in which the project generates evidence of learners’ development of intercultural competence and how participants perceive the project as meaningful. Data in the form of 124 student documents were collected and analyzed over four semesters in a mixed-methods approach. Preliminary findings describe the project’s merits, acknowledge the study’s limitations, and make recommendations for future practice and research.*

**Key words:** Culture Standards; Products, Practices, Perspectives; Intercultural Competence

### Introduction

This contribution is based on classroom-based inquiry and course design in an English-language survey course called World Languages and Cultures (WLC) that is required for all degree-seeking students with a major in the department of Foreign Languages at a large Southeastern university. The study is part of an ongoing focus on ways in which discipline-based inquiry may foster learners’ development of intercultural competence. It builds on findings from previous research that investigated the integration of intercultural competence as a dimension of language classes offered in a department of Foreign Languages at the levels of undergraduate courses and programs (Smith, 2014; Smith, 2015; Smith & Bley, 2012; Terantino et. al., 2013).

Specifically, this study investigates a Moving Abroad project in the WLC course which, as the mid-term assessment, forms an integral component of the course requirements. This project entails student-centered research in which learners explore a foreign culture in intentionally structured ways (see Appendix A: Moving Abroad Project) and then present their findings in written documentation and oral presentations. Guidelines for the Moving Abroad project are derived from a *Standards*-based approach to exploring culture informed by the *World-Readiness Cultures Standards* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). One of the key concepts in the

*Standards*-based approach to culture is the exploration of cultural products, practices, and perspectives in relation with one another. For the purpose of the Moving Abroad project, the 3 Ps are conceptualized as co-relational tenets in a framework, referenced henceforth as the 3 Ps framework (see Figure 1).

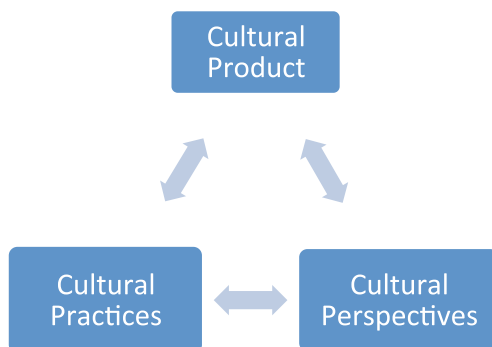


Figure 1. The 3 Ps Framework

In the Moving Abroad project, students adopt the 3 Ps framework to research a foreign language and culture of their choice in a simulation exercise that prompts them to imagine a potential visit, study abroad, or internship sojourn in another country.

The goal of this study is to understand the ways in which the 3Ps framework can be purposefully adopted in a structured and replicable approach to exploring cultures, i.e. via the *integrated* 3 Ps approach. The integrated 3 Ps approach is defined here as the methodological blueprint for exploring specific sets of 3 Ps, i.e. cultural products and their co-relational practices and perspectives. A set of 3 Ps is hence a discrete cultural product, the way in which it is generally used in the culture, and the prevalent beliefs or values that undergird the product and its uses (see Figure 2: The Integrated 3 Ps Approach to Culture: Example The *smart* Car Set of 3 Ps). By examining multiple sets of 3 Ps, learners can gain a deeper understanding of the culture they study.

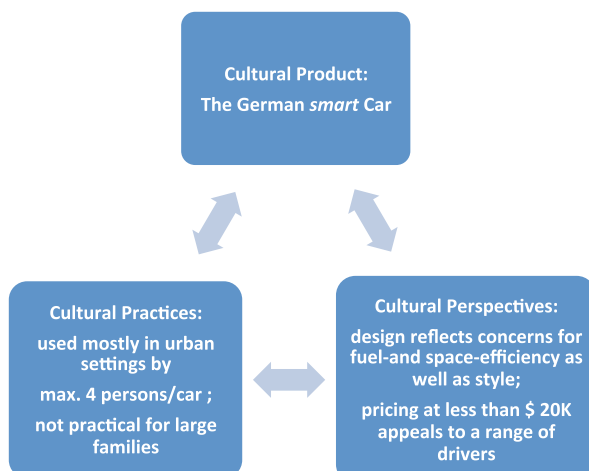


Figure 2. The Integrated 3 Ps Approach to culture: Example The *smart* car Set of 3 Ps

## Literature Review

### *The 3 Ps Framework: Prior Studies*

Over the past three decades, a growing body of scholarship in the field of Foreign Language Education has discussed the importance of developing learners' intercultural competence via the study of cultures and cultural comparisons (Dai & Chen, 2014; Jackson, 2014; Jandt, 2013; Neuliep, 2015). A number of collaborative publications generated by foreign language scholars and educators in the U.S. have affirmed the value of studying cultures via the 3 Ps and intercultural comparisons with the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (ACTFL, 1996, 1999, 2006), currently called the *World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning* (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

The goal of the *Cultures Standards* is defined as "Interact with cultural competence and understanding" and distinguishes among "Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied" and "Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied." (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015, p.1).

The extent to which the 3 Ps framework is effectively integrated into classroom practice has been reviewed. While widespread and increasing awareness of *Standards*-based principles is documented (Phillips & Abbott, 2011), the need for more work with respect to integrating the *Standards* in post-secondary curricula is also reported (Dhonau, Cheatham, Lytle & McAlpine, 2011). One study of adopting the 3 Ps framework in French college-level culture courses illustrates curricular challenges of integrating the 3Ps framework as an integrated and triangulated concept (Cheatham, 2006). Recent studies find that practitioners tend to prioritize the teaching of cultural products and practices (Cutshall, 2012; Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014). Hoyt and Garrett-Rucks (2014) document a ratio of approx. 4:1 incidences for products vs. perspectives, and a ratio of 2:1 for products vs. practices being instructed in lesson plans by students in Teaching Methods courses. To resolve these discrepancies and to ensure the attainment of student learning outcomes in terms of intercultural competence, explicit protocols for assignments and assessments requiring the integration of all three tenets of the 3 Ps framework are recommended (Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014; Marrs, 2014; Maxey, 2014).

### *The 3 Ps Framework and Intercultural Competence*

Conceptually, the 3 Ps framework (see Figure 1) aligns with core components discussed in intercultural scholarship. By comparing and contrasting products and practices and the perspectives behind them, learners identify relevant intercultural and intracultural similarities and differences. Since the 1980s, a growing body of scholarship has generated models and inventories of intercultural competence. Despite noteworthy distinctions among developmental and co-orientational models (e.g. Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), all the models describe the dynamic and interactional processes of negotiating meaning and behaviors effectively and appropriately in intercultural encounters (Bennett, 2009; Bennett, 2013; Deardorff, 2009;

Fantini, 1999). A learner's intercultural competence is said to develop through experience and changes in perceptions as the individual engages with difference (Bennett, 1993). Knowledge, skills, and attitudes complement and reinforce one another around the nexus of critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997; Fantini, 1999). This nexus, termed in Byram's model *savoir s'engager*, connotes the ability to identify and compare-contrast, for instance, the perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). Learners can practice intercultural comparisons drawing from the 3 Ps framework.

Recent scholarship views the 3 Ps framework specifically in connection with the attainment of student learning outcomes related to intercultural competence (Gautier, 2009; Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014; Marrs, 2014; Maxey, 2014). On the one hand, the 3 Ps framework is assessed as purposeful in teaching and discussing cultural diversity (as both intercultural and intracultural differences and similarities in products, practices, and perspectives). Further, learners develop sociolinguistic practices as they engage in sociolinguistic comparisons (Marrs, 2014). On the other hand, the 3 Ps framework is viewed in connection with Edward T. Hall's metaphor of culture as an iceberg with its distinctions between visible and invisible culture (Cutshall, 2012). Cultural products and practices tend to be part of visible culture as they are more readily identifiable than cultural perspectives or beliefs, values, and worldviews, the domain of invisible culture. Critics of the Iceberg Concept note its potential reification of ontological, positivistic views of culture and failure to accommodate the study of culture as interactional processes (Bennett, 2013), a critique that can also be levied against a 3 Ps approach.

### *The 3 Ps Framework and Assessing Intercultural Competence*

Among others, Deardorff (2009, 2011) and Fantini (2014a) have documented the inherent challenges in developing assignments and co-relational assessment tools in the field of intercultural competence. Interculturalists advocate that assessment of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) should build on agreed-upon definitions of ICC, that assessment is an articulated, ongoing and multi-dimensional process, and that the combination of assessment types, modes, and strategies be properly aligned with SMART (specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, time-delineated) learning objectives (Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2014a).

Assessment, done well, generates multiple indicators that "balance our subjective impressions" (Fantini, 2014a, p. 404) and follows the principle of data triangulation. Triangulation is a technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. Triangulation strategies used in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Rothbauer, 2008), derived from methods used in geometry and land surveying, have been adopted in Anthropology since the 1970s (Geertz, 1973; Holloway, 1997). Verification of information takes multiple data sources into account in order to explain the complexity of a phenomenon while adhering to a balanced approach (Altrichter et al.; 2008; Cohen & Manion, 2000; O'Donoghue & Punch, 2003). In research, triangulation leads to clearer, more accurate data. Similarly, in the integrated 3 Ps approach to language and culture teaching, the confluence of cultural information stemming from the learner's examination of sets of three Ps (the cultural product and co-relational practices and perspectives) generates a thick

description of the culture's richness, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of intercultural differences and similarities.

### Rationale for the Study

This study seeks to understand the extent to which the 3 Ps framework can be integrated effectively in undergraduate coursework. In the survey course World Languages and Cultures (WLC), students progress in an intentional sequence toward the Moving Abroad project that challenges them to synthesize their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. One of the course textbooks, *Among Us* (Lustig & Koester, 2006), introduces learners to intercultural concepts (e.g. cultural identity, dominant value orientations in cultures, developmental stages in intercultural competence, continua of social categorizing, strategies for navigating intercultural encounters) via personal narratives and theoretical essays. Students practice articulation of these concepts in short classroom presentations, role play simulations, and reflective writing assignments. The second textbook, *Book of Peoples of the World* (Davis & Harrison, 2006), features 222 distinct ethnic groups in encyclopedic entries that are regionally organized and interspersed with short, critical essays exploring transnational phenomena in intercultural comparison (e.g. language loss, residential housing, music, written and oral traditions). By the time WLC students are assigned the seminal Moving Abroad project, they have already explored and practiced adaptation and transfer of abstract concepts to real-world social issues and to their own experiential contexts.

The Moving Abroad project asks students to select an ethnic group described in *Book of Peoples* (Davis & Harrison, 2006) in preparation for a simulated sojourn in the culture. In small groups or alone, learners research and submit written documentation of their findings and present on their chosen ethnic group in class. In this project, students introduce the culture they studied with two integrated sets of 3 Ps: one set must focus on the local language as the cultural product and introduce co-relational practices and perspectives; the other set of 3 Ps must illuminate a relevant cultural product of their choosing and explain in the integrated 3 Ps approach its significance within the culture and within an intercultural encounter. Thus, students identify relevant intercultural similarities and differences. Lastly, they are asked to list strategies and resources on which they can draw in order to navigate intercultural encounters successfully (see Appendix A: Moving Abroad Project).

To prepare for the project, learners review introductory materials on the 3 Ps framework and intercultural comparisons. The scaffolding materials include examples that offer a methodological blueprint for successful completion of the project. For instance, in the introduction to the 3 Ps framework, information about the Andean Aymara ethnic group, a transnational minority population in Bolivia, Peru, Chile, and Argentina, is shared. The lecture models the integrated 3 Ps approach with two sets of Ps. For example, the instructional materials introduce the Aymara language as a cultural product, a complex and sophisticated system of symbols. Next, the lecture summarizes facts on co-relational practices; e.g., data on language speaker demographics and instruction and/or use of the language. It then introduces cultural perspectives on the Aymara language; e.g., data on recognition of the Aymara language as an official language in the respective nation states, regulatory policies on acquisition/use of Aymara in comparison to other minority and dominant

languages. A second set of 3 Ps is shared to introduce learners to a cultural product that may be considered a significant staple for the Aymara; e.g., *chicha*, a popular, locally produced, fermented beverage. The cultural practices connected to *chicha* include, for instance, the widespread production and consumption of the drink in alcoholic and non-alcoholic varieties in the Andes. The co-relational cultural perspectives range from appreciation for the readily available, inexpensive beverage to usage of the word “chicha” as an adjective connoting something generally cheap, homegrown, or crude. In this example, learners become familiar with an ubiquitous target culture product, and they begin to understand the practices and perspectives toward this product of the Aymara. Arguably, the integrated 3 Ps approach can elucidate any cultural product in connection with historical and contemporary practices and perspectives to demonstrate the culture’s richness.

For the subsequent project segment of reflection and application, i.e. the intercultural comparison piece, the introductory information in the model lesson on the Aymara people identifies similarities and differences between and among cultures (i.e. between the target culture of the Aymara and the dominant culture of one of the surrounding nation states, and/or the learners’ home cultures). Intercultural comparisons may focus on sets of 3 Ps that foreground a cultural product such a “high status” drink for Andean populations, or on US American equivalents of *chicha*, for example “moonshine” or “Coca Cola” as examples of (once) locally produced beverages. Having identified correlative products, learners consider cultural practices and perspectives connected with these products. Alternatively, comparisons might focus on cultural perceptions of alcohol consumption and on co-relational products and practices that may be more or less valued in different cultures. The module rounds out by referencing selected intercultural concepts studied in *Among Us* (e.g., communication styles, gender role expectations, residential housing conventions), developing the students’ knowledge base of culture-general and culture-specific phenomena.

The identified concepts are presented within the context of serving a potential visitor who wants to navigate intercultural encounters effectively and appropriately, fostering in learners the ability to imagine themselves in a different cultural setting, engaging effectively and appropriately in intercultural encounters. The information shared is designed to pique each learner’s interest in the integrated 3 Ps approach and to bring the 3 Ps to life for the students. It is further intended to help students recognize and identify sets of 3 Ps in other cultures and make intercultural comparisons, developing learners’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward exploring other cultures in relation to their own.

Since one goal of the Moving Abroad project is to generate evidence of a learner’s ability to make intercultural comparisons and to identify similarities and differences between cultures, the project challenges learners at different stages of developing intercultural competence. As Hammer (2012) asserts, learners at the developmental stage of minimization are inclined to foreground commonalities among diverse populations; they benefit from the task of identifying intercultural differences. By contrast, students at the stages of polarization tend to focus on differences and are likely to be challenged when asked to determine intercultural similarities (Hammer, 2012). In completing the project, learners ideally personalize strategies and resources for navigating intercultural encounters. The students’ written docu-

mentation of their research and their oral presentations in class converge to produce a plurivocal and multi-perspectival commentary on the integrated 3 Ps approach to understanding culture and evidencing learners' culture-specific and culture-general knowledge as well as providing evidence of their level of intercultural competence. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to generate answers to the two following research questions with a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2013):

Research Question 1. In what ways does the Moving Abroad project, drawing from the 3 Ps framework, generate evidence of undergraduate learners' intercultural competence, and

Research Question 2. How do undergraduate learners perceive the Moving Abroad project, drawing from the 3 Ps framework, as meaningful?

## **Methods**

### *Participants*

Across four semesters, fall 2013 (n=25), spring 2014 (n=14), fall 2014 (n=25), and spring 2015 (n=19), a total of 83 students enrolled in an undergraduate English-language survey class required of all world language majors at a large public university in the Southeast completed the aforementioned Moving Abroad project as a course requirement counting as a mid-term assessment of attained learning outcomes. Of the 83 students who completed the Moving Abroad project, 41 students submitted feedback on the end-semester course and instructor evaluations during the four terms under study, and a total of 33 comments addressed the Moving Abroad project either directly or implicitly in the evaluations.

### *Research Instrument*

The study instrument in response to the research questions is a seven-item check-sheet created by the researcher (Appendix B), used as a rubric to evaluate the students' written documentation of the research conducted as part of the Moving Abroad project. It should be noted that the term "documentation" in the check-sheet refers to written evidence included in either the summary narrative or the Power-Point slides which students submit prior to delivering the oral presentation in class. The seven items in the study instrument capture salient project components. Items 1-6 on the check-sheet assess evidence that corresponds to the first research question, and Item 7 assesses evidence in response to the second research question. With respect to Research Question 1, Items 1-4 address students' documentation of the 3 Ps approach; Items 5-6 focus on learners' documentation of intercultural similarities and differences and strategies for navigating intercultural encounters.

Specifically, Item 1 on the check-sheet notes if the students addressed complete sets of 3Ps in their simulated intercultural encounter for the Moving Abroad project. The criterion of "set of significant other 3 Ps" in Item 2 evaluates the extent to which the documentation features a set of 3 Ps that is distinct from the required focus on the local language and reflects a culture-specific and, within the context of the project's simulated intercultural encounter, a culturally relevant set of 3 Ps. For example, a significant set of 3 Ps might be focused on food, greeting rituals, or residential housing. Next, the descriptor "followed the integrated 3 Ps approach" in Item 3 assesses the student's documented ability to showcase a cultural product and



its co-relational practices and perspectives (as opposed to a learner's documentation of unrelated 3 Ps).

For the next three items, Items 4-6 on the checklist (Appendix B), the wording "appropriate cultural content" evaluates the quality of the research and content information provided in the student's documentation, i.e. information that constitutes likely new knowledge to undergraduates enrolled in a 2000-level course, offering details on the 3 Ps that go beyond a superficial "tacos and tapas" level. Item 5, assessing the quality of students' research and content information on intercultural differences and similarities, looks specifically at the appropriateness of the cultural context for the 3 Ps set in intercultural comparison and contrast with the learners' own culture. Item 6 assesses learners' documentation of the ways in which they would navigate cultural differences based on the newly developed knowledge and resources.

Item 7 on the checklist corresponds with the second research question. It addresses the extent to which students include affective statements about the project in the documentation. The data generated in response to Item 7 prompted the researcher to evaluate additionally the students' anonymous end-term evaluations for evidence of affective statements over the study period.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The study sample consists of two data sets generated in four WLC course sections over four semesters, i.e. fall term 2013 ( $n=25$ ), spring 2014 ( $n=14$ ), fall 2014 ( $n=25$ ), and spring 2015 ( $n=19$ ). Data Set #1 consists of 83 student submissions of the Moving Abroad project (project summary or visual medium) during the study period. Data Set # 1 was analyzed for evidence in response to both research questions. Data Set #2 is made up of 41 anonymous student submissions of end-semester course and instructor evaluations during the four terms under study, of which a total of 33 (or 80%) yielded evidence of affective statements. Data set # 2 was analyzed for additional evidence (in addition to Item 7 in the check-sheet of data set # 1) in relation to the second research question about student perspectives toward the project. Both data sets ( $n= 124$ ) were coded and sorted using a line-by-line coding technique (Charmaz, 2006). Incidences of evidence and non-evidence in correspondence with the seven items of the check-sheet were tracked: a total of 83 submissions (i.e. Data Set #1) in correspondence with Items 1-7; a total of 41 submissions (i.e. Data Set #2) in correspondence with Item 7 of which 33 submissions (or 80%) were analyzed for evidence in support of Research Question 2.

Content analysis of Data Sets # 1 and # 2 generated four recurring thematic strands among the affective statements as identified by the researcher based on the saliency of features in the comments. Statements include that the project was appreciated because it (1) met a latent personal or academic interest; or (2) fostered a new interest in the region of the world or the ethnic group's language and culture; or (3) allowed independence/choice in the exploration of the topic; or (4) accommodated completion of the assignment via a newly learned approach. Although Data Set #1 offered insights into students' attitudes about the project, the findings can only form a springboard for further investigation. Given that the affective comments were voluntarily shared in the graded project, the data were not considered reliable and a second data set was analyzed in order to generate more reliable results.

Data Set #2, consisting of students' anonymous end-term evaluations for the four terms, was analyzed for additional evidence of learners' affective statements about the project. Among the total of 41 end-term evaluations submitted over the study period (reflective of an average response rate of 46 % among course participants), only a subset of the learners' open-ended comments, i.e. 33 responses included affective statements.

In the qualitative analyses, each incident of evidence and non-evidence was given a full-number value. If documentation in Data Set #1 was co-authored by multiple learners, evidence was logged in accordance with the number of co-authors as if each learner had made a submission. Data were recorded and summarized for each term in both numerics and percentages. Percent averages were rounded up or down to the next full single-digit (i.e. 17.4 %  $\rightarrow$  17 % ; 17.5%  $\rightarrow$  18%). Data analysis was completed in fall 2015 by the researcher and instructor of record in the course sections.

It should be noted that the generated graph (Figure 1) showcases only data of Data Set # 1 and visualizes findings that correspond to students' full, partial or absent documentation of the project as captured via the check-sheet (see below). Items 1, 3-4 and 6-7 of the check-sheet items contain three options, and Item 2 and Item 5 specify four options. In all items, option a for each answer denotes that the documentation meets the project expectations fully (i.e. includes two sets of 3 Ps (1.a); one set of a FL 3 Ps and one set of another 3 Ps (2.a); evidences student's ability to follow the integrated 3 Ps approach for two sets of 3 Ps (3.a); contains appropriate content for two sets of 3 Ps (4.a); communicates appropriate content on intercultural differences and similarities (5.a); articulates how s/he would navigate cultural differences, drawing on textbook references (6.a); and includes a positive affective statement about the project (7.a). In Items 1-6, option b corresponds to partial evidence, and in Item 7, option b serves to identify negative statements on the project. In all items, options d and c (in the absence of an option d) indicate the absence of any evidence. An illustrative example of partial evidence registered for Item 3 (student followed the integrated approach for only one of the two sets of 3 Ps) is that a student submitted documentation on one set of 3 Ps that follows the integrated approach, but the documentation for the second set of 3 Ps introduces the three tenets without clarifying how they are connected (e.g. the documentation introduces the cultural product of a car, the practice of celebrating main events in life by dancing, and the perspective of gift giving for special occasions).

Thus, the graph's category "Evidence" visualizes the data that corresponds to complete, accurate, or expected documentation (the "a" items in the check-sheet). On average, 70% of the documentation fits the category of "Evidence" for the items in the graph. The category "Partial evidence" (19% of the submissions) represents the check-sheet item that captures documentation not fully in compliance with the guidelines or anticipated results. Lastly, an average of 11% of the student work does not show any evidence for Items 1-7 (category "None"). The graph also captures that Items 5 and 6, focused on student documentation of intercultural issues, contain the most disparate sets of evidence (see below). Item 7, capturing affective statements in the documentation, is further discussed below.

Within the context of this study, evidence of a student's documented ability to (1) identify co-relational tenets of the 3 Ps framework by following the integrated

3 Ps approach (Items 1-4) and (2) describe strategies for navigating intercultural encounters despite verifiable differences and similarities among cultures (Items 5-6) are considered indicators of a learner's intercultural competence as discussed above and as reflected in recent scholarship.

## Findings

### *General Summary*

Results from data collected via the check-sheet point to identifiable patterns for each term and suggest trends for the study period (please see Appendix C: Summary Table: Moving Abroad Project Data). The majority of the student documentation generated evidence of learners' ability to complete the project according to the requirements. If one of the indicators of an individual's intercultural competence is indeed his/her ability to (1) identify co-relational tenets of the 3 Ps framework by following the integrated 3 Ps approach and (2) describe strategies for navigating intercultural encounters, the student documentation may offer a commentary on a learner's competence. Figure 3 summarizes the results as percent averages over the study period.

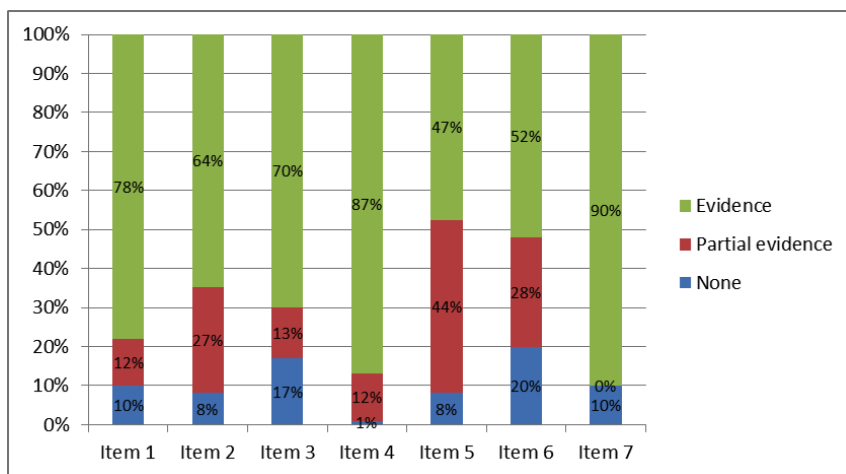


Figure 3: Evidence averages over study period from Items 1-7 in check-sheet

### *Summary Findings in Response to Research Question 1*

In response to Research Question 1 (In what ways does the Moving Abroad project, drawing from the 3 Ps framework, generate direct evidence of undergraduate learners' intercultural competence?), the summative results for Items 1 - 6 of the check-sheet suggest that the majority of project submissions (80% over the study period) evidence learners' completion of the tasks in alignment with the general purpose of the project. However, a subset of the student sample did not complete the assignment fully or according to all requirements, i.e. not evidencing the ability to (1) capture and define the co-relational tenets within sets of the 3 Ps framework and (2) identify intercultural differences and similarities and strategies for navigating intercultural encounters that are drawn from coursework.

More specifically, data for Items 1-4 (capturing students' demonstrated ability to document two sets of 3 Ps) and Items 5-6 (learners' documentation of appropriate content information on intercultural encounters) point to notable findings. Findings include that, on average, a total of 62 (or 75%) of the learners completed the project's required focus on the 3 Ps successfully over the study period (Items 1.a.-4.a.). More specifically, a total of 72 (or 87%) of the students submitted evidence of appropriate cultural content for two sets of 3 Ps over the study period (Item 4.a); 78% of the learners (65 students) submitted two sets of 3 Ps in the documentation (Item 1.a), 70% of the sample (58 participants) documented that they followed the integrated 3 Ps approach (Item 3.a.); and 64% of the projects (53 submissions) included one set of FL 3 Ps and one set of significant other 3 Ps (Item 2.a.). Within the context of this study, direct evidence of students' submissions documenting the 3 Ps approach is considered one of the indicators of the students' developing intercultural competence.

With respect to the project's required focus on intercultural encounters (Items 5-6), an average of 85% of the learners (a total of 71 students) completed this portion of the assignment successfully over the study period. The results for Item 5 indicate that 89% of the students (74 individuals) documented appropriate content for intercultural differences (5.a and 5.b) and hence met at least minimally the expectations for this segment of the project. However, only 47% of the student sample (39 learners) completed the assignment according to the guidelines, documenting appropriate cultural content on differences and similarities between and among cultures (Item 5.a). More than half of the submissions (a total of 44 or 53%) lacked evidence in one or more categories (Items 5.b-d). More specifically, 42% of the student work (a total of 35 projects) evidenced appropriate content on only cultural differences (Item 5.b), and two submissions (2 %) focused exclusively on cultural similarities (Item 5.c); 8% (or a total of seven projects) addressed neither differences nor similarities (Item 5.d).

Summative results for learners' submission of appropriate content on how to navigate intercultural differences (Items 6.a and 6.b) reveal that a total of 66 (or 80 %) of the projects met expectations for this portion of the assignment. Results for Item 6.a (appropriate content with textbook references) show that 52% of the students (42 learners) met the requirement. However, more than a quarter of the submissions lacked documentation of textbook references (28% or 23 projects for Item 6.b), and one fifth of the projects failed to address the challenge of navigating cultural differences altogether (17 submissions or 20 % for Item 6.c). As stated above, direct evidence of students' submissions documenting appropriate cultural information is considered one of the indicators of students' intercultural competence within the context of this study.

The study's limitations, however, mandate caution in discussing the results as generalizable findings. For example, data for fall 2013 vary greatly from those of subsequent semesters, and data for spring and fall 2014 suggest overall stronger student performance than in other semesters (see Appendix D: Summary Graphs per Semesters and Items).

In fall 2013, data for five of the seven items identify lower levels of student achievement, and results for Items 2 and 3 deviate the most. They document that a mere 12% of the students submitted one set of FL 3 Ps and one set of significant other 3 Ps (Item 2.a), and that only 44% of the submissions followed the integrated 3

Ps approach (Item 3.a). By contrast, during the next three semesters of the study, an average of 84 % and 79% of the students met the deliverables in Items 2.a and 3.a respectively. In comparison to the other terms, the fall 2013 data document also lower attainment of project deliverables for Item 1.a (submission of two sets of 3 Ps), Item 4.a (appropriate cultural content in documentation for 2 sets of 3 Ps), and Item 5.a (appropriate cultural content in documentation for cultural differences and similarities between the target culture and their own/another culture). On the other hand, fall 2013 data present stronger achievements for Item 6.a (appropriate cultural content in documentation for how s/he would navigate cultural differences, drawing on textbook references) than during any other term. In comparison, results for spring and fall 2014, Items 1 – 4 indicate higher achievement of deliverables than during the other two terms of the study period.

Several factors may have contributed to the divergent results (see discussion of study limitations below).

### *Summary Findings in Response to Research Question 2*

Research Question 2 (How do undergraduate learners perceive the Moving Abroad project, drawing from the 3 Ps framework, as meaningful?), addressed in Item 7 of the check- sheet, was answered via data gleaned from affective responses found in the students' project submissions (Data Set #1), and in students' end-term evaluations (Data Set # 2) for the study period.

Analysis of Data Set # 1 indicates that a total of 75 students (or 90% of the learners) included positive affective statements on the project and the experience of completing the assignment in the project documentation (Item 7.a). None of the submissions had negative statements (Item 7.b), and 8 projects (10%) were void of any affective commentary (Item 7.c). The content analysis of Data Sets # 1 and # 2 generated affective statements in four thematic strands. Comments indicated that the project was appreciated because it (1) met a latent personal or academic interest; or (2) fostered a new interest in the region of the world or the ethnic group's language and culture; or (3) allowed independence/choice in the exploration of the topic; or (4) accommodated completion of the assignment via a newly learned approach. Although Data Set #1 offered insights into students' attitudes about the project, they were not further mined as findings were deemed to only form a springboard for further investigation. Given that the affective comments were voluntarily shared in the graded project, the data were not considered reliable, and a second data set was analyzed in order to generate more reliable results.

Data Set #2, a sub-set of students' anonymous end-term evaluations for the four terms, was analyzed for additional evidence of learners' affective statements about the project. A total of 33 text responses (80 % of the total 41 evaluations) focused on the course content and addressed the project either directly or implicitly: 19 comments (or 58%) were entirely positive; 7 comments (21%) contained both appreciation and criticism; and 6 answers (18%) were entirely negative.

Only one negative response (3%) addressed the Moving Abroad project directly. A student commented: "For the projects (especially the moving abroad project), the instructions and examples are not the same are (sic) your expectations. There are quite a few of us that were disappointed in our project grades because we did

it exactly the way the rubric said, but when we talked to you about it, you wanted something completely different... please make it clearer on what you want in the future.” The comment addresses perceived inconsistencies between the project’s scaffolding materials and the instructor’s expectations. The sentiment of disappointment with the grade is amplified by the reference to “quite a few” peers who felt similarly. Indeed, a total of five comments (or 15% of the open-ended remarks) note the need for additional clarity in the project assignments.

It should be noted that seven positive comments (21 %) remark on the projects in the class and address either implicitly or explicitly the Moving Abroad project. These responses balance the critiques, exceeding the negative statements in both length and detail. One positive affective statement addresses specifically the congruency between instructor expectations and scaffolding materials, appreciating it as supportive during the project completion phase. Six responses appreciate the academic and professional skills development in global contexts. Four responses note that course assignments prompted them to think independently, engaging them thoughtfully in new and different ways. One learner evaluates the coursework as “fun.”

Four remarks mention explicitly study, travel, and moving abroad as goals for the future. Four commentaries connect the perceived merits of the project to the development of intercultural competence. One comment reads: “I have learned about multicultural communication, also about the product, value and perspective of different cultures of the world. I usually sell my books when the semester is done, but the book “AmongUS”... is part of my book case. I love the curriculum.” Another asserts: “Great overview of different cultures and skills to learn for encountering them.” One student shares: “I learned how to be interculturally competent and I also learned ways to prepare myself before traveling to a different country.” A response that addresses the project implicitly reads: “It gives good information on various cultures and view points, while also having examples and reasons as to why it is so important to be learning the content. There is a good focus on how being culturally knowledgeable and sensitive can help in different areas of life.”

The data subset of anonymous end-term comments, identifiable as either entirely or partially about the Moving Abroad project, enhances evidence gleaned from student documentation via Item 7 in the study instrument only minimally. Perhaps the most compelling insight gleaned from analysis of both data sets consists in the finding that numerous students indeed appreciate the Moving Abroad project as meaningfully connected with personal interests and professional development, discipline-based inquiry, development of intercultural competence, and development of culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Further investigation is necessary in order to generate more robust data. While preliminary results suggest that students’ positive affective remarks about the value of the Moving Abroad project dominate, analysis of additional data sets is indicated (e.g. a survey of or focus group interviews with former course participants to generate data focused on the Moving Abroad project; inclusion of data from courses taught by other faculty, etc.).

## Study Limitations, Pedagogical Implications, and Conclusions

### *Limitations of the Study*

There are limitations to the Moving Abroad project. Firstly, we know the study of any ethnic group's language and culture is limited due to the fact that the project is part of an English-language survey course (Fantini, 2014b). Even though project guidelines specify expectations, the project accommodates learners who complete the assignment at diverse levels of excellence: Students' research and presentations can showcase non-contextualized, superficial, and stereotypical sets of 3 Ps, reifying assumptions about the homogeneity of an ethnic group's culture and focusing on cultural difference. In such instances, instructor guidance and intervention are recommended. Clearly, more research is necessary to evaluate the project's strengths and weaknesses.

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. As noted above, instructor revisions in course assignments and project guidelines may explain variations in results per semester and over the study period. For example, numerous factors may have contributed to the divergent results for fall 2013. Student preparation and guidance by the instructor may have impacted the project submissions: in fall 2013, the Moving Abroad project assignment did not specify that one of the two sets of 3 Ps focus on the language of the ethnic group nor did the introductory information explain the integrated 3 Ps approach. In the following semesters, the project guidelines and introductory information provided these details on expected deliverables, and the majority of the submissions met the project requirements. In comparison, results for spring and fall 2014, Items 1 – 4 indicate higher achievement of deliverables than during the other two terms of the study period. During both 2014 semesters, students had the option of completing an additional, graded assignment on the 3 Ps approach. On average, 66% of the learners took advantage of this option, gaining additional exposure to, feedback on, and guidance for completing the Moving Abroad project. Since project guidelines and introductory materials did not change during the last three semesters of the study period, it must be concluded that additional variables (e.g. instructor's emphasis on teaching practice, supplemental learning opportunities, etc.) in addition to inherent limitations in this small-scale study (e.g., potential researcher error and bias, small sample size, etc.) impact the data and results.

Further, the study design, the study instrument, and the data analyses were developed and utilized or performed by the researcher and instructor of record and were not evaluated by an external reviewer to ensure inter-rater reliability or screened for researcher bias and error. Although it is not surprising that data may be diversely interpreted, further fine tuning of the instrument and the research design is necessary to guard against researcher subjectivity. Conversely, participant bias may factor in the qualitative data captured in Data Set #1 for Item 7. Students' affective statements may reflect learner sentiments that the instructor might expect, appreciate, or reward positive statements about the project. While data on students' evaluative comments were triangulated with open-ended comments in end-term evaluations, all data were self-reported by a self-selecting subset of students and are not generalizable for all learners in the sample.



Finally, the study was completed with a small sample size in a limited setting. Larger samples and study facilitation in other settings are necessary to investigate the extent to which the 3 Ps approach may be integrated in other courses and disciplines.

### *Pedagogical Implications*

In advocating the 3 Ps approach as a viable and meritorious template beyond the setting of the WLC course and this study, the researcher points to examples from other courses in a department of Foreign Languages. As documented elsewhere, the integrated 3 Ps approach can be effectively included in German Studies target-language courses spanning novice to intermediate levels (Fantini, 2014b; Smith, 2015, Smith & Bley, 2012).

At the researcher's institution, German Studies course content is mostly facilitated in the target language. Students are guided in an adaptation of the 3 Ps approach in courses at all levels. Using the target language according to their linguistic and cultural skill levels, students analyze and ultimately create German language texts (ads, poems, prose narratives, or films) by identifying sets of 3 Ps, and by making intercultural comparisons. In an upper-level German Studies film course, for example, students are guided in a sequenced progression from critically viewing films to analyzing and eventually producing a short feature themselves. Learners identify and reflect upon, for instance, the role of props, characters, dialog, setting, plot, and conflict following the 3 Ps approach. Next, they create scenes, scripts, and ultimately a film around cultural products, practices, and perspectives in transnational adaptations.

Merely anecdotal evidence suggests at this point that the 3 Ps approach in project-based assignments may serve as a successful strategy beyond the setting of the WLC course. The German Studies examples illustrate how the 3 Ps approach may work in other foreign language classrooms. In view of current scholarship on the 3 Ps framework and the goal of developing learners' intercultural competence, researchers may want to explore how integration of the 3 Ps may serve instructors who teach students at diverse proficiency and competence levels. The range of opportunities for practice and research may lead the curious instructor to adopt the 3 Ps approach for their use.

### *Conclusions*

The goal of this study was to examine the extent to which two research questions might be answered in a mixed method approach via evidence gleaned from students' submissions. The 3 Ps approach, as an integrated strategy enhanced through intercultural comparisons, formed the focus, and the graded assignment of the Moving Abroad project in the WLC course served as the unit of analysis. Results from data analysis of students' project submissions and end-term course evaluations over four semesters suggest insights and potential directions with respect to discipline-based intercultural inquiry grounded in the 3 Ps framework but do not yield generalizable findings due to the study's limitations.

The divergent results documented per semester invite further research utilizing larger samples and a methodology that controls for the study's limitations. Further, the project guidelines and supporting instruction can be improved upon to ensure consistency. Additionally, anonymous student surveys targeting the assessment of

pre- and post-perceptions of the merits of the Moving Abroad project will generate more reliable data than the instruments used in this study. However, even the preliminary findings summarized above point to the merits of tracking study data over time in order to level variances (among instructors, semesters, delivery formats, etc.) and to evaluate sum averages during any study period as indicative of potential trends and directions instead of specific and generalizable findings.

Preliminary data analysis, hence, suggests the following conclusions: That the assignment may serve the purpose of assessing learners' demonstrated attainment of learning outcomes related to the 3 Ps approach and to simulated intercultural encounters; that the majority of students' submissions in the sample shows evidence of intercultural competence as defined for the purpose of this study (i.e. as the learner's documented ability to (1) identify co-relational tenets of the 3 Ps framework by following the integrated 3 Ps approach and (2) describe strategies for navigating intercultural encounters); and that a self-selecting student sample articulates appreciation of the project as meaningful in terms of their personal, academic, and professional interests.

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## Appendix A

### Moving Abroad Project Assignment

#### World Languages and Cultures Moving Abroad Presentation (25%) (250 pts.)

This assignment is in conjunction with the *Book of Peoples of the World* (BoP) textbook, which we will study once we have finished *Among Us* (AUS). Imagine that you are moving to a foreign country in a region we are studying (note: we will not "cover" Europe or the Americas). Make a presentation that

- illustrates that you have identified specific cultural products, practices, and perspectives of that country and
- shows how you will navigate that country's customs and cultures.

Available dates: See sign-up sheet in D2L Content folder

#### General Guidelines:

1. Review the PowerPoint presentation in the D2L Content Folder with the title "Moving Project" – be sure you understand the terms and requirements.
2. Written Summary (130 pts.): Summarize your findings and research in a succinctly written text (not more than 500 words, excluding bibliography):

- a. An introduction that states your interest and reasons for focusing on this topic/country/ethnic group (10 pts.)
- b. A thoughtfully selected focus on at least two sets of “3 Ps”: one of the sets of 3 Ps must be on one of the local languages (other than English). Conduct a thoughtful discussion of the specific cultural product in relation to practices and perspectives, drawing on BoP, AUS, and/or additional sources (60 pts.)
- c. An analytical and reflective discussion of significant cultural differences and similarities compared to the US, with a thoughtful reflection on how you’ll navigate these differences, drawing on AUS concepts (50 pts.)
- d. An accurately formatted list of references for well-documented sources (10 pts.).

Please post on D2L in the discussion folder (not more than 500 words, excluding bibliography) as blog text or as attachment.

3. Visual Medium (70 pts.): Drawing on the written summary, design a visual medium (poster, or PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.). Please
  - a. limit yourself to under ten slides total (incl. one slide for bibliographical references) (10 pts.),
  - b. include approx. 2 relevant images per slide (+ captions underneath the image, and explanatory text from the summary + references in notes section) (15 pts.),
  - c. limit slide text to approx. 36 words per slide (remember the “golden rule” 6x6 (i.e. six words per line, and max. six lines per slide) (15 pts.)
  - d. list key concepts (most substantive, relevant) in bulleted entries or in salient quotes (w/ references) (20 pts.)
  - e. document all references clearly and accurately so that a fact-finder may access your sources (10 pts.).

Please post on D2L in the discussion folder (w/ your summary text) as attachment.

4. In-class Presentation (50 pts.): Drawing on the written summary and the visual medium, deliver a well-rehearsed presentation of max. 5 minutes (buttressed by the visual medium). Be sure to include the following content points:
  - a. Why did you choose this specific destination, and what would you like to do there (visit, study, work, conduct research) (10 pts.)?
  - b. What specific cultural products, practices, and perspectives can you expect to encounter and which cultural differences (compared to your home culture(s)) can you anticipate (15 pts.)?
  - c. On which cultural concepts, communicated in AUS and in BoP will you draw in order to adapt (15 pts.)?
  - d. Draw a poignant conclusion or ask a thought-provoking question at the end (10 pts.).
5. D2L-Submission: Submit all documentation in the Discussion folder entitled “Moving Abroad” prior to the day of your presentation, clearly indicating the BoP title of the (sub)chapter w/ page #.
6. Assessment rubric:

Criterion	100 % done Completed in an excellent way, satisfying highest expectations for form and content	90% - 70% Approaching expectations: Completed in good to acceptable manner, satisfying most to minimal expectations in form and content, i.e. not done completely or with expected depth, breadth, or scope	60%-0% Not meeting expectations: Completed in non-acceptable manner, not satisfying minimal expectations in form and content, or not done at all
Summary (max 500 words + bibl.) w/ all requirements (130 pts.)			
Visual (max. 10 slides), w/ all requirements (70 pts.)			
Presentation (max. 5 mins.) w/ all requirements (50 pts.)			
Done on time			
Subtractions			
Total points			

## Appendix B

### The Seven-Item Check-Sheet

1. Student submitted in documentation
  - a. 2 sets of 3 Ps
  - b. 1 set of 3Ps
  - c. none
2. Student submitted in documentation
  - a. 1 set of FL 3 Ps and 1 set of significant other 3 Ps
  - b. 1 set of FL 3 Ps
  - c. 1 set of significant other 3 Ps
  - d. none
3. Student followed the integrated 3 Ps approach in documentation for
  - a. 2 sets of 3 Ps
  - b. 1 set of 3 Ps
  - c. none
4. Student submitted appropriate cultural content in documentation for
  - a. 2 sets of 3 Ps
  - b. 1 set of 3 Ps
  - c. none
5. Student submitted appropriate cultural content in documentation for .... between the target culture and their own/another culture
  - a. cultural differences and cultural similarities
  - b. cultural differences
  - c. cultural similarities
  - d. none
6. Student submitted appropriate cultural content in documentation for



- a. how s/he would navigate cultural differences, drawing on textbook references
  - b. how s/he would navigate cultural differences
  - c. none
7. Student stated an affective response to the assignment in documentation as
- a. positive
  - b. negative
  - c. did not state an affective response

### Appendix C

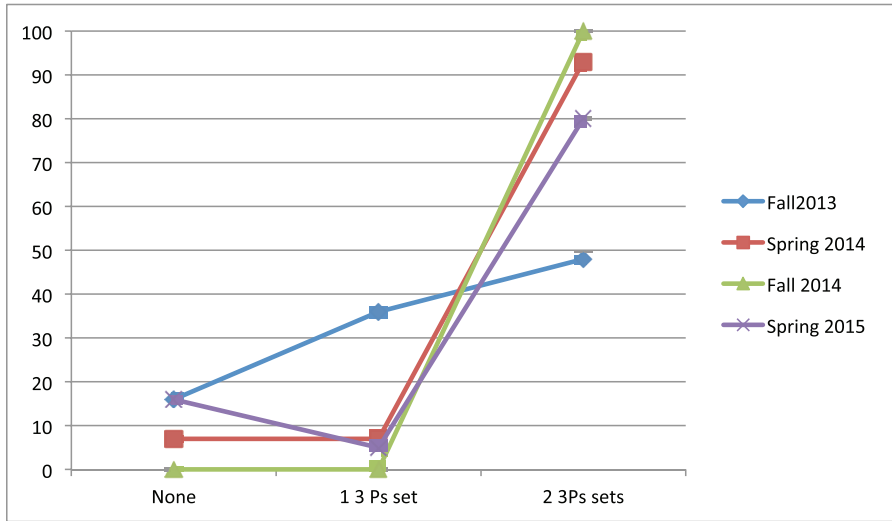
**Summary Table: Moving Abroad Project Data Based on Check-Sheet**

	Fall 2013 Total N=25	Fall 2013 %	Spring 2014 Total N=14	Spring 2014 %	Fall 2014 Total N=25	Fall 2014 %	Spring 2015 Total N=19	Spring 2015 %	All terms Total N=83	All terms %
1.a	12	48	13	93	25	100	15	80	65	78
1.b	9	36	0	0	0	0	1	5	10	12
1.c	4	16	1	7	0	0	3	16	8	10
2.a	3	12	11	79	25	100	14	74	53	64
2.b	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	2
2.c	18	72	2	14	0	0	1	5	21	25
2.d	3	12	1	7	0	0	3	16	7	8
3.a	11	44	11	79	24	96	12	63	58	70
3.b	6	24	1	7	1	4	3	16	11	13
3.c	8	32	2	14	0	0	4	21	14	17
4.a	16	64	13	93	24	96	19	100	72	87
4.b	8	32	1	7	1	4	0	0	10	12
4.c	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
5.a	5	20	6	43	16	64	12	63	39	47
5.b	18	72	5	36	8	32	4	21	35	42
5.c	1	4	0	0	1	4	0	0	2	2
5.d	1	4	3	21	0	0	3	16	7	8
6.a	15	60	8	57	12	48	8	42	43	52
6.b	6	24	0	0	10	40	7	37	23	28
6.c	4	16	6	43	3	12	4	21	17	20
7.a	23	92	10	71	23	92	19	100	75	90
7.b	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7.c	2	8	4	29	2	8	0	0	8	10

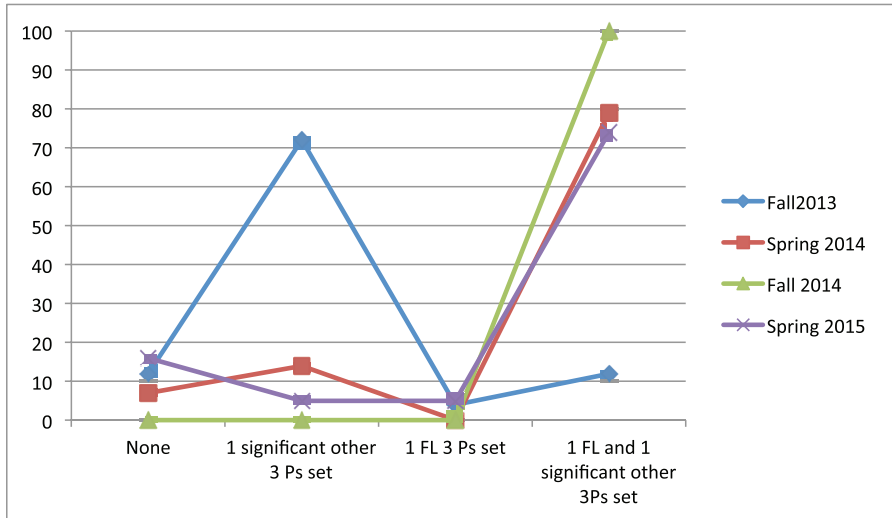
## Appendix D

### Summary Graphs per Semesters and Items

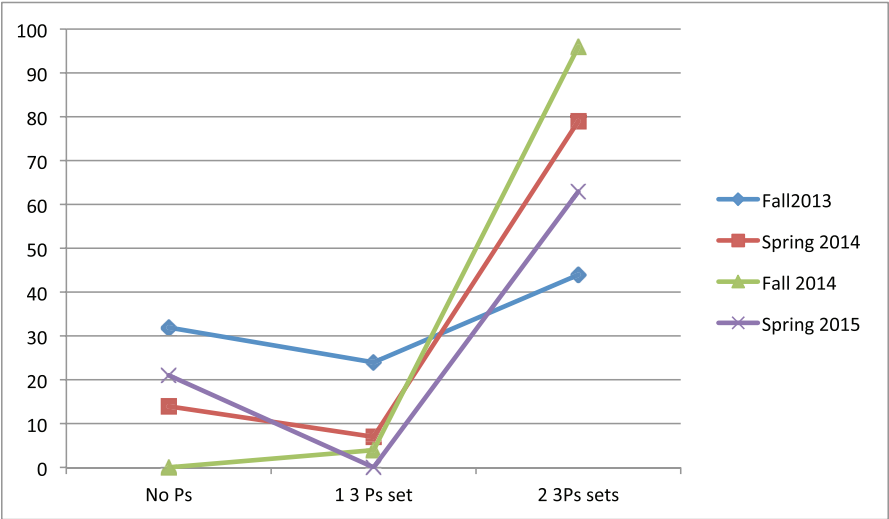
Graph 1: Evidence of Sets of 3 Ps (Item 1 in Check-Sheet)



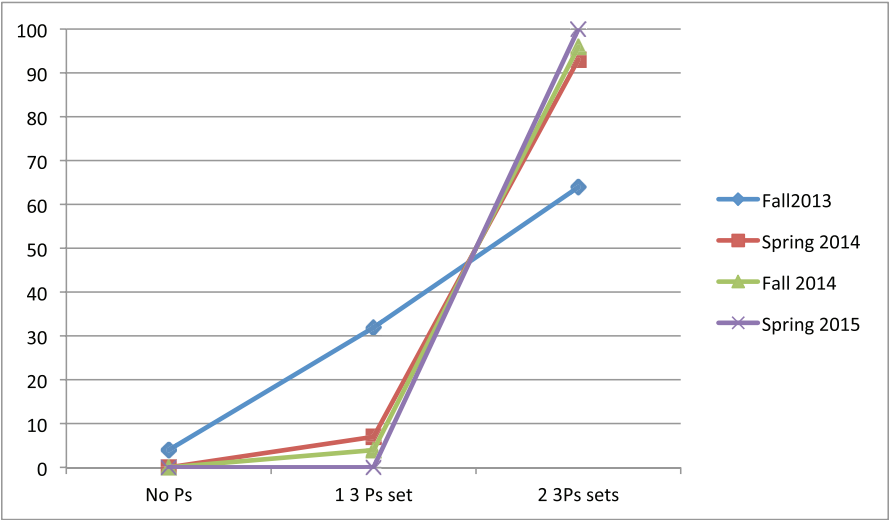
Graph 2: Evidence of Specified Sets of 3 Ps (Item 2 in Check-Sheet)



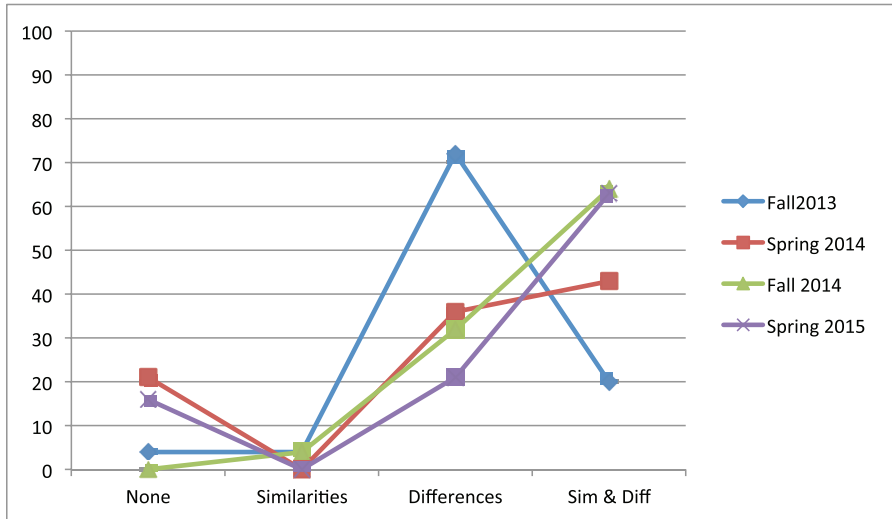
Graph 3: Evidence of the Integrated 3 Ps Approach (Item 3 in Check-Sheet)



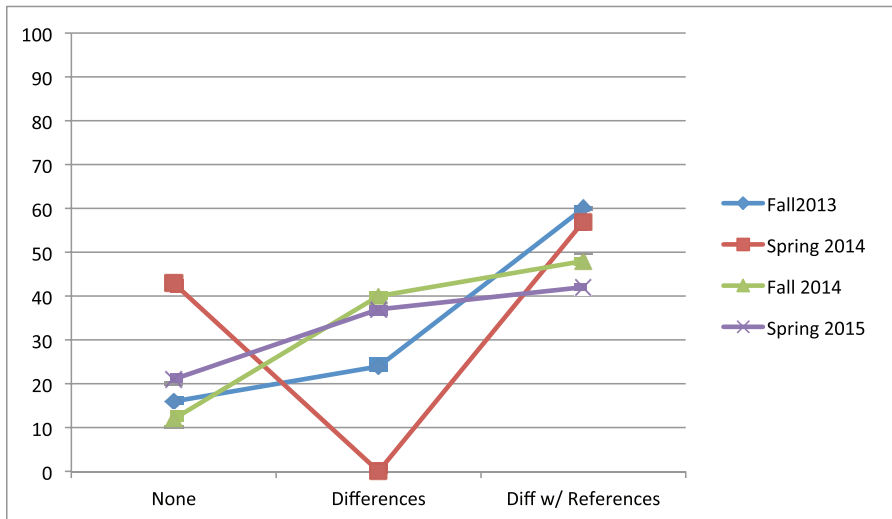
Graph 4: Evidence of Appropriate Cultural Content in 3 Ps (Item 4 in Check-Sheet)



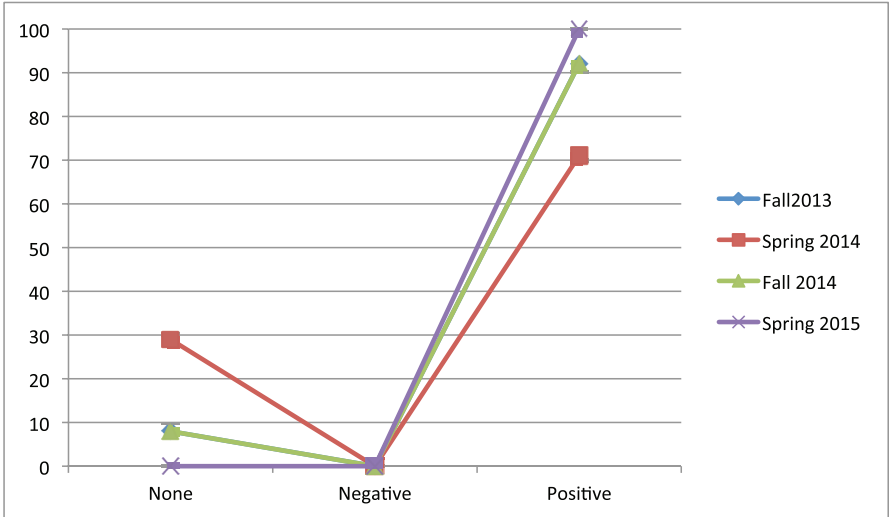
Graph 5: Evidence of Cultural Differences and Similarities (Item 5 in Check-Sheet)



Graph 6: Evidence of How Student Navigates Cultural Differences (Item 6 in Check-Sheet)



Graph 7: Evidence of Affective Statements (Item 7 in Check-Sheet)





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The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the research and the objectives of the study. It highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and the role of the researcher in this process. The second part of the paper presents the methodology used in the study, including the data collection methods and the analysis techniques. The third part of the paper discusses the results of the study and the conclusions drawn from the findings. The final part of the paper provides a summary of the key points and offers suggestions for future research.

The research was conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner, following the principles of scientific inquiry. The data was collected from a representative sample of the population, and the analysis was performed using advanced statistical techniques. The results of the study are presented in a clear and concise manner, allowing for a thorough understanding of the findings. The conclusions drawn from the study are based on the evidence presented and are supported by the data.

The study has several limitations, which are discussed in the paper. These limitations include the sample size, the duration of the study, and the potential for bias. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the subject matter and contributes to the existing body of knowledge. The findings of the study have important implications for practice and policy, and they provide a basis for further research in this area.

In conclusion, the study has shown that the research is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a deep understanding of the subject matter and a commitment to scientific rigor. The findings of the study are significant and provide a valuable contribution to the field. The study also highlights the importance of ongoing research and the need for a continuous effort to advance our understanding of the world around us.