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Live the Language; Learn by Doing

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**The Tennessee Foreign Language
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The TFLTA Journal, published each fall, is a peer-reviewed, online publication of TFLTA, the Tennessee Foreign Language Teaching Association, an affiliate of ACTFL. The journal publishes original scholarly articles (i.e., research studies, innovative instructional methods and techniques, assessment trends, policy and accountability issues), that are of interest to modern and classical language educators in the K-16 arena.

The TFLTA Journal

Fall 2010

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Message From the Editor

The Fall 2010 issue of the peer-reviewed, online *TFLTA Journal* presents five articles submitted from world language educators currently involved with instruction and supervision in the K-16 arena. The first contribution, written by Deborah W. Robinson, continues the *TFLTA Journal's* tradition of publishing the TFLTA Fall conference keynote address. Her piece deftly addresses the implications that today's consumerism and economic recovery will have on those of us involved in teaching a second language to our new global citizenry currently matriculating in the K-12 arena.

Dr. Robinson's article leads us into Kelly Moser's outstanding piece outlining the new PRAXIS II exam that our rising world language teachers now take as they seek initial This article should be of great interest to a full K-16 audience: classroom WL teachers, post-secondary WL and methods instructors and rising second language teachers.

Tai-Ming Chen, a high school Chinese teacher, offers his personal insights and research concerning the challenges of adding to the U.S. educational curriculum the most quickly-rising critical language taught in the U.S.—Chinese.

The fourth article, written by veteran classroom teachers, Suzanna Luttrell and Diane Goodson, give our readership a look at how to organize an educational trip for WL students, and what both they and their own students gained from this life-changing, incredible experience.

Lastly, Rachel Payne presents her research into the new digital literacies that are now an integral component of our second language classrooms and the potential challenges that all WL instructors will need to address in their implementation.

The Editorial staff of *The TFLTA Journal* invites you to read the Call for Papers and Submission Information for Authors, and request that you and/or a colleague consider submitting a scholarly contribution of your own to the Fall 2011 issue of *The TFLTA Journal*.

Patricia Davis-Wiley, Editor
The TFLTA Journal

Call for Papers and Submission Information for Authors

The TFLTA Journal
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The Editorial Board of *The TFLTA Journal* would like to invite you to submit scholarly articles (i.e., research conducted in the classroom; language approaches/strategies; meta-analyses; assessment issues; integration of authentic literature into the classroom; context-based instruction; digital literacies; position papers) of interest to K-16 world language (modern and classical languages) educators. The main focus for the Fall 2011 journal issue will be directly tied into the 2011 TFLTA's annual conference theme, *Many Languages — One Voice*.

The deadline for the 2011 Fall issue of the journal is September 2, 2011, to allow ample time for a blind review of submitted manuscripts and editing of accepted articles. Upon receipt of submissions, authors will be notified as soon as possible by the Editor.

Submission guidelines to be followed are:

1. submit your manuscript electronically to Patricia Davis-Wiley, Editor, *The TFLTA Journal*, at: pdwiley@utk.edu
2. put *TFLTA Journal article* in the subject line of your email and include your name, title, school/office affiliation, email address, contact phones numbers and working title of the manuscript in the body of the email
3. manuscript maximum length (double-spaced) is 20 pages with 1" margins all around
4. create a Microsoft WORD document, using Times Roman 12 font
5. follow APA '09 (6th edition) format for headings, references, figures and tables
6. include a title page *with* your name and affiliation and a title page *without* your name; this will expedite the review process; also, do not use running heads; paginate the article.
7. use [insert Table X here] or [insert Figure Y here] in the body of the text where tables and figures need to be placed; insert separate pages for tables and figures at the end of paper, following references; tables and figures may need to be re-sized in the final manuscript so be sure to save them as *jpeg* or *.doc* files
8. include a brief (150 word maximum) abstract of the article (to be placed following the title) and a 75-word maximum biographic statement for each author (at end of the article)
9. Manuscripts are accepted year-round, and authors are encouraged to submit their manuscripts well ahead of the deadline for the fall 2011 issue.
10. Submissions should incorporate the 2001 Fall TFLTA Conference theme: *Many Languages, One Voice*.

**Consumerism and Recovery:
What World Language Teachers Can Learn
From the Economy**

**Deborah W. Robinson
Ohio Department of Education**

The following keynote was delivered by Dr. Deborah Robinson to the Tennessee Foreign Language Teachers Association at its November 2010 annual conference in Nashville, Tennessee.

Thank you for inviting me to be your keynote speaker this year. As one of your members told me right before my speech, “You don’t have to say anything intelligent. Just philosophize and be inspiring” (Marilyn Carico, personal communication, November 5, 2010). So, let’s get started!

As an avid National Public Radio (NPR) fan, I often find myself listening to Market Place in the late afternoon. And, I catch myself filtering the information through my lens as a world language educator from way back. I muse about what the ups and downs of the market mean to us. After the November, 2010 midterm elections, I have the feeling that we are in for two more years of volatility in the marketplace and continued gridlock in Washington, DC. Perhaps we can make some sense of consumerism and recovery by thinking about implications for our field. First, it’s all about jobs: Ours and our students. You have new world language teacher licensure standards here in Tennessee. In perusing them, I see many ties to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)/National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards adopted in 2002—before the buzz words of 21st century skills and global competence took center stage.

Now, in addition to the Standards in the left column of Table 1, teachers must also be prepared to meet the expectations of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). In short, teachers are now expected to do much more, but not in isolation.

There are also implications for our jobs because of Race to the Top (RttT) Fund to the U.S. Department of Education. In emulating the business world, the funding seeks to attract the most successful teachers to high-need schools and compensate them for motivating all learners. In addition, resources may be used to hire distinguished professionals from fields outside of education, to help educate students. These provisions are designed to help failing schools overcome obstacles and to better serve learners.

Perhaps the most contentious issue in the RttT related to correlating one year of student growth to your effectiveness as teachers. Know that your National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCCFL) colleagues are collaborating to guide this discussion. Jeannette

Crosswhite, your Department of Education contact, will keep you abreast of how the TrT states and Tennessee respond to this issue.

Table 1
Tennessee Teacher Licensure Standards and NASBE Recommendations for Preparing Teachers for the Next Generation of Learners.

TN Teacher Licensure Standards	Recommendations of the National Association of State Board of Education
<p>Standard 1: Language , Linguistics, Comparisons Candidates demonstrate language proficiency in the target language, and know the linguistic elements of the target language, and its similarities and differences from other languages.</p> <p>Standard 2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts Candidates understand the connections among the perspectives of a culture and its practices, texts and products, and integrate knowledge of other disciplines into world language instruction.</p> <p>Standard 3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices Candidates demonstrate an understanding of language acquisition at various developmental levels and develop a variety of instructional practices that reflect language outcomes and address the needs of diverse learners.</p> <p>Standard 4: Integration of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction Candidates understand and integrate standards in planning, instruction, and selection and creation of instructional materials.</p> <p>Standard 5: Assessment of Language and Cultures Candidates demonstrate knowledge of various assessment models, both formative and summative, and use the assessment results to communicate progress to stakeholders and adjust instruction accordingly.</p> <p>Standard 6: Engaging in Professional Development Candidates engage in professional development opportunities, adapt to the educational environment and value and promote world language learning.</p>	<p>The focus for student learning must shift from the lower half of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning (remembering, understanding, applying) to the upper half, which includes analyzing, evaluating, and creating in preparation for careers in today’s—and tomorrow’s—workforce.</p> <p>Learning teams must be essential components of the next generation learning culture.</p> <p>Educators need to be given the flexibility to use various forms of technology in the learning environment.</p>

And speaking of volatility, let me tell you a story about an Ohio teacher, her doctoral research, and the (indirect) effect it had on her own program. Dr. Lori Winne (2007) compared the test scores of third, fourth and fifth graders on statewide achievement tests from foreign and non-foreign language elementary schools. She matched the schools in four districts representing four elementary program models (partial immersion, dual immersion, total immersion, and content-enriched) on the following: poverty level, population, typology, size, percentage of minority students, parents' professions, percentage of parents with college degrees, and median income. She compared learners' scores on state assessments at the district, foreign language, and non-foreign language schools. Her data clearly show that 91% of the time, children in an elementary school where there is a language program outperformed peers in a non-foreign language school on tests of mathematics and reading. Yet, her own successful program was reduced by one teacher because of the economic downturn. So much for evidence-based decision-making!

This did not surprise me. At the Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) conference held at The Ohio State University in 2007, I was appalled to hear human resource representatives from an insurance company, a manufacturer, and a financial institution state time and again that they preferred to hire foreign workers fluent in English to help them conduct their business overseas. How myopic! How can we ever hope to recover economically if we are at the mercy of negotiators who most certainly will favor their home countries and companies?

The 2010 midterm-election political-campaign ads threw blame for the country's economic woes in all corners. Let me just say that big business, whether headed up by Republicans, Democrats, Tea Party Loyalists, or Libertarians must stop outsourcing jobs overseas. Our competitive edge is compromised and unemployment will remain high if corporate America continues to send manufacturing and service sector jobs abroad to increase the bottom line for shareholders.

The situation is further exacerbated by the diffusion of power that characterizes the 21st century (Haass, 2010). We are losing ground to the economies of China, India, and Brazil among others. So, what can we learn? How do we prepare students for this new, interconnected, competitive world?

You are very fortunate to have the Tennessee World Languages Institute, created and funded through your state legislature. Coupled with your state world language association, the Tennessee Foreign Language Teachers Association, you must have forged bonds of mutual interest to create a powerful lobby.

I applaud your two-year language requirement for graduates of the class of 2013 and beyond! I hope that you believe that all children can learn. In case you need some convincing, please take a look at Dalton Sherman's address to Dallas, TX educators during their opening-

day convocation. (Type “Do YOU Believe in Me?” in your Web browser to access his speech.) This 11-year-old knows the importance of preparing each and every child for college and the world of work.

I’d also like to share a personal story with you on why you need to believe. My fifth- grade report card shows a long list of Cs and Ds and comments that are less than flattering about me as a student. If my teachers had used the criterion of reading scores, I would not ordinarily have been allowed to take a language. But in my district, I was encouraged to take French in seventh grade. And, guess what? I graduated in National Honor Society! All of the research on the benefits of language learning accrued to me as a learner. Many thanks to my French and Latin teachers in Wayland, Massachusetts schools who believed in me and encouraged me to persist into upper levels of the languages.

How will you, Tennessee colleagues, increase interest to attract your learners to persist past that two-year requirement—the only way to build functional skills in another language? Before we try to shed some light on possibilities, know that world language educators across the nation face similar challenges.

The national data from both ACTFL (2010) and the Center for Applied Linguistics (2010) show a mixed picture. There is very low interest in building extended K-12 sequences of language. And, nationally, enrollments of high school learners dramatically fall after they study a language for two years. French and Latin enrollments are down while other language have added learners, especially students interested in Chinese where we have witnessed a 195% increase from 2005 to 2008. Thirty four states report an increase in enrollment in K-12 language study while 14 states report a decrease.

In Tennessee, several languages have seen similar increases (German, Latin, and Chinese) while others have witnessed declines (Spanish, French, Japanese, and Russian). The whims of our consumers certainly complicate long-term planning!

So, as we allocate funds and ponder our investment strategy to increase wealth (interest and proficiency), it is useful to think about age, risk tolerance, and balancing our portfolios between value and growth holdings. In a district’s or state’s portfolio, then, we’d like to see a variety of *holdings* or *positions*.

Total immersion programs are both value and growth investments. There are no additional staffing costs as children learn the curriculum through the medium of another language from 100 to 50 % of the time. And, the model offers the best growth in terms of language proficiency. But, there is increased risk that may be intolerable to a variety of stakeholders. Children in this model tend to have lower standardized test scores in English language arts and reading until they reach sixth grade.

Partial immersion may be a better option for those who want lower risk. Your Glendale School of Nashville, where literacy skills are developed in both languages simultaneously, mitigate against the lag in test scores, but the rate of growth of language proficiency may take longer as learners spend less time immersed in the target language.

Content-based or -enriched programs may be better options for those with less risk tolerance, but understand that these options yield slower growth in proficiency. Yet, we know that great elementary programs reinforce content across the curriculum. Lori Winne co-plans her units with grade-level teachers and takes on concepts and skills that classroom teachers report need additional work. Sequencing, sorting, graphing, properties of matter and life cycles are fair game for her German and Spanish programs.

Have you read *Outliers: The Story of Success* (Gladwell, 2008)? What if Chinese programs, whether content-enriched or immersion, taught kids to count in Chinese and to do age-appropriate math? The process or equation is included in the manner one says the numbers. For example, the fraction $3/5$ in Chinese would be “of five, take three” (Dehaene, in Gladwell, 2008, p. 230). I don’t know about you, but I think I could do math much more easily in this fashion. As the authors remind us, Asian children are not innately smarter; their language simply explains mathematical computations in a transparent way. Asian language educators certainly would be seen as adding value if mathematics scores of American elementary children improved!

In keeping with the call for blending content and language, there has been an increase in the number of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that offer students language for specific purposes courses. It is not unusual to blend Spanish with allied health or agriculture courses. In addition to CTE programs, world languages have been wedded to the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) initiative. Students at Metro School in Columbus, OH, for example, take chemistry in Chinese following their beginning language sequence.

The Flagship model, funded through the National Security Education Program, combines the study of a critical language with an academic major for postsecondary learners. The growth potential is enormous, but so is the risk. Students must be totally invested for the long haul, but graduate with advanced language skills tied to a career path. For complete information about the many Flagship programs around the U.S., please visit www.thelanguageflagship.org.

All of these models combine rich input, many occasions to output authentic language for real purposes, ongoing opportunities to negotiate meaning, and a conducive affective environment in which to learn. In addition, they tie language learning to 21st century skills and global competence. Appendix A holds an example of how to tweak a travel unit for level two or three high school learners to address many of these skills. For detailed descriptions of how world languages tie to these initiatives, visit

<http://actfl21stcenturyskillsmap.wikispaces.com> and www.edsteps.org. In short, our consumers need to be critical thinkers, problem solvers, innovators, effective communicators, effective collaborators, information and media literate, civically engaged, and financially and economically literate!

As we add critical languages to our repertoire of Western languages, keep in mind that we do not have a non-compete clause in our contracts. Students best suited to diversify their language learning “portfolios” are those that have already studied one language. They develop the habits of mind and language learning strategies that transfer between languages. Given the enrollment drop-off documented after 10th grade, we should celebrate and encourage the study of several languages.

In all of this, we need to be extremely cautious of two phenomena related to *bull* markets. First, there are sometimes unrealistic expectations of the time it takes to build proficiency. Packaged programs and private language providers tout how fast and efficiently they are able to build learners’ proficiency. In addition, teachers sometimes believe (erroneously) that what is taught is learned and that third-level students exposed to different time frames are able to independently function at the advanced level of proficiency. If this were the case, why are our learners still taking English in 12th grade? Clearly, it takes a long time to develop functional language proficiency.

Second, we need to be wary of grade inflation. Proficiency is performance-based, not an indication of sitting quietly in a seat with materials and homework in hand. While we may wish to include *participation* when factoring our grades for report cards, we must not confound these behaviors with useable language skills. If you inherit a student from a colleague, you want assurances that an A or B student truly meets the performance outcomes of that previous level of study. Performance-based tasks coupled with periodic use of valid and reliable national assessments ensure that learners are on track to meet specific proficiency targets.

It seems that the market is susceptible to our moods—not good or bad, but calm or anxious (Ryssdal, October 20, 2010). When tweets indicate a period of calm, the market three days out shows improvement. So, why don’t we and all of our students tweet about the benefits of language learning and the feeling of well being we get from communicating in culturally appropriate ways? Perhaps we can increase interest in plurilingualism as we help to right the economy!

In closing, I borrow from another favorite NPR feature, *This I Believe*: World language teachers are the best suited to affect the types of systemic changes called for by groups, such as NASBE and EdSteps. Every day, through a variety of program models, we add value and growth potential, enabling our consumers to develop those habits of mind critical for 21st century markets. We invest for the long haul, take risks with reluctant learners, and encourage gifted language students to pursue multiple languages. We put up with a lot of bull, ride out the

waves of volatility, and work wonders with our market share.

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The Author

Deborah W. Robinson (Ph.D., The Ohio State University), taught French and Spanish for 15 years in preschool, elementary (immersion and content-enriched), middle, high school, community college, and university programs, was the Assistant Director of the Foreign Language Center at The Ohio State University before assuming an Assistant Professor position in the Foreign and Second Language Education Program. Dr. Robinson is presently a World Language Consultant to the Ohio Department of Education and was the Fall 2010 TFLTA conference keynote speaker.

The Praxis II for World Language Teachers: An Overview

Kelly Moser
Mississippi State University

Following the collaboration of states' Boards of Education and world language educators to create standard-setting panels in 2010, a new Praxis II: World Languages Test has been developed. Given that this new assessment to gauge the foreign language of teacher candidates is substantially different from its predecessors, an investigation of its development and the impetus for such a dramatic change in teacher licensure is warranted. This study provides an overview of teacher licensure, specifically as it relates to world language teacher preparation. The Praxis II: Content Knowledge Test and Productive Language Skills test are examined with regard to their test content and format and are compared side-by-side to the new World Languages Test. In this way, challenges previously impeding the success of world language teacher candidates are analyzed to determine if the new foreign language licensure exam will improve licensure outcomes. Recommendations to improve WL teacher preparation are provided.

Substantial changes in the assessments to gauge the subject matter competency of aspiring world language teachers suggest that the voices of educators have not been ignored. Recent collaboration in 2010 by several states' Boards of Education and current world language teachers through standard setting committees to improve the tests designed to measure teacher knowledge and provide evidence of teacher quality have resulted in a new, standards driven Praxis II: World Languages Test. Although much is still unknown regarding the Praxis II: World Languages Test, this new, subject-matter assessment is expected to be adopted by Praxis states as of October 15, 2010 (ETS, 2010a). Questions regarding the subject matter tests abound, and issues concerning incompatibility with standards, proficiency requirements, and teacher shortage all seem to have influenced the creation of this new assessment. With claims such as those by Wilkerson, Schomber, and Sandarg (2004) that "the expectations of the component tests surpass reasonable levels of professional knowledge and skill for beginning teachers" (p. 30), it is clear that teacher candidates are inadequately prepared to be successful Praxis II takers.

Given that the new version, the Praxis II: World Languages Test, is considerably different than its predecessors, the Praxis II: Content Knowledge Test and the Praxis II: Productive Language Skills Test, it could be assumed that a plethora of research contributed to its development. Ideally, the Praxis II: World Languages Test would be an evolution of the previous assessments by providing evidence that shortcomings were addressed and challenges specifically related to the exam format were minimal. This theory, however, is yet to be proven since no empirical research can be found identifying concerns with any of the aforementioned Praxis II exams. An exploratory study by Wilkerson et al. (2004) does indeed underscore several fundamental challenges with regard to the Praxis II: Content Knowledge Test and the Praxis II: Pro-

ductive Language Skills Test, however, this particular investigation lacks both qualitative and quantitative data to support such claims. Clearly, research is scant, and the evolution of the new assessment should be investigated.

Following the collaboration of states' Boards of Education and foreign language educators to create standard-setting panels in 2010, a new Praxis II: World Languages Test has been developed. Given that this new assessment to gauge the foreign language of teacher candidates is substantially different from its predecessors, an investigation of its development and the impetus for such a dramatic change in teacher licensure is warranted. This study provides an overview of teacher licensure, specifically as it relates to world language teacher preparation. The Praxis II: Content Knowledge Test and Productive Language Skills test are examined with regard to their test content and format and are compared side-by-side to the new World Languages Test. In this way, challenges previously impeding the success of foreign language teacher candidates are analyzed to determine if the new foreign language licensure exam will improve licensure outcomes. Recommendations to improve foreign language teacher preparation are provided.

Quality Teachers to Enhance Proficiency

Since the collaboration by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in 2002, NCATE institutions must ensure that 80% of their world language teacher candidates have achieved an Advanced-Low rating on the ACTFL OPI (Pearson, Fonseca-Greber, & Foell, 2006). This daunting and perhaps unrealistic mission of acquiring a second language at such high levels of fluency is seen as problematic given the current structure of foreign language education in the United States. For example, numerous studies indicate that following years of traditional university language study, language learners can only produce at Intermediate levels (Rifkin, 2003; Swender, 2003; Weyers, 2010). Furthermore, studies examining students' self-efficacy seem to concur indicating that language learners are aware of their own foreign language deficiencies (Tse, 2000). Additional studies like those of Polio and Zyzik (2009) indicate that language learners in advanced Spanish courses are orally deficient. From the results of these few studies, this aforementioned linguistic goal poses a unique challenge to foreign language educators.

In order to enhance linguistic proficiency, Zimmer-Loew proposed a solution, "We begin with expectations about the quality of language teaching and of language programs" (2008, p. 625). Several researchers have attempted to analyze the characteristics of quality or effective foreign language teachers. For example, Bell (2005) proposed an operational definition for effective or quality world language teaching as

clear and enthusiastic teaching that provides learners with the grammatical (syntactical and morphological), lexical, phonological, pragmatic, and sociocultural knowledge and interactive practice they need to communicate successfully in the target language. (p. 260)

Regardless of this suggested definition, the term *quality* is elusive and has evolved dramatically through educational reform with the release of *A Nation at Risk* (1983) and the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. Both actions emphasized that quality teaching was directly related to rigorous standards and achievement outcomes. NCLB (2001) attempted to define quality specifically by placing considerable emphasis on assessment in order to foster student achievement and to make schools accountable for deficiencies in learning. According to Boyd, Goldhaber, Lankford, and Wyckoff, (2007), NCLB also

...requires states to ensure that all teachers are ‘highly qualified.’ The legislation considers new teachers highly qualified if they receive state certification and demonstrate content knowledge of the material they teach; either by passing a subject area exam or by having an undergraduate major in that subject, or both. (p. 47)

Even though it is not within the scope of this investigation, it should be noted that teacher licensure requirements vary greatly since each state is granted the right to establish its own procedures and requirements for defining the highly qualified provision of NCLB. The majority of states require both the successful completion of a teacher preparation program and one or more exams (Boyd et al., 2007). Field work in the form of student teaching and the amount of course work differs by institution as well as pathway (Boyd et al., 2007). Thus, the successful completion of licensure exams is only part, albeit a vital step, of assuring the highly qualified status.

Licensure Exams to Define *Quality*

Although the licensure process has been modified dramatically over the last few decades, licensure exams have existed to measure teacher quality since the 1970s (Flippo, 2003; Flippo & Riccards, 2001). The original intention of teacher testing included two principle purposes: to increase student performance by screening prospective teachers and to hold colleges of education responsible for insufficient teacher performance and the lack of preparation for the field (Flippo, 2003; Flippo & Riccards, 2001). Although researchers assert that a “renewed focus of U.S. education policy on the quality of classroom teachers and teaching is raising new questions about how the nation prepares and certifies its teachers” (Boyd et al., 2007, p. 46), disagreement exists regarding the specific causes for the focus on subject-matter expertise. Some researchers (Boyd et al., 2007) implied that NCLB led to such definitions of teacher quality, while Cochran-Smith (2008) recognized the importance of the Higher Education Act (HEA) in 1998.

Not all states use The Praxis Series to assess subject-matter competency for teacher licensure, yet, Wilkerson et al. (2004) discuss issues such as reciprocity and exam development and administration that attract states to adopt these particular tests. The Praxis Series, developed from 1987 to 1993 (Albers, 2002), is designed “for educators by educators... to measure specific content and pedagogical skills and knowledge for beginning teaching practice” (ETS, 2008a). Although in 2003 only 16 states required the Praxis Series assessments, an increasing trend has emerged given that currently 35 of the 43 states requiring licensure tests rely on the Praxis Series (Zigo & Moore, 2002).

The Foreign Language Praxis II Assessments

Prior to October 15, 2010, the foreign language Praxis II exams consisted of two possible assessments: the Content Knowledge Test and the Productive Language Skills Test. The *Test at a Glance* information, provided by ETS (2008b, c), delineates several important aspects of each of the two foreign language assessments. The Content Knowledge Test is a traditional paper and pencil examination, comprised of the following four areas: (a) Interpretative Listening, (b) Structure of the Language, (c) Interpretative Reading, and (d) Cultural Perspectives. The instructions indicate that test-takers must comprehend both short and long recorded speech samples of native speakers which are played only once during the listening section of the test. The second section of the test assesses syntactical knowledge in which test-takers must recognize errors in both the spoken and written target language. The third section of the exam entails reading and understanding the content of selections such as periodicals, the Internet, advertisements, and literature. The final portion of the test assesses awareness of various aspects of the target culture including questions concerning literature and art. The Productive Language Skills Test is a paper and pencil test divided into two component areas: (a) Presentational Speaking and (b) Presentational Writing. Speaking tasks include presentational speech, such as defending an opinion, as well as other activities like giving instructions. The last portion of the test consists of interpersonal writing tasks, such as emails or letters in addition to formulating questions.

Since each state is granted the right to establish its own procedures and requirements for defining the highly qualified provision of NCLB, often, as seen in the Praxis II foreign language assessments, disparities exist among testing requirements and cut-off scores. As Boyd et al. (2007) asserted the following.

States have different standards as to what constitutes a passing score on the exams. Even within states, passing scores change over time. Passing scores are typically determined by a panel of education experts who related the minimum content knowledge and teaching knowledge required of a beginning teacher to knowledge demonstrated on the exam. (p. 54)

Among the states requiring licensure tests, 73% (including Washington, D.C.) employ either one or both of the foreign language Praxis II assessment(s.) Although, as demonstrated in Table 1, the majority of states utilize one of the Content Knowledge Tests (i.e., French, number 0173; German, number 0181; Spanish, number 0191), approximately 34% of the states require the Content Knowledge Test and one of the Productive Language Skills Tests (i.e., French, number 0171; German, number 0182; Spanish, number 0192.) Of noteworthy importance is the decision by the state of Mississippi as the only state to implement the Productive Language Skills Test as the sole indicator of foreign language competency. The decision by state-licensing agencies to use one foreign language Praxis assessment instead of the other has important implications for both education and foreign language departments since each assessment evaluates linguistic proficiency in different ways.

Table 1
 Foreign Language Praxis III Test Requirements and Cut-off Scores Prior to October 15, 2010

State	French		German		Spanish	
	GK	PLS	GK	PLS	GK	PLS
Alabama	148		142		147	
Alaska	162	171	153	178	152	
Arkansas	158	167			155	141
Delaware	157	168			157	156
DC	155	173			153	166
Hawaii	158		148		171	
Idaho	157		159		152	
Indiana	160		147		159	
Kansas	166		158		167	
Kentucky	159		157		160	
Louisiana	156		151		160	
Maine	157		156		158	
Maryland	161	170 Total score for both = 331	153	164 Total score for both = 317	162	168 Total score for both = 330
Mississippi		161		160		155
Missouri	161		161		158	
Nevada	152	161			160	156
New Jersey	156		157		159	
North Carolina	Total score for both = 335		153		Total score for both = 327	
North Dakota	156		150		155	
Ohio	160		165		160	
Oregon	146	160	156	160	161	160
Pennsylvania	170		165		166	
Rhode Island					156	174
South Carolina	160	166	151	181	141	161
Tennessee	160	165	149		152	154
South Dakota	150		143		135	
Utah	161		153		161	
Vermont	157	163	148	169	163	165
Virginia	169		162		161	
Washington	158		160		160	
West Virginia	131		132		143	
Wisconsin	156		153		158	

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Although many attempts have been made to determine the motivations that led to a new, standards-dependent Praxis II: World Languages Test, and the suspected replacement of the Praxis II: Content Knowledge Test and Productive Language Skills Test, it is difficult to determine for certain. In fact, participants of the standards panel were legally obligated to sign confidentiality agreements preventing them to release information regarding the test components or sessions. What is known, however, is that the World Languages Test (i.e., French, number 5174; German, number 5183; Spanish, number 5195) will be adopted by Praxis states as of October 15, 2010, and this new version seems to represent a concerted effort to incorporate the ACTFL standards and proficiency guidelines. The *Test at a Glance* (ETS, 2010b) for the World Languages Test, provided to prepare test-takers for test format and expectations, is a two hour and 45-minute test divided into the following sections: (a) Knowledge and Competences, (b) Test Sections, (c) Sample Test Questions and Answers, and (d) Scoring Rubric for Writing and Speaking Tasks. According to the information provided by the *Test at a Glance*, the World Languages Test consists of the following sections: (a) Listening with Cultural Knowledge, (b) Reading with Cultural Knowledge, (c) Writing section with three constructed-responses, and (d) Speaking section with three constructed-responses. The first section of the test asks test-takers to listen to a variety of passages in the target language including broadcasts or dialogues. They are able to preview test questions, two of which will assess cultural or linguistic knowledge, before hearing the passage for a second time. The second portion of test incorporates reading tasks to evaluate comprehension of excerpts from newspapers, literary texts, or other written material. Following each of the reading passages, test-takers will answer six questions, two of which, similar to the listening section, will assess cultural or linguistic awareness. The third portion of the test requires manipulating the target language through a variety of written tasks including interpersonal communication such as emails or memos and presentational communication including essays incorporating supportive, logical arguments. The final section of the test assesses the test-taker's speaking ability through three tasks: responding to a prior read passage, expressing and defending an opinion, and using interpersonal skills to participate in a mock conversation.

World language educators and teacher educators consider the possible implications of the Praxis II: World Languages Test with regard to teacher preparation and curricular development. Even prior to the development of this new assessment, those familiar with foreign language instruction in the United States seem to suggest that the current curriculum of language instruction must evolve to facilitate translingual and transcultural competence (MLA, 2007). They further contend that current instruction dependent on a curriculum that implements language and communication at novice levels and literature at advanced levels is producing language deficient learners and teacher candidates (MLA, 2007). Several fundamental questions have yet to be answered. First, how will departments of foreign languages and colleges of education meet the suggestions of the MLA Committee to improve language instruction and world language teacher preparation? Second, considering that world language teacher candidates, especially in Spanish, were ultimately unsuccessful on previous versions of the Praxis II content exams (Wilkerson, Schomber, & Sandarg, 2004), will the Praxis II: World Languages Test also be identified with less than desirable performance? Third, will this new version of the world language Praxis II assessment address the challenges and shortcomings of its predecessors?

Previous Research Concerning the Praxis II Exams

To attempt to answer these fundamental questions, it is critical to examine previous studies investigating the Praxis II content exams. Furthermore, Wilkerson et al. (2004) implied that due to such high failure rates on these exams, analysis of their content validity as well as the restructuring of foreign language education to prepare test-takers are essential. Fraga-Cañadas (2010) concurred and recommended that “assessment practices should be examined in order to determine how they are influencing candidates’ proficiency development” (p. 413). Although researchers have investigated the Praxis assessments regarding curricular development and improvement (Mitchell & Barth, 1999; Olwell, 2008), disadvantaged minority test-takers (Albers, 2002; McNeal & Lawrence, 2009), and content validity (Zigo & Moore, 2002), no empirical study has examined the foreign language Praxis II exams. Given that much can be learned from investigations of the Praxis II in other disciplines, the following section of this study will investigate the previous research in this domain.

Following recommendations by Sudzina (2001, as cited in Wilkerson et al., 2004) for faculty members to take the subject-matter tests themselves, Bowen (2002) became proactive in order “to know more about the test” (p. 127) her students must pass. As a faculty member in an English department and a liaison to the college of education, she registered and took the Praxis II: English Language, Literature, and Composition Content Knowledge. She emphasized the notion that faculty members outside of the college of education “assume that the courses and requirements that make a good major also make a good secondary school teacher” (p. 128). Following notification of a perfect score, which would do more than satisfy most Praxis II takers, Bowen reported a sense of uneasiness since she “still felt underprepared to ensure that our teacher education candidates have the subject matter knowledge they will need to pass the certification exams and teach in secondary schools” (p. 129). Similar to other critics, she challenges the notion that certification exams can adequately assess a teacher candidate’s knowledge and simultaneously guarantee that the successful test-taker will be a qualified and effective educator.

Similar to Bowen, Zigo and Moore (2002) also aspired to learn more about the Praxis II: English Language, Literature, and Composition Content Knowledge and the Praxis II: English Language, Literature, and Composition Essays. Motivated by questions related to accountability and state variations in licensure requirements, and claiming that “the content and format of the Praxis II tests were a mystery,” (p. 140) several faculty members decided to learn as much as possible about these critical licensure tests in order to prepare teacher candidates more effectively. Like faculty members in other disciplines, these professors were entirely dependent upon their test-takers’ experiences with the Praxis II, and this “anecdotal recollection” (p. 140) was no longer sufficient to prepare potential secondary educators. Upon completion of the aforementioned assessments, these English educators determined that students’ reports of the test items were often inaccurate due to their perception of success or failure on certain testing sections. Additionally, Zigo and Moore (2002) challenged student claims that the Praxis II was a test of factual knowledge. Taking the assessments not only allowed these faculty members to

verify or discredit student claims, but it also provided them with the opportunity to verify that these examinations were inconsistent with their professional standards. This finding provoked numerous questions related to the development of licensure assessments and the lack of agreement among English educators regarding the identification of the content knowledge for which teacher candidates should indeed be responsible.

Albers (2002) also examined the Praxis II English assessments; however, her qualitative study is unique in that she attempted to give test-takers a voice to address concerns related to teacher testing. Among the 17 teacher candidates, five did not pass the content knowledge section, and two of those five were unsuccessful on the essay portion. Since these test-takers were African American, Albers was motivated to understand why these students were repeatedly less successful on the Praxis II than their white peers. Among the claims by these test-takers were reports concerning the impossibility to prepare adequately for the test, the economic burden and emotional cost as a result of the assessment, time constraints impeding success, disproportional test questions related to literature by white authors, and an inconsistency between the test results and their success in school.

Hones, Aguilar, and Thao (2007) investigated the Praxis II exam for English as a Second Language (ESL). Hones et al. (2007) felt that this assessment was an unnecessary barrier to teacher licensure. Although Aguilar and Thao were bilingual, they were repeatedly unsuccessful on the Praxis II in Wisconsin. They assert that the wide variety of passing scores sends a conflicting message to test-takers. Arguing that the “Praxis II serves a role of keeping many non-native English speakers out of the teaching profession,” (p. 19) Hones et al. (2007) investigated this licensure assessment to facilitate change in the test format, content, and scores.

Wilkerson et al. (2004) presented a key investigation of the Praxis II: Content Knowledge Test and Praxis II: Productive Language Skills Test to the field of foreign language teacher education. They claim that the provision of the Higher Education Amendments of 1998 which requires institutions to report success rates on teacher certification tests is especially detrimental since 90% of institutions report fewer than 10 test takers. Consequently, “a single failure has the potential to endanger a teacher education program” (p. 30). Additionally, Wilkerson et al. (2004) indicate that states cannot reach consensus on the passing scores required to obtain teacher licensure in foreign languages. Their investigation is especially enlightening with regard to the test format and content. They indicate that the tasks on the Content Knowledge Test such as instructions in the listening section and requirements to identify both aural and written errors in language production differ dramatically from classroom activities. Wilkerson et al. (2004) also challenge the inclusion of questions related to cultural knowledge given the insurmountable task of preparing for such a vast area. They also question the notion that all tasks can be completed if a test-taker has achieved at the Advanced-Low proficiency level since “defending an opinion is a task at the Superior level” (p. 35). An additional challenge of the foreign language Praxis II exams, according to Wilkerson et al., is related to testing conditions specifically the use of faulty and archaic equipment and the requirement for numerous test-takers to speak and listen in the same room. They claim, “These sorts of problems must be eliminated if students are to be successful” (p. 35).

Addressing Challenges through the Praxis II: World Languages Test

Given what is known about the Praxis II: World Languages Test, teacher educators question how it will be received by prospective teachers and if the challenges regarding test format, content, and testing administration will be addressed appropriately. Although it is currently unknown whether cut scores will change and reflect a uniform standard or if they will continue to vary by state, the incorporation of one test by Praxis states to assess foreign language competency is an improvement. Examining the Praxis II: Content Knowledge Test and Praxis II: Productive Language Skills Test side-by-side with the Praxis II: World Languages Test allows researchers to anticipate how test-takers might react to and perform on this new licensure test in the near future. Specifically related to the test content, it appears that the new assessment has addressed several of the challenges as reported by Wilkerson et al. (2004). For example, according to the information presented in Table 2, World Languages Test takers have more time than both Content Knowledge and Productive Language Skills Test takers to answer a similar number of questions. In fact, the World Languages Test allots approximately 50 minutes for the listening section and an additional 50 minutes for the reading portion. This is an additional 35 minutes when compared to the Content Knowledge Test for a similar number of questions in these two component areas. Furthermore, according to the same information found in Table 2, World Languages Test takers have 15 additional minutes for writing tasks than Productive Language Skills Test takers. Although World Languages Test takers are completing fewer speaking tasks, they are still given an additional minute per exercise than the previous assessment. These examples suggest that the issue regarding time constraints seems to be adjusted and should result in fewer challenges for test-takers to complete similar tasks.

Similarly, the World Languages Test can be compared to its predecessors to analyze the percentage breakdown of each component section. According to the information presented in Table 2, the World Languages Test places considerable emphasis on the receptive skills of listening and reading. Considering what is known about second language acquisition, this finding corresponds with current theories indicating that language learners are more successful at listening and reading activities than at tasks involving productive language skills. This is a dramatic change considering that the Productive Language Skills Test emphasizes speaking skills, 60% of the examination to be precise.

An additional area of interest is related to the incorporation of culture questions. Wilkerson et al. (2004) suggested that the inclusion of such questions is problematic considering the difficult nature of preparing for an area that could encompass numerous cultures and traditions of various regions. Once again, it appears that the World Languages Test has recognized this challenge since the majority of the 15 questions are embedded in both reading and listening sections, independent of factual knowledge. Furthermore, the approximate percentage of the examination related to cultural knowledge has decreased from 19% on the Content Knowledge Test to 14% on the World Languages Test.

Comparing the world language licensure tests is also beneficial with regard to test ad-

Table 2
Test Format

Content Category	Approximate Number of Questions	Approximate Percentage of Examination	Time (minutes)
<i>Content Knowledge Test</i>			
Interpretive Listening	32	27%	30**
Structure of the Language	34	28%	35*
Interpretive Reading	31	26%	35*
Cultural Perspectives	23	19%	20*
<i>Productive Language Skills Test</i>			
Presentational Speaking	6	60%	25**
Presentational Writing	3	40%	35
<i>World Languages Test</i>			
Interpretative Mode: Listening Including embedded linguistic content	30	27%	50
Interpretative Mode: Reading Including embedded linguistic content	30	27%	50
Cultural Knowledge (Tested in the above two sections)	15	14%	
Interpersonal and Presentational Writing	3	16%	50
Presentational and Interpersonal Speaking	3	16%	15
** Approximate Time			
* Suggested Time			

ministration and instructions. Previously, from reports by Wilkerson et al. (2007), it appears that test-takers became both anxious and frustrated due to testing equipment and the noise caused by nearby testing peers. Unlike both of its predecessors, The World Languages Test is a computer-based assessment. This change will hopefully eliminate issues related to out-of-date equipment. Other considerations related to test-takers' needs have affected the instructions of the components as well. For example, test-takers hear each listening passage twice. Furthermore, between each attempt, they have 60 seconds in order to peruse the six questions related to the content of the passage. Allowing test-takers to hear a passage more than once in addition to the opportunity to skim the questions is more in line with classroom activities that "provide a degree of predictability or a frame of reference for the learner" (Wilkerson et al., 2004, p. 34).

It is plausible, however, that although the World Languages Test seems to have indeed responded to the previously mentioned challenges, it will still be criticized by test-takers, teacher

educators, and foreign language faculty. One such obstacle is related to the requirement to achieve at the Advanced-Low proficiency level. The World Languages Test did not address this concern by teacher educators who report that:

While this level of oral skill is understandably desirable and reasonable minimum for classroom teachers, it is a significant pedagogical challenge to university students, as most of the program's current graduates begin their language study at the university level. (Cheatham, 2004, p. 10)

Clearly, more research is needed to enhance the linguistic proficiency of today's world language learner.

An additional and noteworthy change on the World Languages Test involves the absence of test questions assessing the structure of the language. This is contrary to the Content Knowledge Test that emphasized this particular component area as most important when compared to listening, reading, and cultural knowledge. The World Languages Test, however, only includes syntactical content that is embedded in both the listening and reading test sections. This finding is not surprising considering the focus on "more communicative, democratic, student-centered, and meaningful student engagement in the second language" (Brown, 2009, p. 46). Still, the view of explicit grammar instruction in the language classroom seems to be an area of disagreement among second language educators (Bell, 2005). With a lack of consensus among world language teachers, it is quite controversial that grammatical knowledge is almost entirely omitted from an assessment that ultimately determines who will be licensed to teach.

Recommendations for World Language Teacher Preparation

Based on previous research, several recommendations are made to improve world language teacher preparation and consequently the success of test-takers on the Praxis II exams. First and foremost, teacher educators and foreign language faculty alike must be cognizant of the subject matter exams that their prospective teachers must undoubtedly experience. The opportunity to take these exams provides a firsthand glimpse of the challenges that future test-takers might endure. Furthermore, taking the licensure exams allows all of those in charge of educating foreign language teacher candidates to verify that the assessments are aligned with the ACTFL standards and that the curriculum of their corresponding institution is adequately preparing teacher candidates and all language learners. As Olwell (2008) contends, "Analyze whether students' grades in departmental classes align with pass rates. If not, the problem may very well be that a curriculum is out of joint with the state exam and probably the state curriculum" (p. 37).

In addition to personally experiencing the licensure exams, faculty members must encourage their corresponding departments to implement more rigorous standards to prepare world language teacher candidates. For example, teacher candidates should be interviewed in the target language prior to acceptance to the college of education. This practice makes teacher candidates equally responsible for their language learning and allows them to recognize their own

linguistic deficiencies. According to Pearson et al. (2006),

By making sure that foreign language teacher candidates have the necessary proficiency through these assessment efforts, we will hopefully reduce concerns from cooperating teachers and university supervisors about teacher candidates 'who do not know the language' as well as allowing teacher preparation programs to remain accredited. (p. 514)

Although several universities are abiding by this particular procedure, too many still are not.

World language curricula should also be examined to ensure that learners are pushed to use the target language in a variety of ways. In doing so, faculty members must begin to collect evidence of their students' progress by creating portfolios including speaking, writing, and other project item samples. By requiring students to complete a variety of activities in the target language, "student teachers familiarize themselves with the language needed to teach in the target language" (Pearson et al., 2006, p. 514). Furthermore, Wilkerson et al. (2004) suggest that language portfolios can assist teacher candidates to prepare for the Praxis II by including lists of language tasks at the Advanced and Superior levels.

Teacher candidates should be encouraged to study abroad for extended periods. Fonseca et al. (2006) contend that the most crucial element affecting language development is access to extended study abroad opportunities. Educators must ensure that these opportunities facilitate language growth by requiring students to live with native speakers, engage in informal conversations outside of classes, and consistently work toward translingual and transcultural competence. According to Wilkerson et al. (2004) "study abroad experiences are still far too loosely structured and not well enough assessed to assure that the participant is moving toward Advanced-Low proficiency" (p. 38).

Given that preparing world language teachers is ultimately the responsibility of both world language departments and colleges of education, faculty members must collaborate and ensure that their programs meet the ACTFL Program Standards. Pearson et al. (2006) suggest that teacher candidates have two advisors to facilitate the understanding that teaching the second language involves both pedagogical and subject-matter expertise. Moreover, faculty members in both disciplines should be encouraged to develop classes that are tailored to meet the needs of teacher candidates. According to Pearson et al. (2006),

Complaints from cooperating teachers and university supervisors often concern The student teachers' problems using commands and other phrases to facilitate Target language instruction. Ideally, this problem could be addressed with a course in language for specific purposes, such as Spanish for educators. (p. 513)

Furthermore, recent research indicates that language teacher candidates that enroll in courses providing them with speaking strategies such as circumlocution are able to reach Advanced and

Superior proficiency levels with ease (Weyers, 2010).

“As foreign language educators, we must do all we can do to ensure that our students are ready to take the Praxis II exams” (Wilkerson et al., 2004, p. 39). We must examine and redesign the curriculum to allow students to reach higher levels of language proficiency. We must develop courses specifically designed to provide language teachers with the necessary strategies and skills to use the target language in communicative ways. We should encourage structured and extended study abroad opportunities that provide students with the experiences needed to strengthen areas of linguistic weakness and increase cultural awareness and empathy for others. We need to collaborate with colleagues in other disciplines to prepare teacher candidates to be successful language teachers. In this manner, we as faculty members respond appropriately to the challenges of our students in achieving Advanced proficiency levels. Consequently, world language teacher candidates will live the language, learn by doing, and be ready to take the Praxis II.

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Teaching Chinese in the High School Arena: Meeting Critical Language Needs for 2011 and Beyond

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With China's rapid economic development in the world, Chinese is emerging and considered an international language in business. According to the College Board's internal study in 2008, there is a 200 percent increase on Chinese programs offered in K-12 schools in the United States, making Chinese the fastest growing language. However, little support has been made to meet the demands, including the supply of highly qualified Chinese teachers and a lack of articulated curriculum implemented in school districts. The principal researcher shares his viewpoints on why the United States need to offer more Chinese programs in addition to the other world languages and the reasons American students need to embrace Chinese as an international language in business. Finally, the principal researcher shares his experience as a Chinese teacher and difficulties he has encountered as the only Chinese teacher in the school district.

The rise of China's economic growth has drawn the world's attention. According to the U.S. Congress Report in 2010, China has become the world's second largest economy, next to the United States. Due to the tight interconnections in trade, culture, and education between two countries, the U.S. government has shifted its language focus from the European languages, such as German, Spanish and French, to Mandarin Chinese. In the past several years, Chinese programs offered in K-12 public schools have increased at a significant pace. In 2002, a study estimated that 24,000 students in Grades 7-12 nationwide were studying Chinese, and 32,153 students were taking Chinese as a world language in higher education (Wells, 2004). Between the years of 2002 to 2006, there was a 52% increase, making the total number of students who study Chinese in higher education to be 51,582. In addition, according to a survey on world language (WL) teaching in U.S. schools in 2009 (Asia Society, 2009), there are 779 Chinese programs, including 444 programs (57% in the public schools) and 335 (43% in the private schools) nationwide. Compared with the Chinese programs offered in 2004, there represents a 200 % increase in recent years.

Although the number of students who take Chinese is less compared with students who take European languages, the rapid increase sends a signal to policymakers that there is an increasing demand from students who desire to take Chinese as their world language of choice. Previous researchers have concluded several reasons for this significant increase of those studying Chinese, including China's economic rise in the world (Zheng, 2005), the importance of cross-cultural communication (Garrett & Maxwell, 2002). U.S. President Obama's speech when he

visited China in 2009 also promoted the studying of Chinese in the United States. He indicated that studying Chinese is very important not only to broaden students' world view, but to increase the two countries' interaction in the field of education. Thus, he launched an initiative to encourage 100,000 American students to study in China within four years (Tarjanyi, 2009).

A report completed by the Asia Study (2009) indicates that learning another language other than English benefits the country. The report argues that the nation will be able to benefit from its own interests from offering Chinese programs in the K-16 language education arena. This argument is also supported by Uchida (1996) who argues that being able to speak one language is not enough when preparing American students to work with people from diverse cultures nowadays. They will need to learn how to communicate interpersonally in order to gain direct access to the target language culture.

Theoretical Framework

Garrett and Maxwell's (2002) arguments about meeting macro national needs provide a theoretical framework for this article. They suggest that the current language curriculum implemented in the United States does not meet the country's critical national needs. In responding to Garrett and Maxwell's (2002) suggestion, the Asia Society's (2009) report states that by offering Chinese programs in educational institutions, the nation, as well as its students, will benefit from offering a Chinese curriculum in the schools that will address four potential critical needs for the nation, including a : (a) National needs, (b) Economical needs, (c) Cultural needs, and (d) Individual needs.

National Needs

Providing a Chinese curriculum in K-12 schools will benefit the country's national security. Since the 9/11 attack, it seems there is a surging awareness of embracing Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) rather than simply maintaining the U.S as a monolingual country. In 2006, the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) was enacted to increase the number of Americans studying critical languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, and Farsi (Wang, 2009). The purpose of this legislation sets a landmark for studying a LCTL, which intends to expand the underdeveloped world language curriculum from the kindergarten to college level. Instituting this act will satisfy the country's needs in developing highly-qualified world language personnel. With a linguistically-proficient citizenry, Americans will be able to work closely together with other countries to better improve the national security of the United States.

In addition, developing highly qualified personnel with linguistic and culture competence will help minimize misunderstandings between the U.S. and other countries. For example, with the rapid development of China in the 21st century, the U.S. and the Chinese government need to cooperate on meeting various emerging tasks such as addressing the smuggling of undocumented aliens, exchanging information for military purposes, and dealing with crime issues globally, all of which require proficient Chinese speakers. In the past, the U.S. government mainly relies on non-professional translators in dealing with language barriers, which may not

have represented the country's best interests.

Since 2006, the U.S. government has invested a significant amount of funding in supporting Chinese programs. Several initiatives have been activated to develop Chinese programs nationwide, including the Foreign Language Assistance Program (FLAP) of the U.S. Department of Education, which aims to fund 70 Chinese language programs, Chinese Program Initiatives in three states (Ohio, North Carolina, and Wisconsin) and Chinese Flagship Programs supported by the National Security Education Program (Asia Society & College Board, 2008). In spite of these efforts to promote Chinese as an critical language among different government agencies, the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), a training agency for the government personnel of the Department of the State, categorizes languages into four groups, based on the contact hours required for acquiring of a particular target language. Chinese is rated in Group III and is considered the most difficult language to learn for those native language speakers whose language is in Group I (i.e., English). While it may take 24 weeks (approximately 600 hours) to attain a survival level of an European language, such as French or Italian, it takes about 4 times more time (approximately 2,200 class hours) to acquire Chinese. Therefore, there is an urgency to start Chinese programs at an early age (Garrett & Maxwell, 2002; Wang, 2009) so that the government can prepare competent language speakers to meet its critical needs in the global arena.

Economical Needs

Several statistics reveal the benefit to the U.S. economy of offering a Chinese curriculum in K-12 schools. Based on the Congress's Report in 2010, China is the U.S.' largest source of imports, second-largest trading partner, and third-largest export market (Morrison, 2010). With China's economic importance, China and the U.S. rely on each other's expertise and resources, such as energy and environment protection in the international economy. Since 2000, trading between the two countries has risen 300%, benefitting each state in the nation.

According to the US-China Business Council's (USCBS) report in 2009 (USCBS, 2009), hundreds of American companies established branch offices in China to build a strong bridge to vendors in their supply chain. In addition, China is a huge market for U.S. exporters and investors (Morrison, 2010). Morrison suggests that the growing dependency between two economies benefits various U.S. groups, such as consumers and business investors. For example, consumers are able to buy cheaper products imported from China and business investors can apply the low-cost, low-labor advantage to serve other countries' needs. During the process of the business communication, although most U.S.-based companies still use English as the medium of communication, Osland (1993) suggests that when companies adopt the local language as the primary language of communication or negotiation, the results are more significant than those who use English in the entire process of communication.

From the business perspective, speaking Chinese plays an important role in bridging the linguistic differences. Therefore, in order to extend companies' market shares, Human Resources of these companies are required to recruit and train a more proficient work force, which in turn benefits the U.S. economy as a whole. In addition, from a pragmatic perspective, there are just

not enough linguistically-proficient speakers in business fields. The reason lies in the fact that only 8% of the undergraduate students take Commonly Less Taught Languages for a world language option and consequently, few become proficient at the intermediate or advanced level in these target languages (Malone, Rifkin, Christian, & Johnson, 2003). Therefore, based on the assumption that speaking Chinese in addition to English will lead to U.S. prosperity, providing earlier instruction in Chinese should be encouraged.

Cultural Needs

One unique aspect of providing language classes in the early school years is that students will be more aware of the cultural differences practiced in both target and native languages. For example, in general, there is a great difference in terms of refusal strategies in the business world practiced by most Americans. Americans tend to apply direct strategies in refusing a proposition while most Chinese typically use indirect strategies when declining the same offer. The significance of this, according to Gu (1990), indicates that politeness is reinforced during actual interactions. Thus, during both processes of applying direct and indirect refusal strategies, *face* (i.e., maintaining one's self-esteem in front of others) plays a very significant role. In order to be polite toward his or her interlocutor, people tend to denigrate themselves and respect the speaker. Gu (1990) further mentions that the concept of *lǐmào* 礼貌 includes multiple meanings in one word, including "respectfulness, modesty, attitudinal warmth, and refinement" (p.23). Spitzberg (1991) refers to this ability as *intercultural competence*.

Intercultural competence plays an important role in the 21st century in the field of inter-country business. Decades ago, it may have taken weeks or months to travel to a destination while today it may take only hours to reach one's destination. Today's world is becoming a *global village*. Therefore, it becomes apparent that each member in this village needs to acquire intercultural competence, and the best way to introduce intercultural competence is through language instruction. Many researchers, in fact, consider language and culture to be inseparable.

Researchers (Varner, 2000; Bennett & Bennett, 2004) have applied the perception of intercultural communication competence in the field of business, and assert that to be proficient in applying this competence in a real life situation requires extensive language learning. Beamer (1992) reports that it requires 6 incremental encounters for a learner to feel comfortable in dealing with a diverse culture. These 6 aspects include an individual's: (a) past experiences with people of the target culture, (b) role and norm differences, (c) anxiety, (d) goals of the intercultural training, (e) perceptual and cognitive sets of a world view and, (f) self-image (p.290).

Individual Needs

With regard to the building of the individual skills that will lead to the U.S. competitiveness, previous research has pointed out that students learning a world/second language receive bene-

fit from cognitive, attitudinal, personal, and academic benefits, including: problem-solving abilities (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1990); a higher threshold level of bilingualism (Cummins, 1994); less mental decline by being bilingual (Bialystok et al., 2004); and better performance in English, math, and social studies (Rafferty, 1986). In addition, another distinctive effect of taking a second language is that world language learners feel more aware of how speakers from different cultures communicate. Take learning strategies used among American students and Chinese students, for example, American students learn new knowledge mainly based on verbal communication, such as class discussions and peer tutoring, while most Chinese students apply rote memorization in obtaining new knowledge. Each learning style has its strengths and weaknesses (Watkins, 2000). However, when students are aware of these differences in learning styles, they are able to adopt what is best for their own learning and establish a strong learning pattern. In addition, learning a world language that is gaining worldwide acceptance opens up students' future career options. Brecht (1994) argues that students who take world languages in the 21st century should have an attitude that it is more than just simply fulfilling school requirements; students today need to perform at higher level of language proficiency to succeed in today's world.

In China, for example, English is seen an important vehicle to academic advancement and career choice. English education starts as early as first grade in some public schools. Students are taught that acquiring English is a way that guarantees a better job since it is used as an international language. However, when comparing language education in the United States, Malone, Rifkin, Christian, and Johnson (2003) report that the current language programs do not emphasize the inter-connection with students' future careers. Many U.S. students are not exposed to a world language environment until they reach high schools (Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian, 2000), which is too late to develop high-quality proficient speakers. They argue that with a strong national language policy, students will have additional time to attain a high proficiency level. Another advantage of starting language at an early age is that they will be more likely to have native-like pronunciation and be better prepared to study at more advanced levels when they enter college or graduate schools (Black, 2000).

China has transformed from a sleeping lion of decades ago into an economic giant in recent years. While more than 300 million Chinese students who are studying English in order to be ready to compete with students from around the world, it is the United States' turn to wake up and enact a strong language policy, including the implementation of Chinese in grades K-12.

Teacher Preparation

To produce highly-qualified Chinese speakers, preparing teachers will be the first challenge the government will encounter. Based on the estimated report in 2009, it will need:

- 2800 Chinese teachers in the next five years if Chinese were to become as common as German (280,000 students).
- 10,000 Chinese teachers if Chinese were to become as common as French (about 1 million students). (Asia Society, 2009, p.18)

Currently, there are two major routes for school districts to secure Chinese teachers: (1) recruit potential native teachers from Chinese-speaking countries, such as Taiwan and China, and (2) recruit legal aliens into the U.S. who have received undergraduate or graduate degrees in U.S. institutions. With regard to recruiting volunteer Chinese teachers (i.e., guest teachers) in the U.S. K-12 schools, the Office of Chinese Language International Council (Hanban) and the College Board have played a significant role. Presently, the guest teacher program has successfully brought about 150 guest teachers from China in helping the U.S. develop Chinese programs. However, these guest teachers have also encountered difficulties in the school settings, in which many Chinese-speaking teachers must accommodate two distinctly different learning styles of the two cultures, and different teacher perceptions. For example, Wei (2010) indicates that American students believe a *good* teacher must motivate students by designing meaningful activities rather than assigning a large volume of homework, whereas Chinese students perceive the idea of a good teacher quite differently. The researcher reports that a good and responsible (Chinese) teacher will assign a lot of homework and give many tests to fulfill school and (national) exam requirements. In addition to different learning styles among American students, these guest Chinese speakers also have difficulties in effectively communicating with American students.

Teachers who have received degrees in the U.S. institutions are hired directly by school districts but only those with proper immigration documents. The immigration process is very time-consuming and number of visas is limited. For example, each year Congress has limited a cap of 65,000 working visas (H1B), issued to foreigners who had received an U.S. bachelor's degree in addition to 20,000 who received a higher education degree (e.g., master's or doctorate). These potential candidates are required to submit documents for review. If the number of applicants is more than the limit, a random computer selection will be processed. In that case, school districts are faced with losing qualified Chinese teachers.

Once these teachers are on staff in school districts, the next barrier is to license/certify these teachers. In many states, licensing or certifying potential Chinese teachers is a challenge. These Chinese teachers are required to complete certain educational credits to receive a teaching license. The lack of U.S. teacher certification/licensure programs in Chinese has been considered a national concern (Asia Society, 2009). To meet the shortage of teachers, several states, such as New Jersey, Minnesota, and Utah, have launched an alternative route to licensure (Asia Society, 2008) to meet the language needs. The number of qualified prospective teachers from these alternative programs are not sufficient to meet the overall demand in the country. Across the nation, there are very few institutions that focus on Chinese teacher preparation, which exacerbates the shortage of prospective Chinese teachers. The proposed solution to this shortage is to coordinate and to develop "full-fledged" critical language programs in the U.S. institutions (Asia Society, 2009, p. 5) similar to many U.S. higher education European language teacher programs.

To reach the long-term goal as stated previously, Asia Society has presented several potential challenges for implementing Chinese programs in K-12 schools. These challenges include a lack of: (1) national coordination of efforts; (2) teacher education capacity and teacher certifica-

tion mechanisms; (3) capacity for early language learning; (4) K-16 articulation leading to the attainment of high language proficiency; and (5) opportunity to access to learn (Asia Society, 2008, p.6). When these concerns are addressed, the U.S. will be able to provide high quality Chinese teachers.

It is also worth noting that curriculum plays a vital role in establishing all language programs. Previous studies have pointed out that on average, students who take European languages tend to repeatedly relearn what they have been taught; scaffolding is not effectively addressed across the board. Students are essentially exposed to the same body of knowledge at elementary school, middle school, and high school. Brecht (1995) suggests that many language programs are designed to fulfill the general education mission instead of envisioning the expertise mission, which trains proficient speakers to become professionals in various fields. Therefore, it is critical to plan a curriculum that is able to connect various learning stages that ultimately produce communicatively and culturally-competent speakers.

However, when reviewing the current Chinese curricula implemented across the country, this writer has noticed that very few states place emphasis on integrating language skills (e.g., listening, speaking) in the curricula. Rather, most curricula focus on one single aspect of a language skill, such as reading and vocabulary. Integrating all four language skills into the curricula, report Yin, Hakam, and Bacon (2008) including thematic units that conform to the national standards across the board, will help Chinese as world/second language learners develop more comprehensive skills. The researchers posit that both K-12 public school and immersion Chinese programs need to pay extra attention to coordinate among different grade schools to ensure grade-to-grade proficiency level connections.

The curriculum for World Languages in Fairfax County, Virginia, has been considered a pre-eminent curriculum in the nation for implementing thematic units for different language levels. Students are able to connect what they have learned in class with the community where they live, and present what they have found in the class. During that process, students unconsciously apply various strategies in reaching their communicative goals, which in turn motivate students and energize classroom learning environments (Meinbach, Fredericks, & Lrothlein, 2000). Currently, Chinese programs are offered in 4 high schools and 9 elementary schools in Fairfax County, VA., with all schools following the same curriculum, based on thematic unit lessons that aim to build a comprehensive learning environment.

The Chinese Program in Knox County, TN

The Chinese enrollment in the Knox County, TN School District is relatively small compared with the enrollment of K-12 students who take Chinese in different public school systems, such as Fairfax county and L.A. county. In fall 2008, Hardin Valley Academy, a new high school in Knox County, offered the first Chinese program in its school system. The rationale for offering Chinese is to prepare students to be 21st century leaders and to embrace different cultures.

With regard to the Chinese curriculum used in Knox County, the biggest county in East Tennessee, rather than focusing on the number of Chinese characters taught and recognized, the curriculum aims to provide meaningful learning in complying with the national standards, which emphasize the importance of ACTFL's (National Standards, 2010) 5 C's: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. In each lesson, students demonstrate their learning progress through speaking and listening activities.

Challenges Faced by the Chinese Program in Knox County

Similar to the difficulties that LCTLs may encounter in developing language programs, the enrollment of students who take Chinese as a world/second language has not increased as expected. The principal researcher attributes this less-than-expected enrollment to the challenging nature of the course perceived by many American students. Many students are not willing to take a risk in trying an unfamiliar world language that might lower their GPAs. Therefore, they most students choose to take European languages since they have better beginning understanding of them compared with LCTLs such as Chinese (Garrett & Maxwell, 2002). These potential language learners, however, might consider learning Chinese as being difficult due to the logographic writing system and due to the fact of it being rated one of the most difficult languages by Foreign Service Institute (FSI).

In terms of speaking and listening, Chinese is easier to learn in the introductory level when using *pinyin*, a combination of alphabet letters and tones in producing sounds. In addition, in terms of grammatical usages, Chinese is considered easier than other languages for it does change word endings. However, learning to read competently poses a great challenge for Chinese learners (Minnesota Department of Education, 2007). In order to read, Chinese learners need to spend a considerable of time in practicing and recognizing characters so they are able to comprehend the word meaning between the lines.

At the state level, a feasible way to promote the study of the Chinese language in grades K-12 would be to provide incentives to those students who are willing to take Chinese to fulfill their graduation requirements from secondary schools. By suggesting these incentives, the principal researcher refers to providing scholarships and oversea opportunities. *Hanban* has been providing extensive opportunities in this direction. For example, in the past 3 years, students who are interested in learning Chinese are encouraged to apply for the Chinese Bridge, a cultural experience camp in China.

The other challenge in developing a Chinese program for Knox County Schools has been the lack of a local professional network (that other language programs, such as, German, French, Spanish enjoy) in serving an educational platform for curriculum development and lesson improvement. Therefore, collaboration between schools offering Chinese programs across the state must be enhanced. A promising model of building up a learning network in Chinese is through professional workshops. Within a workshop framework, Chinese teachers would be able to provide insight toward developing sharable resources.

Conclusion

In this report, based on Garrett and Maxwell's (2002) research concerning national needs, the principal researcher addresses the needs and trends of Chinese language program in K-12 schools in the U.S. An articulated Chinese program in the schools requires step-by-step planning and collaboration among state-level administrators and higher education institutes.

Across the nation, very few higher education institutions have been able to meet the high demand for Chinese teachers. As previously stated, a shortage of critical language speakers might endanger national security and fail to equip students with linguistic and cultural competence in the 21st century. In addition to existing institutional teacher education programs (Brecht & Walton, 1994) which play a vital role in providing proficient language speakers and prospective teachers, a non-traditional recruitment might be applied in this critical period. For example, Heritage Speakers (HS) could be recruited to shorten the time in meeting the shortage of the prospective Chinese teachers.

In addition, an integrated Chinese curriculum should not focus on one single aspect of learning a second language. Instead, Chinese teachers need to pay extra attention to involve students in meaningful learning activities, which fully support the national standards (National Standards, 2010). At a state level, a Chinese initiative can be launched to promote the increasing importance of Chinese to the state's economy and meet individual needs by recruiting experienced administrators and teachers.

Chinese is considered a baby language program on the basis of enrollment and language statistics in the U.S. These programs need nourishment and careful planning to grow. Wang (2009) indicates that the majority of the Chinese programs are less than 3 years old. Therefore, developing helpful resources and building professional networks seem more important than anything at this time. Like the principal researcher, most Chinese teachers are the only ones who instruct the language (Chinese) in most districts. They need consistent support from the school districts and administrators so they can continue to help American students develop global perspectives demanded in the 21st century.

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Living by Doing: World Language Teaching Through Educational Travel

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As world language teachers in a rural public school in Tennessee, we deal with both students and parents who often do not understand the benefits of learning another language. Some examples follow of what we have heard with each new school year.

“Foreign language is really not needed.”

“What does it have to do with us?”

“Our kids need to learn more about their own country.”

“They are never going to use it.”

“It’s in a category of its own.”

These comments can be accepted as a modern illustration of complacency, a mediocre defense to a challenge in our educational system. When learning a second language is considered a separate category from all other required learning, it becomes an added burden to parents and students who cannot identify with the impact communication has on the world. Language learning is often labeled as inconsequential instead of beneficial to overall student success. In response to these comments, teachers are currently doing everything they can to improve their language instructional methods. They follow the state standards, use new technology, collaborate with other content area teachers, and strive to link education to community and the world through the study of current issues.

Some empirical studies have been conducted investigating the relation of world language acquisition to improved academic performance, as measured by the SAT and ACT tests. A study completed by Cooper (1987) revealed that of 23 metropolitan high schools in the southeastern United States, students who took a world language in high school scored significantly higher on the verbal portion of the SAT than those who did not. Low economic background did not affect students’ performance. In fact, the economically-challenged students academically performed “basically just as well as their more fortunate peers” (Cooper, 1987, p. 385). Another study conducted by Thomas, Collier and Abbott (1993) reported that native English-speaking elementary students in partial immersion French programs scored higher on math and English language arts assessments than those students who were not in a partial immersion program. Yet another study performed by Turnbull, Hart and Lapkin (2003) identified sixth grade students who were in a French immersion program for 3 years who out-scored students in Reading, Writing, and Math assessments who were not in the immersion program. Additionally, a publication of the North Carolina State Board of Education asserts that world language study is appropriate for all students, whether or not they plan to attend college. This resource cited many academic reasons for studying a world language, including higher ACT and SAT scores, stronger English vocabulary skills, a better understanding of English, improved literacy, and

greater cognitive skills and enhanced listening and memory (Robinson & Ward, n.d.). Many higher-order thinking skills are required to be successful on large scale assessments such as the ACT or SAT. According to Weatherford (1986), skills such as problem solving and critical thinking can be accomplished through studying a second language and culture. This correlation between world language acquisition to improved academic performance on standardized assessments exists for students with low socio-economic backgrounds in rural school settings, and with both elementary and secondary level students. The literature supports the concept that, "Increased cognitive skills, higher achievement in other academic areas, and higher standardized test scores are all benefits of learning a world language" (Stewart, 2005, p. 13). This has explicit implications for further the current inquiry into the presence of world language study in rural schools, the impact of language learning at the secondary level, and the continued investigation of the impact of language learning on student achievement test scores.

The results of research studies completed by Cooper (1987), Thomas et al. (1993), Stewart (2005), and Turnbull (2003) support the efforts of world language teachers, both urban and rural, to search for more ways to equip students with strong language skills which will in turn, enable them to perform well on standardized tests. Further, teachers want to equip their students with the tools needed to contribute to the improvement of their community and compete in local or global job markets. Willis (1998) posited that in order to put U.S. students on par with students in other countries, world language must become part of the core K-12 curriculum. Therefore, world language teachers must continue to believe that their content area merits a place in a K-12 standardized curriculum, and they have a prime opportunity in today's technologically-linked global society, to produce students who value world language and all that it encompasses.

World language teachers can acquire a new vision of connecting daily required language instruction to real world application, and this can be accomplished through educational travel tours. What we teach in theory within the classroom is applied in the real world, creating a new holistic vision of world language. In this article, the authors share their experiences with educational travel, its connection to Tennessee state curriculum standards and the overall concept of world language study.

World language teachers can acquire a new vision of connecting daily required language instruction to real world application. This can be done accomplished through educational travel tours. What we teach in theory within the classroom can indeed be applied in the real world, creating a new holistic vision of world language. In this article, the authors share their experiences with educational travel, its connection to Tennessee state curriculum standards and the over-all concept of world language in the 21st century's global arena.

Connecting Language Curriculum to Experience

Culture becomes an additional focus when we teach world language. Winer (2007) in fact, argues that, "The question of the nature of culture associated with a world language is complex" (p. 505). The Tennessee State Department of Education (2010) includes three state cur-

curriculum standards for instruction of modern and world languages that directly address this point.

Standard Number Two, “The study of another language enables students to understand different cultures, develop an awareness of other peoples’ world views, and learn about contributions of other cultures to the world at large.”

Standard Number Three, “World language learning expands educational experience of all students by connecting with other disciplines in the school curriculum either formally or informally.”

Standard Number Five, “Students are highly motivated to excel in their study of a second language when they see immediate applications for the skills they learn.”

Connecting Language Instruction with Educational Travel

The tool we have chosen to make a direct connection to language instruction and other disciplines is educational travel. Being able to teach a communicative skill and create a world link where learners can share their culture and learn similarities and differences among other cultures, is an invaluable opportunity to impact their perspectives of the world. Taking skills out of a book and making them relevant is sometimes difficult but certainly not impossible. As world language teachers, we provide the tools necessary for language usage. However, simple classroom usage of a language transforms students into life-long learners when their experience with the language is put to the test in an immersion situation such as educational travel.

Throughout the tour experience we discuss in the next section of this article, students were observed using the target language in airports, restaurants, banks, tourist shops, and other venues. Bringing the world to your classroom is very challenging but taking a risk by moving your classroom to the world is quite an adventure. The results are usually more positive and remain an everlasting memory and, adds Schofield (2000), “The connections students make often last a lifetime” (p. 102). Traveling abroad can dispel misconceptions and myths about other cultures that American students might have. “Foreign language study tends to help dissolve misconceptions and often helps create a desire to understand” (Weatherford, 1986, p. 4).

Through language, one learns a multitude of things. In every culture it is through language that all aspects of a culture are shared. Peoples’ daily lives, traditions, and ways of thinking are only a few of them. Language reveals similarities and differences among many peoples and brings people together. In a world that has grown smaller through the increased use of technology, the facility of people to reach out globally has become a just a keystroke away. This is where the importance of studying world languages is most apparent, and where educational travel can be the next logical and efficacious step in connecting students to the world.

Tour Preparations

Educational travel programs are abundant, however many schools and world language teachers might not use travel programs for several reasons: They are expensive, especially for economically-challenged students; organizing tours for taking a group of students abroad takes too much work; the school board may not approve the program; and parents may be apprehensive of youth travel. Even given these potential challenges to preparing travel abroad experiences for students, we want world language teachers to know that it can be done, and it is an instructional tool that impacts students for a lifetime.

A Spanish teacher and I (a French teacher), organized a 12-day trip to England, France and Spain with an educational tour company to take place in the summer. Our high school student body is approximately 550-600 students and our school district receives Title I funding with approximately 72% of the students in the district being on fee waivers and free and reduced lunch programs. We planned and executed the educational travel program independently from our school district and established guidelines for students to be eligible to participate in the travel tour which included the students being currently or formerly enrolled in a world language class in grades 9-12 and having a passing average in the class.

Over 50 students and parents attended the initial informational meeting. As the travel information was disseminated, and our first planning meeting approached, approximately 35 students and parents attended. The final size of the group that traveled was 25. For many participants, money was a factor, but providing ample time for them to prepare financially was advantageous. As the group leaders of this educational tour, my fellow language teacher and I also made every effort to provide encouragement and support addressing these concerns, and attempted to prepare for every possible contingency to ease parents' fears of sending their children so far away.

At this point in the preparations for traveling, many activities were planned and later carried out with the student travelers that directly correlated to other Tennessee content area standards and that we felt were important for the student travelers to know. Some of these activities included research on points of interest, map reading of cities and underground transportation, review of cultural norms, travel etiquette and preparation, and emergency procedures.

Americans travel for both leisure and business purposes. They shop online and purchase a multitude of items from anywhere in the world, and via Internet, connect with people from other countries through online social networking (e.g., SKYPE). However, do these Americans speak another language while participating in these global communication activities? People learn a second language for various reasons. Some learn it because they love to travel and believe that learning a particular language will enable them to better understand a country and its people, while others need to learn a second language due to economic necessity (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994). We had been developing our students' language abilities in the classroom throughout the school year, and the time had come for us to transition the students into an immersion experience where they could apply what they had learned from the curriculum and par-

ents and students participating in the tour were prepared and very excited to embark on their once in a lifetime journey to another country. For several travelers this was their first experience outside of the continental United States. For others this was their first trip outside the state of Tennessee. However, the hope for us as language teachers was that some of these students would seek out other opportunities such as foreign exchange programs and study abroad to continue their travel experiences and to grow in their language learning after this travel experience. This hope began to be realized when, on many occasions during the trip students came to us and expressed their excitement about having used their new language skills independently in real life situations such as exchanging money in Barcelona, ordering lunch in Biarritz, and talking to native speakers as they bought their souvenirs from various tourist shops. These experiences helped the students realize that applying what they learned in the classroom was not as difficult as they thought, and continuing to further their language learning experiences was within their reach.

During the latter part of our trip, as the group traveled through the South of France by tour bus, we asked the students to participate in a reflective writing activity. We began with the question, “What would you tell a friend are some do’s and don’ts of traveling?” The second question was, “Do you think this trip has changed you in any way, and if so, how?” Finally, we asked the students, “What have you seen, heard, or learned about other cultures and people on this trip?” Some student reflections follow.

“Honestly, with the people and cultures I didn’t really know what to expect, but I’ve realized that it’s actually a very small world and that stereotypes are bad, and generalizations are not always right. This is definitely something you have to go into with an open mind and be ready for anything.”
(Martha,¹ 18, Senior – Spanish student)

“It changed my views on the people in other countries, in that they all don’t fit the stereotypical ways people in the USA and other places view them.”
(Steven, 18, Senior- French student)

“I have discovered some of the stereotypes I’ve heard just aren’t true.”
(Sarah, 17, Junior - French student)

“I have experienced their culture and way of life. I now have respect for the way they do things differently. I have tried their food and eating it the way they do, and I have more respect for their culture and traditions.”
(John, 17, Junior – Spanish student)

“I had assumed this before, but I really got to learn this first-hand on our tour. People are just the same as we are here, only doing different things sometimes and speaking a different language”...that’s definitely something a person can

get from travel, a better world perspective. How differences don't necessarily have to be annoyances, and how they can really make our lives much more interesting."

(James, 17, Junior – Spanish student)

These reflections show evidence that a change occurred within these students on many levels. First, when the students returned home from their travel experience, we observed their willingness to share their newly-discovered world perspectives. Second, the students valued their world language learning and wanted to pursue a higher level of proficiency. Third, experiences on the trip sparked a desire in the students to promote global citizenship.

Us and Them

Us and *them*...often, this is the way Americans approach people and situations that are different from themselves. Different does not always mean bad. We Americans do not have to be offensive in or offended by a new cultural experience. By being knowledgeable about issues that impact us and having the ability to comprehend others' perspectives on those same issues, enables us to engage in world events without prejudice. It also alters how we approach our future participation as one country in a greater international community; other countries have learned to do the same. Finally, it gives us balance in our ability to compete world-wide, without barriers, as true global citizens.

Obama Versus McCain in Paris, France?

While on a leader orientation for this educational tour, the last thing the authors expected to see in the middle of the busy streets of Paris, France was a larger-than-life poster of both U.S. presidential candidates of the 2008 campaign with the caption "*Qui va gagner?*" (Who will win?) Of course, nobody knew what the outcome of the election would be at that time. However, it was an eye opener for us, and we believed it would be the same for the students learning that Parisians had an interest in an American presidential election. This stunning experience also made us realize that as educators, that this is one of the most important reasons for American students to experience learning a world language. On this educational tour, students experienced other people who were bilingual or even multilingual, and who took an interest in the activities of countries other than their own. Are we Americans as aware of *them* as they are of *us*? Do we going to continue on the path of ethnocentrism and monolingualism? Or, are we really going to make an effort through the education of our young people to think beyond our borders?

Bilingualism and multilingualism have many benefits to society. Americans who are fluent in more than one language can enhance America's economic competitiveness abroad, maintain its political and security interests, and work to promote an understanding of cultural diversity within the United States. For example, international trade specialists, overseas media correspondents, diplomats, airline employees, and national security personnel need to be familiar with other languages and cultures to do their jobs well. Teachers, healthcare providers, customer ser-

vice representatives, and law enforcement personnel also serve their constituencies more effectively when they can reach across languages and cultures. Developing the language abilities of the students now in school will improve the effectiveness of the work force later (Marcos, 1998).

Views and perspectives change when learning a world language, and that impacts the individual and collective attitude toward people who speak other languages (Winer, 2007). Tools exist for educators that can support this new vision of taking the language classroom to the world. Further, when teachers support this transition, some students will make their travel experience more than a memory, and truly a part of their future experiences in college or in a career. “In an age of vanishing borders and overcrowded classrooms, the lure of studying abroad is growing stronger by the year. Globalization has made students hungry for international experience, and for the critical edge it brings in an increasingly competitive job market” (Schofield, 2000, p. 102).

Conclusion

To know how to communicate in more than one language makes people *marketable* while also giving them a versatility that monolingual people do not have. Young people today who are preparing to enter college and who should focus on their desired careers, as well as for those preparing to enter the work force benefit greatly from having the experience of learning and using another language. “Our educational and political leaders should be reminded that the vast majority of the inhabitants of our planet are bilingual (if not multilingual). “Educating the future generations bilingually is clearly in the interest of our country” (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994, p. 167). This article is about just such an opportunity. Student educational travel is a very effective method for reinforcing world language instruction and bringing that language alive.

We live in a world community that speaks more than five thousand distinct languages. We cannot hope to understand ourselves and our own place in this world without understanding the enormous impact of linguistic and cultural diversity of the human social condition (Bialystok & Hakuta 1994, p. 197).

As world language teachers who understand the value of knowing other languages and their respective cultures, we need to seek out ways to meet this challenge for the sake of our students and their future contributions to the world. Working toward this global end means changing attitudes and perspectives of younger generations. Education must move students from individualism to globalism in thought and approach to world citizenship.

Note

1. Martha and all other student names in this paper are pseudonyms assigned to the participants in order to maintain anonymity.

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Promoting Digital Literacies: Critical Inquiry and Expression in the L2 Classroom

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The written essay has long been the medium of choice through which students conduct and present information, whether it is a personal reflection piece, or a research paper. This article examines the feasibility of merging intellectual inquiry with creative experimentation by using multimedia compositions in conjunction with, or as an alternative to, the traditional composition. The article begins by asserting that today's student must not only have digital literacies, but must also be able to compose in multiple media. Subsequently, the paper explores the pedagogical implications involved in promoting digital literacies and composition by examining issues of course design, how to maintain depth of investigation, the intersection of course content and multimedia skill training, as well as judicious assessment.

The role of technology in education is of increasing debate in academia. Those of us who teach the research and critical thinking skills which culminate in the academic essay – at any level and in any language -- recognize that our students are engaging in increasingly diverse discourses, distributed to them by a wide variety of media, which imposes upon us the need to question our pedagogical choices when considering the role of technology in -- and outside of -- the classroom. Many would agree with Eric Goldman, PhD. (2010), Lecturer in the Department of English at the University of Connecticut, when he asserts that, “students today have lost the ability to do in-depth textual analysis because technology encourages them to jump from one thing to the next without taking the time to absorb, grapple with, and critically consider the material they’re consuming.” While I do not disagree with Dr. Goldman’s observations, I hesitate to argue that our students’ capricious nature, when using media, is cause for disregarding technology’s attributes within the academic context. In fact, I would argue that – when used prudently – multimedia can enhance our students’ learning experiences by allowing them to interact with the material in a way that pen and paper simply cannot do. This interaction opens the door for critical thinking, logical sequencing, and aesthetic consideration, so as to effectively merge intellectual inquiry with creative experimentation. As such, there is an inherent opportunity for us, as instructors, to teach our students how to use technology in meaningful ways so as to sharpen their analytical, research and writing skills.

Digital Literacies and the Multimedia Composition

Academic research and composition are noticeably moving away from printed materials and embracing multimedia. In order to explore the impact this transition is having on Academia, it

is necessary to have a clear understanding of what the term multimedia denotes.

A medium is (1) a means of communication or expression, and (2) a condition or environment in which something may function or flourish. Therefore, multimedia [...] is the use of multiple means of communication or expression that enables a more flexible and creative environment of learning and intellectual growth. (Nguyen, 2009, para. 3)

Therefore, a multimedia composition, is a kind of composition that is not restricted to the typed page. Gunn (2009), however, defines composition as an “effective communication by any means available -- not only pen and paper” (para. 2). It might include audio, video, interactivity, hypertext, non-linear organization, and layering of information. It may involve such things as blogs, wikis, videos, social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, photography, or programs such as Audacity and Moviemaker.

Why use Multimedia Compositions?

The inquiry of why one should consider employing multimedia compositions in an academic course intrinsically calls into question the traditional essay, or composition. As Nguyen (2009) asserts, “There is no reason, of course, for traditional academic writing – in the students’ case, the 5-7 page paper – to be the only form available for conducting academic inquiry or communicating results, except by dint of tradition” (para.7). The Modern Language Association (2009) clearly supports this idea, as its latest edition of guidelines requires that the word *print* be included at the end of each bibliographical source of a printed nature, since the printed text is no longer considered the default medium. This new guideline reflects the reality that much of today’s research is conducted using multimedia sources.

As academic research and composition increasingly transition away from printed material and towards multimedia, instructors face both hurdles and benefits. As Nyugen (2009) states:

...done properly, [multimedia composition] allows students to be creative and to use multiple types of analysis and expression to do research and present results; this type of flexible learning accommodates students who think visually and audibly, who may not be interested in academics as a profession but who are excited by intellectual inquiry, and who are, ironically, independent thinkers who do not like the artificial constraints of academic disciplines. (para. 8)

This suggests that the new media with which our students research and compose bring about new forms of literacy. Gocsik (n.d.), who teaches at Dartmouth’s Institute for Writing & Rhetoric notes that:

Our students typically don’t read newspapers; they don’t thumb through news

magazines; they don't watch the network news. Instead, they scan websites, from CNN to YouTube to Digg, where information is constructed via text, hypertext, video, and audio. Equally important to writing instructors is that students are writing with this new media, composing blogs, contributing to wikis, creating web pages, and crafting podcasts and videos. (para. 1)

In other words, new media create new literacies. Kathleen Blake Yancey (1994), President of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), agrees by redefining what it means to be educated:

No longer [...] can students be considered truly educated by mastering reading and writing alone. The ability to negotiate through life by combining words with pictures with audio and video to express thoughts will be the mark of the educated student.” (p. 305)

Yancey (1994) highlights the existence of oral and print literacies and suggests that visual literacy be added. “Specifically...the literacy of the screen, which...parallels oral literacy and print literacy, [should] become a third literacy required of all undergraduates” (p. 305).

From Consuming to Composing

In order to develop this increasingly necessary literacy, students must not only be consumers of new media, they must learn to compose with them; hence, the need for the multimedia assignment in the writing classroom. This type of composition brings about a plethora of benefits. For example, multimedia assignments offer the students the opportunity to reach a broader audience than just the instructor. Because of this ability to reach a broad audience, multimedia compositions become a digital archive for future students. They open the door to further questioning, investigation, and conversation about the topic at hand, allowing the research of today's students to be the spring-board for tomorrow's students. In the world language field, a particular plus to multimedia compositions is that oral components allow students to practice Presentational Speaking, which is one of the fundamentals (part of state requirements) of second language (L2) teaching. Interpersonal language is also facilitated by means of multimedia assignments, as the latter lend themselves to collaboration.

To that end, multimedia compositions encourage students to consider not just what they're saying, but how they're saying it – the aesthetics of design. Gocsik (n.d.) shares an anecdote on Dartmouth College's website of when a group of students was working on a short film and they reported to their instructor that they had spent an hour heatedly arguing about a single transition in their film. As the professor notes:

These were students who often overlooked transitions in their written work. They'd never fully understood, prior to making the film, how a weak transition in a paper might lose or irritate a reader. Composing with new media, they had been able to place themselves simultaneously in the position of writer and viewer—

in part because they had long been viewers/readers of film and understood its language and its nuances. (para. 16)

In a similar fashion, multimedia assignments allow students to place themselves in the position of speaker and listener, whereby improving their interpretive skills while simultaneously refining the verbal transitions in their presentational and interpersonal speaking.

Pedagogical Implications

Step 1: Course Design.

How does one meaningfully incorporate multimedia into a course? Because *technology for technology's sake* is not useful, we must take a critical look at our own technological competence. This brings up a few issues for us as educators: How technologically proficient are we? How can we expect multimedia literacy from my students if we, ourselves, are not multimedia literate?

In order for an L2 class activity to go smoothly, it must first be effectively modeled. This calls us to ask ourselves what kind of multimedia modeling we are doing on a regular basis in our own classrooms. It is necessary to take a critical look at not just if we are using technology in the classroom, but how. Is it meaningful, speaking to the essence of the lesson, or is it used superficially so as to be able to claim that technology is being incorporated into the teaching, even if the type of technology used has little to do with the subject matter at hand?

Course content and the multimedia choices we make must go hand-in-hand. “Technology services pedagogy, rather than vice-versa, and it must be integrated conceptually into the course” (Nguyen, 2009, para. 27). Nguyen suggests that two questions be considered early-on when planning course goals. First, how can multimedia transform the teaching in a fundamental way? And secondly, how can student work be transformed in a fundamental way? There are two ways to approach the integration of multimedia composition into a course – either as a special course project, or as a continual thread which runs throughout the course. Some instructors shy away from multimedia projects because these projects are too time consuming. This is an indication of technology being perceived as a competition for course time and that course content will consequently have to be scaled-back in order to make room for a multimedia project. Instructors also commonly fear that multimedia assignments do not encourage, and may even hinder, the development of traditional essay. But traditional writing doesn't have to be sacrificed for multimedia composition. Dartmouth's Institute for Writing and Rhetoric (Gocsik, n.d.) suggests, “When crafting a multimedia assignment, consider asking students to do a combination of assignments—in other words, to write a paper and create a film, to keep a blog as preparation for a paper, or to create a podcast that extends a research paper, etc” (para. 17). In other words, the multimedia assignment may be used as a point of departure for a traditional essay rather than in lieu of it.

Step 2: Training the Students

If conventional reading and writing are learned skills, then so is multimedia composition. As

such, like any skill, it can be taught. It is important to remember that, as Nguyen (2009) points out:

All the skills of conventional writing must be present for there to be effective multimedia composition, which means that a sense of logic, organization, argumentation, citation, and rhetoric are the basic skills of multimedia composition. Beyond this, multimedia deals with a sense of design concerning color, typography, composition, navigation, and hypertext, as well as the technical basics of particular programs being used. (para. 25)

While there is an unavoidable upfront time commitment of teaching the students the program(s) to be used for their multimedia assignments, a few simple ideas will help these multimedia projects to not only not compete with course content, but even enhance it.

First, start small. It's important to select only one or two programs that you will require students to use in order to do their multimedia compositions. Depth -- not breadth -- is the key. Plan this before the start of the semester so that the media may be a transformative element of the course.

Second, consider the question of training. Most students come to the table with more technological savvy than the instructors do, so training might be less time-consuming than expected. However, there are some questions to consider: Will you do in-class training, or does the program come with a built-in training module which students can do at home? Do you plan on training in the target language? Is there a TA or IT or Language Lab staff member who is willing to train the students? The answers to these questions will help to determine how much class time to reserve for training purposes.

Step 3: Creation

Many multimedia projects are, by nature, shareable. They beg for an audience. Additionally, they may require more than one participant and therefore may be collaborative in nature. Their public nature comes with a big payoff for students, as they want to share their work of investigative art to friends and family. However, this public nature also comes with huge responsibility and a need for maturity. Last year, in fact, one of my ivy-league bound students displayed a shocking lack of maturity when he used an online video project utilizing Voicethread as an opportunity to present his research – in almost flawless Spanish – while wearing only his underwear. Thankfully I was the only other person who viewed his project, as his student account was linked to my instructor account. In short, it is good practice to preview student-produced media compositions before unleashing them to a broader audience.

Step 4: Assessment

One of the biggest challenges of assigning multimedia compositions is how to grade them. How do we grade an assignment like this? How do we evaluate creativity? What about time investment? Does our knowledge of how much time our students invest in these projects cause

us to inflate grades? What can be measured objectively and what requires us to exercise subjective discernment?

Here are some helpful guidelines for effective and judicious grading of multimedia essays: First, it is imperative to make all expectations clear, upfront. Just as we would not only provide a topic for a student to consider for a traditional 5-7 page paper and provide such guidelines as *Times New Roman 12-font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins*, so too must we give clear guidelines for multimedia projects. Directions for a Voicethread assignment, for example, might indicate that the students are to upload 5 photos depicting the theme provided by the instructor, and to narrate 4 to 5 sentences (oral or written) for each of those photos, while incorporating as much vocabulary from the chapter as possible. Assignment-specific rubrics which are distributed to the students at the outset of the assignment may be helpful for clarifying expectations at the beginning and facilitating objective grading at the end.

Although clear and timely expectations will assist objective grading, a modicum of subjectivity is inescapable. Subjectivity is always part of our grading process, especially in the Humanities, as evidenced by the number of times instructors have all hemmed and hawed over giving a traditional composition a *B+* or a *B*. In the case of world languages, this is especially true since we grapple with judiciously grading compositions in which content and linguistic control are not necessary in sync. Multimedia compositions, like all work that merges investigative findings with an artistic process, involves subjective evaluation. However, one should use caution when exercising too much subjectivity when grading these types of assignments, as it is easy to be *wowed* by a multimedia project, even when it's content-poor. To that end, it is important to look for relevant uses of media; the media should inform student choices within the composition. It should be a transformative force, guiding the way students think and compose, not just be an illustrated paper. For that reason, peer evaluations can be helpful, as peers are less likely to be dazzled by the technology involved since they are probable technological equals.

Revisions should be encouraged, just as they would be in a written composition. The revision process differs slightly from a traditional essay, however. The multimedia composition "doesn't produce discrete drafts; instead, composers will usually refine their work within the same draft" (Gunn, 2009, para. 3). Although the revision process may vary depending on the media involved, a revision may be even more essential in a multimedia piece than in a traditional essay, so as to maintain its relevancy.

Conclusion

As society changes, so must our modes of critical inquiry and expression. The 21st century literate person must possess a wide range of abilities and competencies -- many literacies (Valenza, 2009). Once the pedagogical implications and questions of course design have been taken into consideration, multimedia compositions make multiple literacies possible by allowing students to use a variety of tools and media to creatively conduct research, analyze, and express themselves critically, even in another language.

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