

REF

PENNSYLVANIA LANGUAGE FORUM



Pennsylvania State Modern
Language Association

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ABOUT

Pennsylvania Language Forum (PLF) is the semiannual online publication of the *Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association*. It features articles on teaching strategies, lesson plans, project ideas, and research by and for world language teachers in Pennsylvania.

PSMLA Members will receive an invitation to view the journal online through the publications section of our website. A digital archive of previous issues is also available online. Visit <https://psmla.org/pennsylvania-language-forum> to access PLF online.

SUBMISSIONS

Article submissions are accepted on a rolling basis but must be received by February 1 to be considered for publication in the Spring issue of PLF or by August 1 for the Fall issue.

Contributors have the option of submitting their article for peer review. To learn more about that process, please see p. 62 for further details. All other submissions should follow the guidelines outlined below.

Submission Guidelines

- PSMLA members may submit titled articles related to teaching and language education.
- All submissions must be written in English, though examples of lessons or student work may be in the target language.
- All articles must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document or a Google Doc, formatted using Times New Roman 12-point font and be double-spaced. PDF article submissions will not be considered for publication.
- Scanned documents and photographs that accompany the article submission must be clearly identified and labeled. They must be submitted as a JPG or PNG.
- All documents of the submission must include the following information:
 - Name(s) of author(s)
 - Affiliation(s)
 - Language(s) taught
 - Intended levels, when relevant
 - Release Form(s) (available at <https://psmla.org/pennsylvania-language-forum>)

Submissions must be submitted online using the submission link on the [PSMLA website](#).

All authors and any co-authors must be current PSMLA members. PSMLA members whose work is chosen for publication will be notified via email and will receive a final copy of their submission for approval before publication.

Contact PLF

PSMLA is not currently accepting ads for the *Pennsylvania Language Forum*. Vendors wishing to advertise should consult the Advertising Manager's page on the PSMLA website (www.psmla.org). All other questions may be directed to Christina Huhn or Nathan Campbell, Co-Editors of PLF, at PALanguageForum@psmla.org.

President's Message



John Grande
President
Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association

This year looks very different than any of our past ones, does it not? Every aspect of our life has changed. As we strive to not let the presence of the pandemic cripple us, we focus on trying to stay physically and mentally healthy. Easier said than done!

Plans for what our “schools” will look like change daily. Districts that announce plans for the coming year warn us that they are in constant flux as unforeseen events occur.

In addition to all of this, our nation is dealing with the effects of cultural and social injustice in our country. Daily, we witness a lack of understanding which leads to the mistreatment of the person who is “different from me”. I believe that as World Language educators, the cultivation of understanding and the appreciation of those differences lead to gaining new perspectives. It is what we are all about as teachers.

The shifting sands under our feet, require ultimate flexibility when planning lessons for the coming year. Social and emotional learning must be woven into our instruction. Our students are the vulnerable ones. Whether we are face-to-face, hybrid or in a virtual environment, our lessons need to be rigorous in content. Yet, we also need to establish an element of trust among our students and a sense of belonging. Our main message to them is that we trust and care for each other. This should be the message they take into a diverse society. It is a tall order!

PSMLA is here to offer a few opportunities to make your planning a little easier. Please enjoy this PLF newsletter with lots of insights in planning for your classroom. As you know, our Fall Conference has been postponed until fall of 2021. Meanwhile, stay connected to PSMLA through our web page www.psmla.org. Take advantage of our “Teacher’s Toolbox” to find helpful websites and learning activities. Pages will be updated with new links to webinars, podcasts and other opportunities regularly.

Finally, whether we are face-to-face, hybrid or virtual, I hope our 2020-21 school year is healthy, and filled with unexpected surprises and successful strategies that work better than expected in each and every one of our classrooms. May this temporary blip in our teaching style lead us to newly discovered talents within ourselves!

All the best,

John Grande

Editors' Message



Nathan Campbell & Christina Huhn
Co-Editors, *Pennsylvania Language Forum*
Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association

Welcome to the Fall 2020 issue of the *Pennsylvania Language Forum*!

In our spring edition, you may have noticed a blending of the PSMLA Newsletter and the *Pennsylvania Language Forum* (PLF). This combined format will continue to provide information on current activities from PSMLA with articles contributed by your PSMLA colleagues.

We recognize the challenge that we all are facing during this unprecedented and uncertain time in education. As a complement to your work as educators, the editors informally surveyed world language students from across the state about their perceived learning experiences during the spring shutdown. We hope that you will enjoy their insights and find them encouraging as you continue to navigate these unique learning conditions.

While PK-12 and post-secondary have many differences, the articulation between all levels of language education is an important one, and in an effort to promote expanded World Language Studies in Pennsylvania, the editors present a new feature offering a profile of a program of study from one of our leading PA universities. This is an opportunity for our state's universities and colleges to highlight what makes their program special and inform our readers about unique options available to future world language majors.

Regardless of level, the diverse needs of our learner remain at the forefront of our work, and this issue also includes several contributed articles focusing on this important topic.

Last but certainly not least, throughout the history of the PA Language Forum, many scholars have contributed excellent original research and research driven articles, and the addition of the Peer Review component to our journal continues that long tradition. Beginning on p. 41 we feature 2 articles that have undergone a blind peer-review process.

We hope you enjoy this Fall issue!

Christina and Nathan, your co-editors

palanguageforum@psmla.org

PSMLA News Highlights

2020 NECTFL Teacher of the Year

Megan Flinchbaugh, Manheim Central High School (PSMLA)



Megan Flinchbaugh

PSMLA's 2019 Teacher of the Year, Megan Flinchbaugh, was selected from among twelve candidates in the Northeast Conference vying for the prestigious award. Megan will represent the Northeast Conference at the National Language Teacher of the Year competition at the ACTFL Convention in November 2020. According to NECTFL, "the award for the National Language Teacher of the Year is intended to elevate the status and the public profile of the language teaching profession at the state, regional and national levels by recognizing the individuals chosen for this award." PSMLA is pleased to have our own TOY be one of five national finalists for this important role. Learn more about her classroom and the award at the [NECTFL website](#).

PSMLA Exemplary Programs (PEP)

Given the extraordinary circumstances caused by the pandemic and the required constraints placed on school districts, PSMLA decided in May of 2020 to the following:

1. 2019 PEP Award schools will have the option:

- to submit an application in February 2021 OR
- to not re-submit, thereby retaining their current status for 1 additional year.



NOTE: For those schools that choose to retain their status, this might be a fine opportunity to begin to gather evidence and plan for "how" to meet the current indicators.

NOTE: Current 2020 PEP Awards continue to be valid through December 2021.

2. Any school (current or new) may submit a PEP application in February 2021.

3. The indicators will remain unchanged save normal adjustments and updates that are made on an ongoing basis.

4. PEP will continue to accept both hard-copy and online applications with the intent of transitioning to all applications being submitted online.

The objective of PEP is to best serve, support, and improve World Language learning.

PSMLA Fall 2020 Conference postponed

PSMLA announced this past spring its decision to postpone our 2020 Conference that was scheduled to be held in the Philadelphia area October 2020.

The PSMLA Fall Conference will return to Philadelphia in October 2021! The conference will be held at the Philadelphia Marriott West in West Conshohocken. Be sure to read our weekly PSMLA News mailings for forthcoming details!

Meanwhile, don't miss our ongoing series of webinars that have been offered to our membership during the fall of 2020 to help with continued professional development.

PSMLA Exemplary Program

2020 Awards Showcase

In honor of the national “2005 Year of Languages”, PSMLA began an award program to recognize and honor Exemplary PA high school foreign language Programs (PEP). All PA high schools (public, parochial, private, charter) are encouraged to SHOWCASE their exemplary programs!

To participate, high schools must submit documented evidence that they meet the rigorous criteria established by PSMLA – with signatures of the school superintendent, principal, and supervisor or department chair to attest to the accuracy of the information submitted.

PEP criteria are detailed in the form of the 11 Indicators and the PEP Rubric (www.psmla.org). The PEP Rubric serves as a BLUEPRINT to assist schools by helping them to evaluate their world language programs and by providing concrete goals for improvement, as needed. The two- year awards may be earned at four levels: Globe, Bronze Globe, Silver Globe, and Golden Globe.

PSMLA believes that all PA students deserve exemplary foreign language programs! Therefore, PEP is not a competition; every school that meets and provides the required evidence receives a commensurate award.

GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS

Academy of Notre Dame de Namur, Villanova, 2005-20*
Gettysburg Area High School, Gettysburg Area S.D., Gettysburg, 2015-20
Merion Mercy Academy, Lower Marion S.D., Merion Station, 2015-20
North Hills Senior High School, North Hills S.D., Ross Twp., 2016-21
Owen J. Roberts High School, Owen J. Roberts S.D., Pottstown, 2013-20
Palisades High School, Palisades S.D., Kintnersville, 2020-21
Penncrest High School, Rosetree Media S.D., Media, 2014-21
Pittsburgh Allderdice High School, Pittsburgh S.D., Pittsburgh, 2007-20
Plymouth Whitemarsh High School, Colonial S.D., Plymouth Meeting, 2019-20
Upper Moreland High School, Upper Moreland Twp. S.D., Willow Grove, 2009-20
Upper St. Clair High School, Upper St. Clair S.D., Upper St. Clair, 2019-20
Vincentian Academy, Pittsburgh, 2019-20



SILVER GLOBE AWARDS

Abington Senior High School, Abington S.D., Abington, 2013-20
Chartiers Valley High School, Chartiers Valley S.D., Bridgeville, 2017-20
Gateway High School, Gateway S.D., Monroeville, 2018-21
Greater Latrobe Senior High School, Greater Latrobe S.D., Latrobe, 2019-20
North Allegheny Senior & Intermediate High School,
North Allegheny S.D., Wexford, 2020-21
Saucon Valley Senior High School, Saucon Valley S.D., Hellertown, 2019- 20
Upper Merion Area High School, Upper Merion Area S.D., King of Prussia, 2019 -20



BRONZE GLOBE AWARDS

Great Valley High School, Great Valley S.D., Malvern, 2019-20



GLOBE AWARDS

Boiling Springs High School, South Middleton S.D., Boiling Springs, 2017-20
Delaware Valley High School, Delaware Valley S.D., Milford, 2015-20
Eastern Lebanon High School, Eastern Lebanon County S.D. Myerstown, 2019-20
Honesdale High School, Wayne Highlands S.D., Honesdale, 2020-21
Titusville Area High School, Titusville Area S.D., Titusville, 2017-20

(*Years listed represent years of consecutive PEP Awards.)

[View the complete PSP school profiles on our website](#)

Learning during a pandemic

We asked students around the state to share their reactions to transitional learning during the Spring 2020 statewide school shutdown. Here are a few of their thoughts.

It was hard knowing that I couldn't just walk up to my teacher's desk to ask a question, I had to wait for an email response or schedule a zoom meeting. – 10th grade

I missed having conversations with my peers and classmates and yes, making faces at my friend on the other side of the classroom. Over the weeks, the most engaging and fun aspects of learning were sapped due to a lack of connection. – University

How did your education online compare with that of your brick and mortar experience?

I found that I did better in some classes online than I would have in person. However, when online, we lost the ability to do different activities and have different ways of learning. For example, my one class would complete an 8-page journal format every week. This got extremely boring and repetitive as I completed them for 5 weeks. If we were in school, we would be completing a variety of activities that would help all learning styles. – 10th grade

It was challenging to judge when to engage in class conversations when we were not in the same physical space. – University

The biggest challenge I had was time management. Procrastinating and doing work last minute were something so that I struggled with daily. – 9th grade

What was the biggest challenge in online learning?

Every week felt the same: working for hours each day trying to understand the material and then finally finishing the work for the week only to be handed a new list of assignments the next day. I knew I couldn't slack off because I still needed to learn, but I also was tired of staring at a computer for 3-4 hours each day. – 10th grade

Learning...pandemic (cont.)

I gained appreciation for all the little and big things about in-person instruction that typically make learning a joy. I also grew in gratitude for amazing professors who were intentional about checking in on their students not only academically, but personally.

This situation was just as hard on instructors as learners, by my professors never wavered in their encouragement and care. – University

What did you appreciate most about the online experience?

I liked that I could get my school done in like 2 hours. – 10th grade

The best part about online school was that if you stayed motivated and on task, you could be finished with your work within a few hours. – 10th grade

My teachers were willing to take the time to help me individually. – 11th grade

Online language learning seemed to work well enough with synchronous classes at the college level. However, I imagine it would have been much less effective with a completely asynchronous format at an introductory level. – University

If it becomes safe again to go to school and I had an option, I would definitely choose to be in-person again. – 10th grade

What did you appreciate most about the online experience?

Online learning definitely made me realize how much I took school for granted. I wish I wouldn't have, because now I would give anything to go back to school. When we are able to return, I will be so happy to go back to school and see all my teachers that I won't even mind having to do a lot of homework! – 10th grade

Being quarantined without seeing any of my friends was a really rough time. School was an outlet to connect with kids my age. – 9th grade

College & University Spotlight

Institution Name & Location:

Millersville University, Millersville, PA

Web Address:

<https://www.millersville.edu/languages>

Contributed by: Susanne Nimmrichter, Ph.D., associate professor

Approximate number of World language majors each year: 50+



World Language Programs

- *BA in Language & Culture Studies with concentrations in French, German, and Spanish*
- *Options in each language:*
 - *Teacher Education (certification)*
 - *Language Studies (a traditional language specialization leading to a high level of proficiency in the language)*
 - *Culture Studies (an ideal second major with fewer requirements overall)*
- *Minors in French, German, Japanese, and Spanish*
- *MA in Languages & Cultures in a joint program with West Chester University with specialization in French, German, and Spanish*

Study abroad

- *Encouraged but not required*
- *Most undergraduates complete at least one semester abroad*
- *Study abroad available in many locations*
- *MU Exchange programs:*
 - *Caen (France)*
 - *Marburg (Germany)*
 - *Burgos (Spain)*
 - *Valparaíso (Chile)*



Dr. Gaudry, advising a French major.

Summer Courses

- *Graduate level (open to advanced undergraduates with permission)*
- *June/July (4 or 5 weeks)*
- *Online, on-campus, hybrid*
- *German (1 course) & Spanish (2-3 courses)*
- *Degree & non-degree seeking students*



Dr. Nimmrichter instructs German students.

Scholarship Opportunities

- Available for incoming students in all languages
- Merit awards each year
- Additional study abroad scholarships

Links

[MU's Language & Culture Studies Dept.](#)
(check it out for a more in-depth look at their programs and course offerings)

[Scholarships and Awards](#)

[Video: Why study languages?](#)



Dr. Antolin, Spanish professor.

Why is Millersville's program special?

We are a small department and develop very close relationships with our students. All the professors who currently teach at MU are native speakers of the language they teach and didn't come to the US until they were in graduate school. We strive to immerse our students in our languages and cultures, inside as well as outside of the classroom. We want all students to achieve a high level of proficiency and to be cultural ambassadors who will be able to use their intercultural communication skills and knowledge successfully in whatever career they choose.

MU has an excellent Teacher Education program, the Professional Development School program, which places students in their senior year into a secondary school with experienced mentor teachers for the whole year.



How do you say “QUEER” in...? or... Supporting our queer students in the world language classroom

Devin Browne
Brashear High School
Pittsburgh Public Schools
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In a recent discussion with a Pennsylvania superintendent, I used the word “queer” when referring to some of the students in my school’s Gay Straight Alliance (GSA). There was a pause. A beat. And then the question, after a brief yet polite verbal stumbling: “So... we can say ‘queer’ now?”

I like the word “queer” when talking about people in the LGBTQ community. Or LGBT, as of a few years ago. Or GLBT, from back in the day when we centered Gay men in everything. Or LGBTQIA+, for those who want to be more inclusive. Or LGBTQIA2S, to honor our Native communities (Two Spirit). Or LGBTQI, as I often read in European publications (although on a French website recently I saw LGBTTQQIAAP, which they claimed is sometimes used in the United States, and I shuddered a bit). As a member of this broad, disparate community, even I get weary of the fluid nature of our alphabet soup acronyms (I guess technically, they’re initialisms) to identify non-straight and non-cisgender people. So, I’ve embraced “**queer**.” And I wanted to get that out of the way before moving forward, because you’ll see the word throughout. When I talk about queer students, I simply mean the ones who identify as either not straight and/or not cisgender.

Whether or not *you* choose to use the word queer, well, it depends on your comfort with the word. If you’re not comfortable referring to “queer students” or “the queer community” or saying things like, “You need to know queer history to understand the struggle for marriage equality,” then you probably shouldn’t use it. But maybe that will evolve over the course of time.

Like societies and attitudes, language also evolves. Words become powerful, words fall out of fashion, words are appropriated, words are reclaimed. Language teachers get this. We get that some of the expressions we learned in our high school French class might sound outdated or overly formal or even silly when we use them with native speakers today. Because of this, world language teachers are perfectly primed to discuss ways to support queer students despite the changing lexicon and letters of the queer community.

With this in mind, the following is a list of ways to be supportive of queer students in our language classrooms. The list was culled from suggestions given by world language students and teachers, both queer and allies. Keeping these suggestions in mind will make our classrooms feel more inclusive for everyone. I’ve even framed the suggestions in the parlance of language learning and teaching to make it all the more relatable.

- **Teach and reteach appropriate behaviors:** When you're teaching students about acceptable classroom behavior, and you cover the part about bullying and harassment, be intentional to include sexual orientation and gender identity when referencing the type of misbehavior you're talking about. Don't tolerate a student using a slur for a gay man or a transgender woman. Don't shy away from a discussion about why saying "That's so gay" is insulting and can be hurtful. Interrupting this type of speech sends a message to all students (to straight and cis students as well) that your classroom is a safe space for **all** kids.
- **Learn new vocabulary:** Make sure you know how to talk about the different ways folks identify (LGBTQIA2SP+) when speaking in the target language. Many of these words are cognates and easy to use in both languages.
- **Do your homework:** Be at least generally aware of how queer issues are handled in the target culture. Is same-sex marriage legal? Is homosexuality punishable by law? How is gender handled historically and politically in the diverse cultures taught in our classes? How is the evolution of pronouns for trans folk developing in the countries where the target language is spoken? It's surprisingly easy to get this information with the right keywords in Google.
- **Include visuals:** Use images that include queer writers, artists, politicians, celebrities, etc. from the target culture — and don't shy away from mentioning how their identity influenced their work. After all, how can you teach a poem by Arthur Rimbaud without addressing his scandalous affair with an older man, right? Also, look around your room. Are the posters, photos and other images reinforcing or breaking down gender (and ethnic and racial) stereotypes?
- **Pay attention to your content:** When exploring family vocabulary, include diverse family structures (two men or two women as parents, single parents, blended families, etc.). I always include a photo of my husband and me and our daughter when I present family vocabulary. Make sure students see diversity in terms of race and ethnicity as well, of course.
- **Promote studying abroad:** Be aware of countries where it's safe for queer students to travel. Understanding how your queer students might be treated in different cultures helps to raise awareness and can contribute to making positive change. I've known queer people who have studied in countries where queer rights are murky, and safety is a serious concern. But the connections that they were able to make planted seeds of new thinking in many of the people they met, even if some of the individuals didn't directly out themselves.
- **Remember the standards for Community and Connections:** Show support to your school's GSA by inviting them to a mixer with your German Club or your Salsa Dance Club (or maybe even with a team or group you sponsor outside of language learning). Suggest that your foreign language clubs translate signs for

Day of Silence. Or post images of famous queer individuals from your target cultures during LGBTQ History Month in October.

And for students who identify as transgender or outside of the traditional gender binary (non-binary/NB, gender fluid, gender queer, gender expansive), a few suggestions specific to this often very vulnerable group of kids:

- **Promote good grammar:** Familiarize yourself with how the use of pronouns in the target culture is evolving for the trans community. You don't have to be an expert, but it's been fairly easy for me to find articles addressing pronoun use in various French-speaking and Russian-speaking countries. This is not at all just an American issue.
- **Embrace unfamiliar grammar:** Ask them what their pronouns are. And if a student tells you they want to use "they, them, their," don't debate grammatical correctness with them. After all, the singular "They" was Merriam-Webster's 2019 Word of the Year.
- **Be aware of the Communication standard:** Privately discuss their level of "outness" among classmates, friends, and family. You might have to use one set of pronouns in class and another set of pronouns one-on-one. Definitely not easy — and most of these students understand this — but they will appreciate your efforts.
- **Learn from mistakes:** Finally, if you misgender a student or use an incorrect name or pronoun, acknowledge it with an apology, and move on.

The last suggestion for all queer students doesn't merit a clever sub-topic heading because it's more serious: **Acknowledge their reality and respect their privacy.**

While some of the queer kids you meet nowadays seem so confident and out, many are still deeply closeted, and need to be. The statistics around queer youth are dire, to say the least. Many face threats of being kicked out. Many go home to verbal abuse, beatings, alcoholic parents, the threat of injurious and inefficacious "conversion therapy" (still legal in Pennsylvania), or parents who ignore them and provide no love, no tenderness, no support whatsoever. Queer kids are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol. They're more likely to turn to survival sex work, especially if they become homeless. And for queer students of color, these threats are even more urgent – and compounded by racism and xenophobia.

Despite regularly facing homophobic and transphobic language at school, despite many queer students feeling unsafe or threatened by teachers, administrators, or peers, sometimes school is the only place where they find supportive adults who will respect

and protect them unconditionally. Be that supportive adult and protect them by protecting their privacy.

Not all information about queer youth is so terrible, though. More and more feel comfortable speaking up for themselves, advocating for themselves, standing up for their Black peers and for immigrant rights, interrupting the status quo around the rights of queer and other marginalized students. School districts all over the country — and many here in Pennsylvania — have developed policies that address the needs of queer students in their schools. Pittsburgh Public Schools has a very progressive policy that addresses the rights of trans students and mandates training on LGBTQIA+ issues for most staff, a policy that has been shared and adopted at other schools across the country (reach out if you'd like a copy!). And finally, more and more queer educators are feeling comfortable being out in their schools — and we know how essential openly queer teachers are for vulnerable queer youth.

This is progress that we should be proud of, and language teachers are often at the forefront of making these positive changes in their school. When you get right down to it, this is already our job: we make the incomprehensible unambiguous, the confusing clear, and the foreign familiar.

If you've read this far, you're probably one of the teachers making a difference for your queer students — or I bet you're about to — and I can't thank you enough. In this disjointed political time, in the middle of dual pandemics of a killer virus and chronic racial violence against Black people, when our kids are craving affirmation for who they are, our queer students need you now more than ever.

Developing Group Intercultural Competence through Cross-Cultural Comparisons

Junko Yamamoto, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania

Rich Madel, Plymouth Whitmarsh High School

Wilma Dunkle, Meadville Area Senior High School

Lindsay Westwood, Ringgold High School

Group Intercultural Competence

As we prepare our students for the multi-ethnic and multicultural work environment, the ability to combine a variety of perspectives to forge an end-product is valuable. The skill to analyze and understand why people from diverse cultures think and act differently is a prerequisite for global leadership (Haber-Curran & Guramatunhu Copper, 2020). Wagner, Cardelli, and Byram (2019) define Intercultural Citizenship as “being active in one’s community - local or beyond the local - and using one’s linguistic and intercultural competences to realize and enrich discussions, relationships, and activities with people of varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds” (p. XV). Group Intercultural Competence (GIC), or the ability to function in a culturally diverse setting, is increasingly coveted by a global society. The cognitive ability to perceive cultural differences and similarities, as well as the flexibility to make behavioral adjustments according to cultural appropriateness, are components of GIC. Such capacity develops as individuals collaborate in a culturally diverse group (Schmidmeier, Takahashi, & Bueno, 2020). Dagbaeva, Darmaeva, Samoshkina, and Tzybenova (2020) showed that intercultural competence consists of communication skills, the ability to create synergy, the ability to learn, self-knowledge, personal management, and social interaction. Moreover, intercultural competence is a central tenet of intercultural communication, a capacity that is receiving broader attention in the field following the publication of deconstructed Can-Do targets by NCSSFL-ACTFL (2017).

Collaboration Among Students of Multiple Languages

World language teachers are already aware that learners benefit from an understanding of the products, practices and perspectives of the target culture. The process of analyzing underlying values and viewpoints of target cultures helps language learners develop the cognitive process and flexibility to successfully coexist with others from different backgrounds. Learners also understand target cultures by comparing the target culture with their own (e.g., the Comparisons Standard in The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). While comparing and contrasting two cultures is a valuable process, it is also likely that one’s students will be required to work with colleagues of diverse cultural backgrounds simultaneously.

What if, then, language learners collaborate with students of other languages? A successful workforce should be able to flexibly negotiate multiple perspectives (Davidson, 2017). Our students will encounter a variety of values, options, or modes of communication (e.g., some cultures are more verbal than others) in their workplaces. It is possible that today’s learners will be in a multi-national collaborative team in the future. When they do, they will need to successfully co-create a product, a plan, or a solution in a professional world, in which multiple languages are spoken and a variety of cultures mingle. Hence, it is logical that language educators facilitate a cognitive process to become

aware of differences and similarities among multiple cultures. Teachers of different languages can model a multi-cultural collaboration, and then facilitate similar process for their learners.

A multi-language collaboration does not have to be limited to working with different classrooms within the same school district. Teachers can collaborate with other school districts or overseas. In fact, International collaboration is essential for learners to build intercultural competence. Video conferencing, social media, and email make it easy for remote classrooms to collaborate. Apps such as [WhatsApp](#) and [LINE](#) make international communication affordable. Infrastructure such as reliable Internet access and high audio quality for learners to listen to their counterparts, as well as co-planning among teachers, is crucial for successful international collaboration (Lee & Park, 2017). Affordability and reliability of communication tools are key component of successful international collaboration.

Furthermore, world language educators can also invite civics, history, and world cultures teachers to join, depending on the project (Wagner, Cardetti, & Byram, 2019). Teachers of other content areas, such as art, theater, dance, music, and/or culinary arts, can collaborate with world language educators as well. The Connections Standard of the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015) focuses on learners connecting language learning and their study of other disciplines. In Bulgaria, for example, Genova (2019) described teaching human rights in a Civics and an English class, collaboratively, as a foreign language class. In this unit, 11th-graders read Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. They examined their beliefs and values about adultery and analyzed the historical and cultural context of Puritan society in the 17th century United States.

Possible Method

In accordance with the work of Wagner, Cardetti, and Byram (2019), the first step is to identify the desired results followed by the determination of acceptable evidence which will then shape the planned learning experiences. Wiggins and McTighe (1998, 2005) suggested that activities planned without identifying learning goal tend to be mindless or lack purpose. Students may be engaged, but without a clear outcome. This view is supported by Patrick (2007) and Clementi & Terrill (2013): they suggest starting a unit design with identifying an essential question. After the essential question becomes clear, the teacher can list what students should be able to do, followed by what students should know. When a teacher identifies a transferable issue in multiple cultures, defining a big idea is critical.

Suppose a teacher chooses a subject, such as *maintaining one's health* as a topic to examine and consider whether everyone around the globe has equal access to a means of maintaining their health (Glynn, Wesley, & Wassell, 2014). Students may then want to investigate a more specific aspect. One group might explore whether language is a barrier to accessing the care they need in hospitals. They may want to research how different countries approached the COVID-19 pandemic. Spanish language students may identify how Latinos in the United States experienced the pandemic compared to other ethnic groups. Another group may investigate food security. Someone else may want to find out if everyone around the world has access to clean water. Allowing learners to select a topic to investigate that most interests them is likely to increase motivation (Evans & Boucher, 2015). To investigate a current topic of interest, students can consider using social media, news articles, Skype calls, Zoom meetings, or LINE phone interviews to receive and analyze relevant

information. If the topic requires comparing classical and modern time periods, their main method would be a formal investigation.

To demonstrate more tangibly, the authors are providing a sample plan in Appendix A, a rubric in Appendix B, instructions to students in Appendix C, and a sample of student work in Appendix D. The authors modeled the instructional plan after the templates provided in *Words and Actions: Teaching Languages Through the Lens of Social Justice* by Glynn, Wesely, and Wassell (2014).

The authors of this manuscript chose the model suggested by *Words and Actions* because the publication shows how world language teachers can align Social Justice Standards and World-Readiness Standards and has a variety of ideas about educating our students to become responsible global citizens. The combination of the Social Justice and World-Readiness standards overarches issues in a culturally diverse society, in which more than two languages are spoken. Their model was based on one target language. The authors expanded this model by bringing multiple languages and cultures into the same project. Learners need to develop the ability to function in a diverse society and workplace. Therefore, the opportunity to engage with the common denominator of humanity, in a setting, in which multiple languages and cultures intermix, will inevitably contribute to their growth in societal, professional, and global literacy.

The example shown in the appendices encourages interpretive communication of the target language for language learners in the United States during the investigation phase. Students in a variety of language classrooms may read in their target language and share their interpretations in an effort to co-author in a common language. The authors simulated how students read in Latin, Japanese, Spanish, German, and French, and collaborate in English.

Conclusion

Our students will always live in a society with mixed ethnic and cultural backgrounds. If they develop the aptitude to work effectively on a diverse team, they will become valuable contributors to a global society. On the contrary, lacking the mindset to view customs, products, or social phenomena with flexibility could cause them to create ethnic or cultural division. World language teachers are in a unique position to teach our learners to respect and appreciate others whose behavior and thinking processes may be different. Language learners develop cultural competence by using the framework of products, practices, and perspective to analyze how culture influences people. Collaboration among a variety of languages makes this process even more meaningful. Furthermore, teachers can model how we collaborate when we co-plan with our colleagues and encourage our future generation to work in harmony with others.

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Appendix A: Plan Sample

Essential Question: How are we similar regardless of cultural background?

Goals:

- Students will be able to work effectively with their peers who study diverse languages.
- Students will be able to write with a clear introduction, supporting explanations, and a conclusion.
- Students will be able to explain how we are similar as humans regardless of cultural background.
- Students will be able to compare diverse cultural perspectives.

World-Readiness Standards:

Interpretive Communication -

Students will identify relevant texts to their group’s theme in their target language.

Interpretive Communication -

Students will use multiple sources in their target language to develop an argument.

Relating Cultural Products and Perspectives -

Students will use written or spoken sources in their target language to explain perspectives in the target culture.

Acquiring Information and Diverse Perspectives

- Students evaluate diverse perspectives.

Cultural Comparisons -

Students investigate and explain human nature through intercultural comparisons.

**English Language Arts Standards - Writing*
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Teaching Tolerance Social Justice Standards:**

D-7. Students will develop language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including themselves) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups.

Summative Assessment:

Students will write an essay about similarities and/or differences in human nature in their multicultural group in their selected topic.

* Common Core Standards are available from <http://www.corestandards.org/>

**Social Justice Standards are available from <https://www.tolerance.org/frameworks/social-justice-standards>

Appendix B: Assessment Rubric Sample

	Exceeds expectation	Meets expectation	Approaching expectation
Essential Question	Successfully and thoroughly answers the essential question.	Successfully answers the essential question.	Attempts to answer the essential question.
Research (Interpretive communication)	3 or more sources from your target culture are included in the group writing.	2 sources from your target culture are included in the group writing.	1 source from your target culture is included in the group writing.
Introduction	Clearly introduces the main idea; introduces the readers to what you are going to say in the main part.	Clearly introduces the main idea.	The main idea is vague.
Supporting paragraphs	Strongly supports the main idea; all sentences are relevant.	Substantially supports the main idea; one or two irrelevant sentences are in the final write-up.	Supporting paragraphs are weakly connected to the main idea; three or more irrelevant statements.
Conclusion	Successfully and cohesively summarizes main ideas	Accurately summarizes main ideas	The conclusion is somewhat relevant to the topic, but introduces a new idea.
Multi-culture comparison (Connections: acquiring information and diverse perspective <i>Comparisons:</i> cultural comparisons)	Shows similarities and differences among multiple cultures; combines multiple cultural perspectives to create a cohesive argument, including your own culture; clearly explains cultural perspectives with your observation.	Shows similarities and differences among multiple cultures, including your own culture; combines multiple cultural perspectives to create a cohesive argument.	Shows similarities and differences among different cultures.
Collaboration	Respectful and kind to your team; demonstrates leadership; individual responsibilities completed on time.	Respectful and kind to your team; individual responsibilities completed on time.	Individual responsibilities completed on time.
Reflective discussion	Describes what you and your team did in details; description is insightful, not just the summary of what happened, but also digs deeply into internal personal growth, inspiration, etc.; makes sure all voices are heard during the group talk.	Describes what you and your team did in details; description is insightful, not just the summary of what happened, but also digs deeply into internal personal growth, inspiration, etc.	Reflection is surface-level, merely describes what happened; shows little respect to the views and voices of others.

Appendix C: Instructional Sample

Essential Question: How are we similar regardless of cultural background?

Instruction: You will represent your target language and culture in a group where multiple languages and cultural values are represented to answer the essential question above. Choose a research topic in which all of you are interested. Your goal is to write an introduction, three supporting arguments, and a conclusion. The introduction presents and communicates the main point to the audience. The three supporting arguments expand on the introduction. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the introduction and supporting arguments. Each person needs to use at least two sources of the language that you are studying. It is recommended to read or listen to more than two sources as not all sources may be relevant to your topic.

Step 1: In your group, select a topic that all of you would like to research. You can select from the list below or create a new one that all of you agree on.

- Role of food in a culture
- Importance of music
- Importance of visual arts
- Leadership
- Sustainability
- Human rights
- Innovation and technology
- Pets

Step 2: Refine your topic in your group. For example, if you choose human rights, you may want to choose gender equality, civil rights movement, freedom of expression, etc.

Step 3: Each person needs to read, listen to, or view multiple sources in his or her target language relevant to the topic and take notes.

Step 4: Get together as a group to compare notes. Discuss some patterns or common themes that appear across cultures. Discuss and document similarities and differences between cultures.

Step 5: Create the basic structure of your report by filling in this graphic organizer:

Introduction/ Main point	
<u>Supporting Theme 1</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● (example from culture 1)● (example from culture 2)● (example from culture 3)● (example from culture 4)

<p><u>Supporting Theme 2</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (example from culture 1) ● (example from culture 2) ● (example from culture 3) ● (example from culture 4)
<p><u>Supporting Theme 3</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (example from culture 1) ● (example from culture 2) ● (example from culture 3) ● (example from culture 4)
<p><u>Supporting Theme 4</u> <u>(optional)</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● (example from culture 1) ● (example from culture 2) ● (example from culture 3) ● (example from culture 4)
<p>Conclusion</p>	

Step 6:

Submit the graphic organizer for feedback.

Step 7:

Using the feedback you receive, co-write the introduction.

Step 8:

Everyone in the group adds examples from his or her target culture for the three supporting arguments.

Step 9:

Get together to ensure that the main point has one voice.

Step 10:

Co-write the conclusion.

Step 11:

Revise the draft to ensure everything flows.

Step 12:

Submit your draft for feedback.

Step 13:

Using the feedback that you received, revise the draft again to produce your final draft.

Step 14:

Group reflection - record your conversation (video or audio) to discuss the points below. Make sure everyone's voice is heard.

- Who in the group made you feel that your contribution mattered? How so?
- Who demonstrated leadership? How?
- How did you contribute to the group effort?
- What did you learn?

Step 15:

Submit your final, revised, written report and your recorded discussion.

Appendix D: A Student Work Sample

Ideal Military Leadership: Cross-Cultural Comparison

Oftentimes, stories of military leadership resonate with their readers. Regardless of background, human spirits appreciate qualities such as bravery and establishing trust by caring for members of the group. Some military leaders have been praised for winning battles but also criticized for seeking too much power. What are the elements of ideal military leadership? Are there common denominators across cultures? Moreover, are there timeless virtues that humans revere, both in ancient and modern times? We argue that bravery, the ability to raise the morale of the group, and the aptitude to set aside self-interest to serve the whole community are universally admired virtues.

Bravery

Julius Caesar wrote about two outstanding centurions during the Gallic Wars (58 B.C.E. - 50 B.C.E.), Titus Pullo and Lucius Vorenus. Every year, there was a dispute about which one should be promoted above the other. One day, there was a fierce battle near a fortification. Pullo said to Vorenus, "Why do you hesitate, this is an opportunity to prove your strength," and rushed into the most densely populated enemy line. Vorenus followed. Eventually, a pierced shield prevented Pullo from drawing his sword. When Vorenus slipped and fell, Pullo saved him. After each had slain a great number of enemies and returned to the camp, the Roman soldiers applauded. Caesar concluded the story by saying that it was impossible to decide which one seemed braver (Julius Caesar, DBG.5.44).

Bravery, as the story tells, is expected of a military leader. In *The Tale of Heike*, a piece of Japanese literature written sometime between 1200 and 1300, the daredevil behavior of its character, Minamoto-no-Yoshitsune, is idolized. He was leading the Genji clan in the war against the Heike clan. In a particular encounter in 1184, the Genji clan was on a cliff called Hiyodorigoe, at the foot of which was the Inchinotani beach where Heike camped. Running off the cliff on horseback to surprise the enemy was a dangerous strategy, but Yoshitsune went down the cliff, causing his men to follow. This attack resulted in the victory of the Genji clan (The Tale of Heike).

An iconic revolutionary figure throughout Latin America, Ernesto "Che" Guevara gained attention on the international stage as a leader alongside Fidel and Raul Castro during the Cuban Revolution (1953-1959). The Argentine-born medical doctor joined the rebel 26th of July Movement to support the armed struggle against the brutal Batista dictatorship in Cuba and provide medical support. However, Che's military prowess and defined bravery were quickly acknowledged by the movement's leadership shortly after landing on Cuban soil when they immediately met heavy resistance from the US-backed regime (Anderson, 2010; Guevara, 1963/2006). Beyond bravery in combat, those who served with Che recall a near recklessness in his willingness to engage enemy fire with little hesitation or concern for his own wellbeing. In fact, when reminiscing on Che's contribution as a heroic guerrilla fighter, Fidel Castro often shared the anecdote of having to assign a soldier with the expressed duty of looking after and providing cover to Guevara during combat (Castro, 2006).

Raising Morale

Virgil's *The Aeneid*, narrated by Aeneas, is the story of the Trojan who led his men from the fallen city of Troy to Italy. In Book 1 of the Aeneid, the group encounters a severe storm, which only 7 out of 20 Trojan ships survive. The remaining men and ships land in Carthage in northern Africa. Out of necessity, Aeneas hunts seven deer to feed his men. The men feast on the venison and wine. Aeneas hides his anxiety deep in his heart, puts on a happy face, and gives hope to the men, who are exhausted from the travel in the storm (Aeneid. 1. 186-209).

Though she had been unknown in the time period, Joan of Arc became a heroine who led her army to victory at the Battle of Orléans during the Hundred Years War, sparking her title of "The Maid of Orléans," which raised the morale of the French (Liger, n.d.). Her rise to military leadership began when, at the young age of thirteen, she heard the voice of Saint Michael telling her that she needed to help expel the English from all of France. Joan of Arc decided to meet with King Charles VII in 1429 to share her visions ("Chronologie: Jeanne d'Arc Biographie," 2006). King Charles VII, believing Joan of Arc and her mission, gave her armor and a guard of men to bring to battle. Before Joan of Arc's arrival in Orléans, the city was on the verge of surrender, running out of resources. Joan of Arc takes over military control after the capture of The Duke Charles of Orléans (Liger, n.d.). After various strategic attacks organized by Joan of Arc, the English were forced to retreat from Orléans on May 8th, 1429, bringing Orléans back under French control ("Chronologie: Jeanne d'Arc Biographie," 2006). Joan of Arc's victory at Orléans restored faith in Charles VII's reign over France and it also delivered a renewed spirit in order to win the Hundred Years War in the decades to come (Liger, n.d.).

"People are the castle; people are the wall, and people are the moat. Compassion is an ally and vengeance is an enemy," is a famous quote by Shingen Takeda (1521-1573) of Japan. Japanese businesses still refer to this quote for an organizational leadership model (Daigo, 2012; Hitachi Systems, 2020). Shingen believed that taking care of people was crucial to the strength of his organization. He was the lord of the Kai province (currently Yamanashi prefecture). His military was so fierce that Shingen was called "the tiger of Kai." To create the feeling of ownership among his fighters and to empower them, he regularly developed military strategy based on the consensus of the group. Moreover, he rewarded his soldiers after battles and placed personnel in different positions according to their strengths. "People are the castle..." is interpreted that just like a strong castle is made of a variety of materials, an organization requires a variety of well-placed talents. He understood that people in an organization would do best when they feel valued and appreciated and can focus on and apply their strengths.

Even in modern times, the Swiss rally around their legendary, national hero, Wilhelm Tell. In the 14th-century tale, the strong, skilled huntsman boldly defies an order to pay deference to the hat of Gessler, the appointed Austrian leader of the Swiss town, Altdorf. For his defiance of the tyrannical Austrian House of Habsburg, Tell would pay with his life, unless he could shoot an apple, placed on his own son's head, with his bow and arrow. The legend brags of his success but when Gessler asks why he had a second arrow ready, Tell confidently shares that the second arrow was for him. Infuriated, Gessler takes Tell away for a lifetime of imprisonment but, aboard a ship, when a storm hits, the men need Tell's remarkable strength and knowledge of the waters to save their ship. Tell indeed saves the endangered ship but also manages to escape and later ambush Gessler, shooting him through the heart (Leber, 2014). The oppressed Swiss were inspired by his lead and joined the rebellion that led to the unification of the Swiss cantons, and eventually to the formation of

Switzerland (Kuchařová, 2017). In more recent centuries, Wilhelm Tell's role as a national hero has been solidified. The famous German philosopher and author, Friedrich Schiller, wrote a drama of his tale, a drama credited with boosting German morale in the fight against Napoleon's advance and he even served as an unifying hero during the French Revolution (Jud, 2017; Kuchařová, 2017). His legendary bravery is said to have united the Swiss in their efforts to resist the Nazis in World War II (Jud, 2017). While the details of this legend vary, the impact of this uplifting character is apparent not only in the German-speaking world, but also in many other cultures (Leber, 2014).

Selflessness

Selflessness is a virtue that an ideal leader possesses. In Virgil's *the Aeneid*, the main character, Aeneas, is often referred to as "*pious*." In ancient Roman society, the word *pious* meant, "someone who is committed to the country, the gods, and his family." He suppressed his own desires to fulfill these obligations. He carried his household god and led his men and his child from the fallen city of Troy to Hesperia (Italy), the land of their destiny. After the group experienced a shipwreck and landed in Carthage, Aeneas fell in love with Dido, the queen of Carthage. Though he was easing into a comfortable life in Africa, he followed the god's command to set off to Italy, where he was destined to lead the Trojans (the *Aeneid*, book 4). Here, suppressing personal feelings for his lover on behalf of the nation is an example of *pious*. Augustus Caesar commissioned Virgil to write this epic poem in 27 B.C.E. Augustus defeated Marc Anthony at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E. after Anthony chose his love for Cleopatra, an African queen, over his dedication to Rome. Romans during Augustus Caesar's time probably contrasted Marc Anthony and Aeneas, while they saw parallels between Augustus and Aeneas.

Selflessness is sometimes demonstrated by stepping into a military leadership role, despite a lack of enthusiasm for the position. Kenshin Uesugi (1530-1578) in Japan falls into such a category. He is still respected as a great leader and has been a model for modern TV shows and movies. He was born as the third (maybe fourth) child of a landlord. Since his older brother, the first son, was expected to become the head of the family, he spent his childhood in a Buddhist temple. During this time, he learned to separate himself from material desires. However, his older brother asked him to be the head of the family, since his health condition did not allow him to protect the family property: there were constant battles over lands. Some hypothesize that Kenshin never married and had children because he intended to pass the family line to his older brother's son. When he was 27, dismayed by further destruction, killing, and theft, he fled into a Buddhist temple, declaring that he was going to be a monk. Masakage Nagao, the husband of Kenshin's sister, persuaded him that the family needed him, and had him come back to rule the family (Takada, 2019; Tsuji, 2019).

Likewise, Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus became the dictator of Rome in 458 B.C.E. at the request of the Senate, when the Sabines attacked Rome. According to a legend, he was plowing a field on a small farm across the Tiber River when he was appointed dictator (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, III. 26). He quickly led the Roman army to victory. When Cincinnatus saw that his job was done, he resigned from his office on the 16th day of dictatorship although he could have held onto the power for 6 months (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, III. 29). Such humility appeals to humans, regardless of time and culture. Cincinnati, Ohio is named after Cincinnatus and he is often compared to George Washington, a farmer, a general, a statesman, and an American military hero.

In the case of Latin America, a geographical zone with a tumultuous history of imperialism (Galeano, 1971/1997), many military figures have emerged from the comfort of the protected classes

to support and liberate the oppressed. Chief among them is South America's most widely regarded liberator, Simón Bolívar (Arana, 2013). Born into wealth and aristocracy, educated abroad in Spain and France as a young man, Bolívar was moved by his introduction to the ideas of the Enlightenment which ultimately served as motivation to take on Spain and liberate vast portions of colonial South America. After centuries of colonial rule in Latin America, an armed revolution against the Spanish crown was regarded as a suicide mission. Such a risk did not deter Bolívar, however, who led the struggle nonetheless and eventually liberated modern-day Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia.

A more modern Latin American example is that of the aforementioned Ernesto "Che" Guevara, born into the comfort of middle-class Argentinian society and educated in cosmopolitan Buenos Aires to be a doctor, Guevara could have lapsed thoughtlessly into a life of privilege and prestige (Anderson, 2010). Instead, Guevara was fervently convicted in anti-imperialist ideology and joined multiple armed struggles to liberate historically oppressed working classes in Cuba (Guevara, 1963/2006), the Congo (Guevara, 1965/2011), and Bolivia (Guevara, 1968/2006) where he was captured and killed. Guevara spent years following the Cuban Revolution establishing societal values that would support the newborn revolutionary government (Guevara, 1965/2003). Much to the chagrin of those accustomed to the amenity and perks of a business-as-usual administration during the previous dictatorial regime, Guevara organized a country-wide call to volunteer service. True to form as a selfless leader, Che - as he was affectionately known in Cuba - was highly regarded for his dedication and work ethic. He worked lengthy hours at the behest of the young revolution, and, on his only day of rest, he would join his compatriots providing volunteer services that included such arduous labor as cutting sugar cane in the Cuban countryside.

On the contrary, an attempt to consolidate power is frowned upon, such as the example of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) in France. With the Directory in power in France who was at war on multiple fronts throughout Europe, Napoleon was planning his rise to power militarily in order to unify and strengthen France. In 1799, Napoleon organized the Coup de Brumaire to ultimately dissolve the Directory and gain power. He then declared himself First Consul of France and later emperor in 1804. Napoleon was inspired by the Roman Empire for many of his conquests throughout his time in power, including the Roman idea of *virtù*, which stood for "the sacrifice of personal interest for the good of the republic, the whole" (Masson, 2005). With this in mind, he developed his Napoleonic Code, which outlined all of the laws and expectations under his rule in all the territories that he and his Grande Armée had conquered, including rules for financial transfers and other legal transactions, citizenship, as well as the mandatory establishment of schools in order to unify his territory and to spark scientific and technological development. However, with his consolidation of power, Napoleon began to lose grip of his empire in Spain in the west and in Russia in the east starting in 1810. This slow but steady deterioration of his vast empire led to his eventual exile in 1815 (Masson, 2005).

Conclusion

There is a common thread in humans that makes similar virtues universally appealing. Showing bravery when others are afraid, raising morale, and selflessly serving the interest of the community are traits of admired leaders. By the same token, humans collectively tend to vilify those in power who become too greedy. No matter the culture, no matter the time frame, these common values are consistently apparent in societies around the world.

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Writers' Workshop: One of Various Strategies and Interventions Used to Increase our German and Spanish Students' Writing Proficiency

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Intended levels: Composition and writing instructors for L2 or Heritage Language (HL) learners (secondary & post-secondary)

To give the reader a little background, the work presented in this article was supported by a Kutztown University Assessment Grant (AY 2019-2020) awarded to Christine Núñez (Modern Language), Dawn Slack (Modern Language), Lynn Kutch (Modern Language), and Nancy Zimmerman (Modern Language) entitled "Formative Assessment of SLO 2 (Writing Proficiency) for BA Spanish and German Programs." Our grant consisted of funds to provide interventions and measures to improve the writing proficiency of our language majors and minors in German and Spanish composition classes, including taking a pre and post assessment (AAPPL) to ascertain benchmarks and areas for improvement, and Writers' Workshop which was facilitated by native and near native speakers of Spanish and German. I am specifically going to address the perspectives of two of the native speakers/student workers who ran the workshops, and one of my non-native speakers who wholeheartedly participated in this resource.

In my particular advanced writing course (SPA 212WI), students are given the Presentational Writing ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) at the beginning of the semester and again at the end. Throughout the course, process writing is primarily used with peer editing as a regular activity. All students (native and non-native) are expected to take a draft of their edited compositions to at least eight writers' workshops in a semester and have the facilitator check for vocabulary, grammar, mechanics and/or organizational problems. After peer editing, my editing and the help of the student facilitators, the students rewrite their composition and receive a second grade based on the improvement. At the end of each semester, the students in the class are asked to rate the efficacy of the strategies: AAPPL, process writing, peer editing, and Writers' Workshop. Interestingly, at the end of the fall semester, the same number of students rated process writing and Writers' Workshop as the two most effective interventions.

Based on these survey results from Fall 2019, I felt that it would be interesting to learn more about the perspectives of two native speakers, Milagros B. and Diego M.R., who facilitated the workshops, and one very enthusiastic non-native participant, Howard E..

Milagros and Diego gave very worthwhile feedback that included how the workshops also helped them improve their own writing.

Milagros' perspective:

What do you like best about working for WW?

What I like the most about working for the Writers' Workshop is the opportunity to view the different writing styles and view the different ways of organization as well as how people can interpret one story in multiple ways.

What do you find most challenging?

One challenge that I have found was when having so many different interpretations try to maintain the meaning that the student wants to convey to the reader.

Describe the experience working with non-native speakers in comparison with those that are heritage and/or native speakers?

I have noticed that working with non-native speakers they are very open to the learning and they put a big emphasis on their writing. One question I get often from non-native speakers is how to write as fast in Spanish as they do in English. Heritage and native speakers, I have noticed, [sic] rely on their listening and oral skills when writing their papers. As well as, the students have personal experiences that they are able to apply to [sic] their writing.

Has WW helped you improve your writing and/or language skills? Explain please.

The writer's workshop has helped me with my writing skills because not only I revise the papers, but it refreshes previous grammar as well [sic] helps me expand my vocabulary and knowledge on different topics. Working at the WW has given the opportunity to improve my analytical and critical thinking during the semester. I am extremely thankful for the opportunity of working for the Writers Workshop.

Diego's perspective:

What do you like best about working for WW?

What I like best about working in the Writers' Workshop is helping people improve on their writing. I want them to leave the Workshop sessions knowing more than what they did before entering the sessions.

What do you find most challenging?

What I find most challenging is when I'm unsure of whether or not they used a word correctly or not. I also find it challenging when I have little time to review their papers because that means that I have less time to explain to them my corrections/suggestions. Another challenge is for me to make sure that they understand why their mistakes are mistakes and why my suggestions improve the quality of their papers.

Describe the experience working with non-native speakers in comparison with those that are heritage and/or native speakers?

I notice that with the non-native speakers, sometimes their sentences sound like they were translated directly from English, sometimes placing adjectives before nouns or using words that do not fit the context. For native speakers, however, their sentences are more fluent, but there is sometimes Spanglish involved when they are writing. Overall, I need to explain more in depth with the non-native speakers, but with the heritage speakers, my explanations are shorter.

Has WW helped you improve your writing and/or language skills? Explain please.

I would say that the Writers' Workshop has helped me to write better because I sometimes see mistakes in other people's papers that I would have otherwise overlooked had it been my paper. Also, reviewing other people's papers helps me to review all the grammar rules that I have learned in the past. Working at the Workshop makes me have to go over all the areas where people tend to make mistakes.

I enjoyed working in the Writers' Workshop and I hope others will work there as well to help their fellow classmates!

Howard's Thoughts:

Howard was a non-traditional student (retired engineer) returning to college to earn a minor in Spanish, wrote a review of Writers' Workshop. Additionally, a segment of one of his compositions as evidence of his writing proficiency follows the review:

My thoughts on the benefits from the grants that provided our Writers' Workshops:

I commute, which does not afford me the community that students on campus can make use of for practice with speaking/writing Spanish, plus I have no one at home or in my immediate circle with whom to speak Spanish. Therefore, the opportunity to sit with an hispanohablante to discuss my composition is priceless in many ways. In my first semester, I didn't fully appreciate the value of the conversational Language Partners sessions which would have been quite helpful to me, and hope to take advantage of in the future, but I don't know if that is covered in these grants, so that may be superfluous to this discussion.

Mili has taught me the benefit of reading aloud as I was able to find some of my errors simply by listening to her read out loud. I try to do that for myself now and find it beneficial. I progressed from hearing "well you're technically correct, but an hispanohablante would never say it that way!" to it being more of a single or couple words correction. Patterns were apparent and correcting one approach led to understanding similar mistakes in other usage. Example, getting careless with what the original subject for the verb was, resulting in a compliance issue. Mili has reinforced the emphasis that Dra. Z has placed on "enlace" [transition words], always telling me where she feels it is weak, and helped improve that part of my writing greatly by observing where I fall short on good enlace, making recommendations but not necessarily giving me the answer, but pointing me to some options to consider, so that I own the final choice. I believe this to be the one area of greatest improvement in my AAPPL test before/after scores. Offering options (including nothing, of course) is a great way for it to remain my paper.

I've always had a decent vocabulary where often I would give great thought (especially with writing) to choosing the one word (in English) that conveys exactly what I'm trying to express. Using the Spanish translation of these words doesn't usually convey that same effectiveness and the language partner lets me know, usually with a "what exactly were you trying to say here?" But, in doing so, I believe, it also helps the language partner (whether Mili or Diego) understand and appreciate some new words (perhaps not that frequently used) and their intended meanings that might be helpful in their future efforts as a translator, interpreter or in a professional environment.

I found out firsthand during these Writer's Workshops that not all students in the class were at the same level, and in these sessions, we would do peer reviews when things got stacked up timewise. I was able to help tutor on occasion, partly because of my life experiences where I often did edits or rewrites of plans or presentations, but more so because, despite my vocabulary recollection fading over time and currently in need of revitalization, my fundamentals of my high school Spanish have stuck with me in terms of grammar and pronunciation.

It is not physically possible for an instructor to spend this much time with each student, so the Writers' Workshop is a tremendously valuable activity which supplements and reinforces the classroom instruction while targeting the specific needs of the student. I found it to be invaluable and believe any other student who participated to the full extent would be in total agreement.

I also learned that no matter how many times a paper is reviewed things can still be missed by me and the language partner and I shouldn't beat myself up over it. I can't count the number of times I've said, "I can't believe I missed that!" Dra. Z's statement that she's not looking for "perfection" helps with my personal whiplashing as well.

The following is an excerpt (the first and last paragraph) of Howard's composition, "Un tío muy especial" that he wrote in October 2019. The essay's theme was based on the short autobiographical story, "Cajas de cartón", by Francisco Jiménez and how a teacher or others can inspire us and change our lives.

Excerpt from “Un tío muy especial”

De vez en cuando la mayoría de nosotros hemos perdido el camino de vida, o simplemente se siente que nuestro viaje llega a ser una rutina inútil. Es muy probable que Panchito, en realidad Francisco Jiménez, galardonado autor y profesor de la Universidad de Santa Clara, viviera su niñez sin demasiada esperanza hasta que conoció al señor Lema, su maestro en el sexto grado. El señor Lema le dio la atención y la dedicación que le faltaba para aprender inglés y gozar aprendizaje. No era claro exactamente cómo Dr. Jiménez pasó del niño que no podía asistir a la escuela, a excepción de después de la cosecha, hasta el adulto que recibió su PhD en Columbia Universidad. Sin embargo, es evidente que el viaje a la sala de música con su maestro el señor Lema para mostrarle la trompeta marcó un momento de cambio, no solamente de aprendizaje, pero para su futuro lleno de éxito. A mi parecer, la trompeta representó su nuevo comienzo. Igualmente, estoy seguro de que la mayoría de los estudiantes de español pueden identificar a algún maestro que en una manera les haya ayudado a aprender o haya inspirado para lograr más que lo que han esperado. De la misma manera, yo tuve maestros y profesores que nunca olvidaré, pero para mí, la persona más influyente no fue ninguna de estas.

...

Desafortunadamente tío Gilberto murió hace diez y seis años atrás, pero tuve la oportunidad de hablar en favor de mi familia para su funeral. Hablé orgullosamente acerca de mi amor hacia él, cómo trataba de modelar mi vida como la suya, al igual de cómo me inspiró a estar involucrado con la junta de directores para la campaña del Unido Camino, el Centro de Lectura del Valle Lehigh, y el Centro de Los Ciudadanos Mayores. En mi opinión, su viaje al éxito es paralelo al de Francisco Jiménez que tuvo efectos similares en las vidas de las personas que conocieron, incluyéndome a mí. En conclusión, a mí, tío Gilberto fue como un segundo padre que me enseñó bien las lecciones de la vida y me demostró lo que el amor de un tío podría significar a un joven impresionable.

To sum it up, Writers' Workshop has been an invaluable resource to our language majors and minors, and we are hoping to continue it even without the grant. There are definite challenges such as logistics, finding time for our busy student workers to facilitate the workshops, and the problem of too much work and not enough time. But we are quite fortunate; Kutztown University, due to its central location between Allentown, Reading, Lancaster, and Philadelphia attracts many very talented native and heritage speakers of Spanish who are able to successfully facilitate these workshops. And although I cannot give all the credit to Writers' Workshop for the fact that 10 out of the 16 students surveyed after the course in Fall 2019 showed improvement on their AAPPL ratings, I feel that it was definitely influential in helping our L2 and HL learners improve their writing proficiency. Furthermore, I was so impressed by these three participants' comments and how they all benefited from the process, that I hope that others who are teaching writing in L2 or HL can develop and utilize a similar program.

The Professional Community: Opportunities for involvement, growth, and contribution

Megan Flinchbaugh, Manheim Central High School
PSMLA, Second Vice President
PSMLA, 2019 Teacher of the Year
NECTFL, 2020 Teacher of the Year
ACTFL LILL, 2020 Graduate

For many, teaching can be a lonely profession. You might be the only language teacher in your building or district. You may be your school's lone teacher of a less commonly taught language. If you are fortunate enough to teach alongside other language teachers, you may still feel isolated from colleagues in the day to day. After all, for many of us, the only people that pass through our doors throughout the day are our students.

Given these realities, how can we connect with other language teachers? How can we share ideas and materials, and how can we collaborate and co-create? How can we both contribute to and benefit from our profession within and outside our schools and districts? Early in my career, I discovered that the answers to many of these questions lie in two important facets of the education community: collaboration among colleagues and involvement in professional organizations.

Collaboration

In my experience, teachers are sometimes reluctant or hesitant to collaborate with colleagues. For a myriad of reasons—time constraints, variances in teaching styles, self-doubt, and differences in curriculum and teaching assignments, to name a few—teachers often feel alone in the work of planning, creating, and refining.

Yet collaboration with colleagues is one of the most invigorating and inspiring ways we can engage in all those tasks. In my years as a high school Spanish teacher, I have found that my best lessons and teaching experiences often come from brainstorming, creating, reviewing, and reflecting alongside a trusted colleague. It requires us to be vulnerable and open to critique and feedback, and precisely because of that, it also forces us to grow and improve.

I am fortunate to have world language colleagues across the hall, but it has not always been this way. When my closest collaborator and I worked in different schools, we created opportunities for collaboration. Regardless of your teaching environment or situation, reach out to a colleague and get started. Early in your professional relationship, collaboration may be little more than conversation; eventually, it will grow into a multifaceted, essential element of your practice.

Here are some other ideas that can help get you started, depending on your circumstances:

- Informally share experiences (successes *and* failures), concepts and ideas, plans and lessons, strategies and activities, doubts and questions. You can do this in the hallway, over lunch, on your commute, or even via email. In the beginning, be intentional; after time it will become a natural part of your conversations.
- Set aside time throughout the school year to intentionally request and provide feedback and reflection for each other.
- Co-plan and co-create lessons and activities.
- Plan and lead field trips and extracurricular experiences for your students.
- Co-plan and co-present a session at a professional conference.
- Share materials; understand and embrace that your colleague(s) may adapt them to better fit their needs or style.

- Be honest and be open. When a colleague shares an idea, get comfortable providing honest feedback. Then get comfortable hearing honest feedback. For you and your colleague to improve your materials and your craft, it is important to provide—and be open to—honest critique.

Professional Organizations

See an abbreviated list in Appendix A for names and brief descriptions of organizations that may interest you. When available, their websites are linked.

Professional organizations offer language teachers boundless opportunities for professional connections and growth. Through my involvement in Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association (PSMLA) and other professional organizations, I discovered the value of connectedness and alliance in a profession where it is otherwise easy to feel isolated. Through conferences, leadership opportunities, publications, and other services, professional organizations have helped support me in my quest to be a great teacher.

If you are new to the profession or just new to professional involvement, start small. Find an opportunity that seems useful to your daily practice as a teacher and build your involvement from there. Here are a few ways you can get involved in professional organizations:

- **Professional Development**

- Attend a professional development event: workshop, conference, webinar, etc.
- Present (or co-present with a colleague) at a professional development event.

A professional development event is an excellent opportunity to meet and network with other like minded world language educators who are equally as passionate about language, culture, and education. The climate of professional development events is invigorating and motivating—which may be reason enough to attend. Of course, at conferences and similar events you can network, discover the latest research and methods, and learn new activities and strategies for the classroom. By providing this type of professional development specific to world language education, professional organizations fill a void often left by school district in-services and other continuing education.

- **Publications**

- Read the publications (journals, magazines, newsletters, etc.) produced by language organizations.
- Submit articles and essays to professional publications.
- Access and contribute to libraries of classroom resources.

Reading and contributing to professional publications are simple ways to reach beyond your classroom and stay connected to the field of world language education. In reading professional publications, you'll learn—and perhaps even contribute—information similar to what you might find at a professional development event: current research, strategies, and perspectives.

- **Leadership**

- Seek out and serve in leadership positions, such as on a regional or national executive board, a school committee, or even as a student club advisor. Most organizations hold elections annually and are regularly seeking new faces to join their leadership teams. Self-nominate, or nominate a colleague to serve, and be confident that you have experience and expertise to contribute.
- Reach out to teachers, especially new teachers, to encourage them to get involved in the professional community.

- Become a mentor to a new teacher. Many organizations have formal programs to pair mentors with new teachers, but if the programs do not meet your needs, reach out to a local university that graduates teacher candidates and work together to establish a mentoring relationship.
- Develop your own leadership skills, whether or not leadership comes naturally to you. Organizations such as ACTFL and NECTFL offer training to help you develop the skills necessary to take on professional leadership roles, and they offer grants and scholarships to support teachers in their leadership projects.

Additionally, professional development events are a great way to contribute to the profession. Consider submitting a proposal to present a session in which you share activities, lessons, projects, teaching approaches, or classroom management strategies that have been successful in your classroom. If you are hesitant, attend a conference first to see what types of sessions are well-received; then consider presenting your own and/or co-presenting with a colleague the following year.

Conclusion

Through your leadership in roles like these, and by attending conferences, staying current with research and trends, and contributing your professional expertise in presentations and articles, you are also leading by example. Your leadership can produce a domino effect, both for you and for others. You may find your leadership roles expanding, and you may see your spheres of influence broadened. Involvement in the professional community means world language teachers are better supported and primed for continued learning and growth, all of which translates into a richer classroom experience for our students.

The professional community of world language educators is passionate and vibrant and worth your involvement and commitment. Through the participation of teachers like you, we can improve our individual practice, and in doing so, improve the profession as a whole. As we grow as teachers and a community, the result will be better teaching and more prepared students. And after all, preparing students for a multilingual society is why we entered the profession.

Appendix A

- [ACTFL](#) is the national, guiding organization for world language educators in the United States.
- The [Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages](#) (NECTFL) is one of five regional organizations that collaborates with ACTFL. Our state organization is a member of NECTFL.
- [Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association](#) (PSMLA), the organization responsible for this publication, is the state association for world language educators in Pennsylvania.
- The “AATs” are the American associations of teachers of specific languages. For example, the [AATF](#) is the American Association of Teachers of French.
- There are several regional organizations in Pennsylvania. Some of them are listed on the [PSMLA website](#).
- [LILL](#), an ACTFL program, is the Leadership Initiative for Language Learning. State and other language organizations nominate emerging leaders from their membership for participation in the biannual institute.

Promoting Language Study with the Seal of Biliteracy

Cherie Garrett
Dallastown Area High School

The Seal of Biliteracy is an award given by a school, district, or state in recognition of students who have studied and attained proficiency in English and a second language by high school graduation. This award encourages students to pursue biliteracy, recognizes the skills that students attain, and serves as evidence of linguistic skills sought by college admission boards and by future employers. Although Pennsylvania has not approved the Seal of Biliteracy at this time, the legislation is currently under consideration and will pass more easily if more schools in the state offer the Seal within their school or district. This article explains the necessary steps to successfully implement the Seal of Biliteracy at a school or district level and provides additional information about the Global Seal of Biliteracy, especially for college or university students.

Step 1: Determine the proficiency criteria based on the proposed Pennsylvania Seal of Biliteracy.

Based on the proposed PA Seal of Biliteracy, the criteria options for English proficiency are based on being proficient or advanced on the English Literature Keystone Exam or earning a 4.5 or higher on the WIDA ACCESS for English Language Learners. For second language proficiency, there are various options. The most common assessments are the Advanced Placement World Language Exams, the AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages), and the Stamp 4S (Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency). Students taking the AP exams must earn a “4” or higher while students taking the AAPPL or Stamp 4S must obtain an intermediate high level of proficiency or higher. Other ways to verify an intermediate high proficiency is to score 700+ on a SAT II subject test for a world language or to earn intermediate high or higher on an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) and Written Proficiency Test (WPT). Both the OPI and the WPT are administered by LTI (Language Testing International) and Avant World Speak.

Step 2: Meet with administration to explain the Seal of Biliteracy and the benefits to students and to the school district.

To get support for the Seal, it is necessary to meet with administration to explain the numerous benefits of offering such an award such as encouraging students to study world languages and to continue through the upper levels of the program, to recognize the diverse languages and cultures in the school, to prepare students with 21st century skills, and to certify students' levels of language proficiency which can be used by college admissions boards and future employers. In addition to benefits for the students, it also provides positive public relations for both the school's language programs and the school district as a whole. Lastly, it is imperative to explain the process of implementing the Seal of Biliteracy and any costs (proficiency assessments, certificates, medals, etc.) associated with it.

Step 3: Gather data about potential candidates for the Seal of Biliteracy and meet with them.

After getting approval to offer the Seal, advertise the Seal of Biliteracy to all students in the school. The target audience of students are students taking world languages (including classical languages), EL students, exchange students and deaf and hard of hearing students. It is important to explain the benefits of earning the Seal and setting the biliteracy goal for underclassmen, so they take the necessary classes to prepare them to earn the award. Once interested students have been identified, have a meeting to find out which students are candidates for taking the assessments for proficiency. Since the AAPPL and Stamp 4S assess all 4 skills (reading, writing, listening and

speaking) in Arabic, English, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Thai, it is important to make sure that students can perform all four skills in their target language before registering them for the test. In languages not assessed by the AAPPL or Stamp 4S, the students need to be able to speak (OPI) and write (WPT) in the language. At the high school level, the students should be assessed no sooner than 18 months before they graduate so that the Seal reflects their current level of proficiency upon graduation.

Step 4: Collect English proficiency scores.

Speak to the guidance counselors to find out the students' English proficiency scores by using the Keystone Exam in Literature. For students who did not take the Keystone exam or who were not proficient, speak to the EL teacher to either find out the students' WIDA scores or to administer the WIDA to determine their level of proficiency in English.

Step 5: Assess students' proficiency in a language other than English.

Register the students to take a proficiency test (AAPPL, Stamp 4S, etc.) at least 2 months before the end of the school year so that the results are determined in time.. For some exams, such as the Advanced Placement exam, the results are not received until mid-July, so the award is not announced until that time. The cost of the exams varies from \$20 for the AAPPL or Stamp 4S, \$55 for the OPI and WPT (if the AAPPL is given to other students), and \$95 for the AP exam. The cost of the proficiency exams can be covered by educational grants, Title III funds, school funds or the students could pay of their own accord.

Step 6: Compile the testing data and recognize award recipients.

After the students complete the testing, it is important to share the results with them so that they know their current level of proficiency and have the documentation to prove it. The data should then be compiled to create a list of students who qualified for the Seal of Biliteracy based on the predetermined criteria. Each student should receive a certificate and/or medal to recognize their achievement. Also, the school administration should be notified as well as the local media.

The Seal of Biliteracy is offered to students K-12 in schools who offer the award; however, another alternative is the Global Seal of Biliteracy which is offered to anyone who demonstrates proficiency in both English and a second language at the intermediate-mid, advanced low or advanced high level. For colleges, universities and schools that don't offer the Seal of Biliteracy, this is another viable way to provide recognition for students who are bilingual. The Global Seal of Biliteracy is awarded at the following levels: Functional Fluency™, Working Fluency™ and Professional Fluency,™ and a certificate is offered at no cost to anyone who has the proper documentation to prove their proficiency in English and has qualifying test scores for a second language. Many colleges and universities have seen an increase in retention and language program enrollment as a result of the implementation of the Global Seal of Biliteracy.

In summary, the Seal of Biliteracy and the Global Seal of Biliteracy are excellent opportunities to provide students with an accurate assessment of their proficiency and to recognize those who achieve an intermediate through advanced level of proficiency. The awards not only encourage students to study languages and to continue their pursuit of proficiency, but also provides recognition of the diverse cultures and languages in the school. Moreover, the award creates positive public relations for both the school and the programs that develop the students' linguistic skills. Finally, the Seal of Biliteracy serves as evidence of students' linguistic proficiency and cultural awareness and is extremely beneficial for universities and future employers who are seeking candidates with these 21st century skills.

Sources

[Global Seal of Biliteracy](#)

Learn more about the Global Seal of Biliteracy, its purpose, ways to earn it, and support materials.

[Seal of Biliteracy](#)

A useful resource which explains the Seal of Biliteracy, its purpose, state guidelines, steps for implementation, ways to award it and support materials.

[ACTFL Assessments](#)

Additional information about ACTFL assessments.

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES *NEW*

The following section contains two contributed articles that have undergone our blind peer-review process.

The first piece, by **Deiter and Cortijo of Slippery Rock University** presents the importance of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) and its inclusion in our classrooms, especially as there seems to be an “app” for just about everything.

The second article, by **Madel of Plymouth Whitemarsh High School** article showcases the impact of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) among Novice- High/ Intermediate-Low students when they are provided the opportunity to incorporate independent reading into their classroom activities.

A special thank you to our authors and peer reviewers for this inaugural issue!

Empowering Second Language Learners through Intercultural Communicative Competence

Gisela P. Dieter and Adelaida Cortijo

Slippery Rock University

Abstract

It is no secret that the United States' workforce is becoming increasingly internationalized; the need to recruit employees who speak an additional language other than English has become increasingly evident. Globalization and connectivity are buzz words. However, there is an inverse correlation between an increasing demand for workers who speak other languages/increased demographic shifts, and low-enrolled language courses at institutions of higher education. This article suggests that one way to reverse the low-enrollment trend is to integrate Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) in the second language classrooms. This integration, however, faces significant hurdles such as language educators' perceptions of the need to implement cultural competence in their lesson plans mostly focused on linguistic competence; and the effects of their own low intercultural competence. The article encourages sharing successful experiences integrating ICC among language educators to promote empowerment to fulfill our roles as nurturers of cultural competence in our classrooms.

Key Words: intercultural communicative competence (ICC), cultural competence, globalization, second language skills, second language teaching, second language learning.

Introduction

Globalization is the buzz word that signals world connectivity. Indeed, the world has never been so small, and we have never been as connected to other people and cultures as we are now. This reality makes knowing a second language an important aspect when preparing to enter this new and vast network of possibilities.

Demand for a more globalized workforce

The relevance of knowing languages other than English in the United States is evidenced in recent studies. In May of 2019, ACTFL published "Making Languages Our Business: Addressing Foreign Language Demand Among U.S. Employers," ("Making Languages Our Business: Addressing Foreign Language Demand Among U.S. Employers," 2019) which shows the critical need for multilingual employees, providing the most comprehensive look at the value of foreign language to date. Moreover, the study shows that this demand is on a sustained rise as the majority of employers report that their companies' need for foreign languages has increased over the past five years and project that it will continue to grow. With a five-year outlook, employers in the healthcare and social assistance sectors, for instance, are the most likely to expect an increase in demand (64 %), followed by employers in trade (59 %), education services (57%), professional and technical services (55%) and construction (54%) ("Making Languages Our Business: Addressing Foreign Language Demand Among U.S. Employers," , 3-8)

Another implication of living in a global society is the need to transcend mere linguistic knowledge. For effective intercultural communication to occur, a high level of cultural competence is

also required. The importance of addressing and integrating intercultural competence into language learning becomes, then, vital for training the future workforce on how to sustain successful intercultural communication. Qualified workers who are skilled in a language other than English within industries such as construction, hospitality, travel, healthcare, social assistance, education, and the trades, for instance, are in high demand. But understanding and practicing cultural awareness have a major significance when dealing with populations of international origin in these sectors. For example, safety administrators who manage the construction industry must consider the demographics within that sector. Since the number of construction workers of Hispanic origin continues to rise (Looney and Lusin 34), making sure that safety parameters are clearly addressed and communicated in a linguistic and culturally appropriate manner is extremely important. Otherwise, these could have costly repercussions for both workers and companies.

Integrating ICC into language learning

The importance of integrating intercultural competence into language learning is clearly recognized by national language organizations too. The 2017 NCSSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements (NCSSFL-ACTFL 2019), the result of collaboration between the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages (NCSSFL) and ACTFL, for example, include new statements for Intercultural Communication and a Reflection Tool for Learners to demonstrate how they can use the target language and knowledge of culture to show their Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). This tool is intended to clarify and support ACTFL's World-Readiness Cultures standards by noticing how to: "...use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices or products and perspectives of cultures" and to lead learners toward developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). For the purpose of this document, ICC refers to what the ACTFL Can-do-Statements' Document defines as "the ability to interact effectively and appropriately with people from other language and cultural backgrounds." Continuing with the definition,

ICC develops as the result of a process of intentional goal-setting and self-reflection around language and culture and involves attitudinal changes toward one's own and other cultures. ICC is essential for establishing effective, positive and meaningful relationships across cultural boundaries, required in a global society (NCSSFL-ACTFL).

This is precisely what ACTFL recommends to businesses aiming at staying relevant in today's market: "to maintain an inventory of the linguistic and cultural competencies of the workforce and to identify and cultivate a pipeline of multilingual talent" ("Making Languages Our Business", 3-8). This reveals that an emphasis on the cultural aspects of second language learning is, therefore, a key that would contribute to the transformation of the United States' workforce. Promoting intercultural competence will tally valuable skills and dispositions to those seeking to become relevant in today's marketplace by adding the ability to: act and speak with an open and inquisitive mind, listen openly to new points of view, think flexibly, critically, and with empathy in new situation, and to foster a desire to find out what is beneath the surface of cultural practices and products; and promote a willingness to interact with others from different cultures (Bott Van Houten and Shelton 34).

This strong and growing demand for foreign language skills and cultural competence is a natural result of the evolving conditions of the U.S. society as increasingly multilingual and multicultural, with approximately 65 million U.S. residents speaking a language other than English (40 % of which have limited or no English proficiency) and with 96 % of the world's consumers and two-thirds of its purchasing power residing outside U.S. borders. However, when this reality faces the reality of a third (34 %) of U.S. employers who depend on foreign languages, reporting a foreign

language skills gap when asked if their employees are able to meet their foreign language needs, the resulting scenario is chaotic and alarming. Further, the foreign languages with the greatest demand among employers also rank as having the biggest shortages. Eighty five percent of U.S. employers say they need employees with Spanish skills, making it by far the most sought-after language. This is followed by Chinese (34 %), French (22 %) and Japanese (17 %). Meanwhile, 42 percent of employers say they are experiencing a shortage in Spanish skills, followed by 33 percent, 18 percent and 17 percent reporting gaps in Chinese, Japanese and French skills, respectively (Looney and Lusin, 3-4).

Declining Enrollments versus rising demand

The data presented in the MLA Report above describes how total enrollment (undergraduate and graduate) in languages other than English dropped by 9.2% between fall 2013 and fall 2016, as reported in the MLA's twenty-fifth language enrollment census (Looney and Lusin 2-4). It is interesting to note that even though Spanish still lays claim to the majority of language enrollment, (50.2%) it dropped by 9.8% in 2016 after dropping by 8.3% in 2013. These findings signal an inverse correlation, particularly revolving around the Spanish language in the United States. On the one hand, the trends in employers' needs reflect the importance of Spanish at the moment of hiring, while on the other hand, there is a significant decline in enrollment in Spanish courses at institutions of higher education. If one considers the demographic trends as recorded by the U.S. Census Bureau, nationally, the most populous minority group is Hispanics, who numbered 52 million in 2011, which constitutes 16.7% of the nation's total population. The projections indicate nothing but a continued growth of this segment of the population in the coming years. This projection, accompanied by the expressed increase in the demand for Spanish-speaking employees in the market, makes the decline in enrollment in Spanish courses at 2- and 4-year colleges, surprisingly contradictory and counter-productive.

It is not within the scope of this essay to analyze the reasons for this decline or inverse correlation, as much as to provide insight into one alternative that could be adopted to help stop such erosion of students, and boost enrollment in higher education language classes: integrating intercultural competence in language learning. Emphasizing and making the connection between the relevance of intercultural competence and learners' future professional success could be the proverbial key that opens the door to higher enrollment.

Maintaining the focus on ICC

The MLA report mentioned above supports this observation. For instance, the report highlights how integrating language and culture has worked well for the Department of German at Georgetown University, which reported increased enrollments in fall 2016 for all three levels of study included in the report: introductory undergraduate (183, up from 176 in 2013 and 135 in 2009), advanced undergraduate (43, up from 28 in 2013 and 13 in 2009), and graduate (36, up from 34 in 2013 and 19 in 2009). Its headline-making undergraduate curriculum reflects the department's commitment to close collaboration between literary and cultural studies faculty members and colleagues with primary expertise in second language acquisition and linguistics. The four-year curriculum fully integrates language and content as it emphasizes developing cultural literacy and fostering advanced language acquisition (Looney and Lusin 7).

Therefore, learning about culture in a context that promotes more target language use, while learners explore their own culture, interact with native speakers, develop insight that may change

attitudes, and are more open to community engagement is crucial to achieving the goal of ICC, but also has the potential to boost enrollment and to retain healthy/sustainable numbers in language programs. Learning the second language while learning the culture go hand in hand. The link between linguistic knowledge and cultural knowledge creates a level of competence that enables learners to aspire to a successful positioning in the globalized job market. The pedagogical implication for the second language classroom then shifts towards the importance of fostering a level of curiosity in the learners that helps them attain in-depth cultural learning while facilitating their journey to becoming proficiently qualified users of the target language in terms of socially appropriate communication (Özışık et al. 1437).

Regardless, ICC as a learning objective in the language classroom, could prove challenging to attain. The reasons for such challenge depend heavily on language teachers' perception or degree of realization of the importance of integrating culture with language study. Another reason of great significance is language educator's own cultural competence in the target culture (Al-Amir 28, Sercu, et al, 180). Sercu, et al. investigated teachers' perceptions towards the incorporation of intercultural competence in EFL classrooms. Teachers who participated in the study were from seven different countries: Bulgaria, Mexico, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Greece and Sweden. They were asked whether they believed cultural competence should be taught in their classrooms and whether it has positive impacts on students' performance or not. They concluded that, if in this new globalized world, where people from different cultures mobilize among various geographic regions, groups from diverse backgrounds need to understand each other, and not simply exchange information, language learning/training must be more complex and rich than one with an emphasis solely on communicative competence. Achieving this level of complexity depends on the measure that educators themselves receive a highly complex and enriched training that enhances their own ICC (Sercu, et al 180). In other words, language educators need to experience the culture so they can be willing and able to teach it. Just as with language proficiency, the teachers themselves need to be interculturally competent in order to promote intercultural competence in their classroom.

The implications of these affirmations indicate that supporting the ICC development of language educators should be a priority. In the era of COVID-19, however, when most study abroad and cultural immersion programs have been canceled, and when second language courses have migrated to online modalities that tend to favor linguistic competence, the emphasis seems to be on the exchange of information between people who speak different languages, rather than on a comprehensive approach that integrates cultural and linguistic competencies. Proliferation of language learning and translation electronic applications also seems to be creating an oversimplified view of the language acquisition process and of what constitutes effective intercultural interactions. In a society where there is "an app" for everything, interculturally-integrated language learning might actually be the missing link learners cannot get in an electronic application. App-mediated language learning lacks cultural integration, a crucial component to ICC. Failing to understand that communicating with people from different cultures and languages goes beyond linguistic ability aided by raw, electronically channeled translations, can seriously hinder intercultural exchanges. Language educators must be clear about this truth, and consistently integrate interculturality and global competence in the classroom to counteract the pervasive impact of the app-driven mentality. It is, therefore, not simply knowing about the language and about the culture. Rather, it is an active participation in communicating with those from another cultures, experiencing and discovering the differences and similarities because of an inherent curiosity, and forming new attitudes that mediate between one's own and others' cultures. Ultimately, the goals of ICC are to expand one's own world view; to develop an insider's perspective toward the target culture's beliefs, traditions and ways of behaving; to develop a sensitivity toward alternative perspectives and cultural

differences and mediate those divides through language; and finally, to expand one's own identity as a global citizen (Bott Van Houten and Shelton 35).

The lingering question now is how to support language educators who need to empower themselves with Intercultural Competence in an era of social distancing and collapsed plans for cultural immersion programs. One alternative could be to share existing knowledge and to foster collaboration among language educators. At our institution, we have a success story not much unlike the case of German at Georgetown University mentioned earlier. For us, the model of integrating language and culture has worked significantly well in the Arabic program. Our department went from offering only the basic Arabic 101, 102 and 103 in 2010 with only 25 total students enrolled in 101 and 103 in the fall of 2010 to currently offering a Certificate in Middle Eastern Studies and a Minor in Arabic with a total of 97 students enrolled in the fall of 2020, an almost 3-fold increase in the last 10 years.

The vast majority of students enrolled in these programs come from three departments in particular, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Homeland/Corporate Security Studies, and Military Science (ROTC). It is crucial to promote and offer these students a strong curriculum where cultural practices, products and their relationship to perspectives are a big part of the language learning process so we can prepare them well to become successful future professionals in their fields. Therefore, as a principle, the classroom experience is centered around the cultural products, practices, and perspectives of Arab speaking countries. Culture is not an add-on. Classes are structured so students can learn something new about the culture that ties in with the linguistic functions being studied. For example, when teaching how to address people, Arabic can be similar in some way to English. When you talk to a friend you use the first name adding the word (ya) يَا in front of it which would be similar to saying (hey), hey Ahmad يَا أَحْمَد, hey Jack يَا جَاك but this (ya) يَا can get interesting when it turns to formal (you) if you put it in front of a title such as Dr., Miss, Mr., etc. يَا دَكْتُور، يَا أَسْتَاذَة، يَا سَيِّد Examples like this one are integrated into the daily lessons plans to contextualize the grammar.

On the same topic of addressing people, calling older people that we don't know personally with the title of خَالَة (khalah) [aunt] or عم (Am) [uncle] is a common cultural practice. Let's say, for example, you are trying to get the attention of an unknown woman on the street who has dropped something and want to bring it to her attention. To get her attention you call out to her by saying خَالَة (khalah), but make sure she's old enough to be called aunt or she will be upset, because the term implies that the person is old. These seemingly simple exercises provide important information that equips learners in their journey to Intercultural Communicative Competence. Future professionals in the disciplines that feed the Arabic program (Criminology, Homeland Security/ROTC) benefit tremendously from the knowledge and the ability to appropriately apply these concepts in the social circumstances they very likely will encounter in their fields. Understanding sociocultural issues of formality and respect when addressing members of the Arab communities is a key aspect of ICC. Successful application of these cultural functions of the Arabic language will enable learners to be effective at their jobs in critical ways.

Another example of integrating culture into the vocabulary lesson plan is when learning animal names in Arabic. It is important to point out to students that animals can be used to reference something else. For example, كَلْب (kaleb) [dog] is an insult if you call someone that, while غَزَال (ghazal) [deer] can be used to flirt with a woman as a reference to beauty. حِمَار (himaar) [donkey] is a reference to someone stupid, and the list goes on. As students of Arabic learn about these cultural practices, they could associate them to their own cultures and make interesting intercultural connections and comparisons that will help them relate and remember these concepts. It comes to

mind the use of the word “dog” and how it could be also an insult in American English, just like it is in Arabic. By thinking about this reality, students would be able to relate to this practice, which may nurture curiosity to figure out the nuances of the similarities, which is an important element that promotes language proficiency (Özışık et al. 1437).

Seeing the language from the perspective of the culture, gives students meaning and purpose in their study of a second language. However, it does not need to be overly complicated either. Combining culture and language can be accomplished by incorporating low-stress cultural practices. For example, in Arabic courses, the simple act of bringing chocolate or other treats to class, can be used to explain cultural practices and traditions of hospitality in Arab regions, while at the same time, introducing some high-frequency expressions in Arabic utilized in the context of sharing meals. ICC in the Arabic program is also reinforced by a wide variety of Arabic Club activities such as cooking sessions, game night, belly-dancing sessions, and field trips to mention a few. Of course, the conversion of many second language courses to online modalities due to, not just to the current pandemic, but also as a countermeasure to low-enrolled language courses/programs nation-wide, hoping the convenience of online classes would attract more students, has deeply disrupted the teaching and learning experience.

Arabic courses at our institution, however, will continue to be delivered in a multimodal format, implementing smaller cohorts that will rotate between face-to-face and synchronous online simulcasts for the time being. In the case that Arabic classes were to move to fully online, the challenge would require imaginative ways to bridge the gap created by the lack of presential interaction. One example of how to manage the integration of Interculturality in an online format could be to create a task where learners need to research norms of social closeness in Arabic cultures during times of emergencies such as the pandemic, to analyze the changes that have been implemented and compare them to the experience in the learners’ own culture. This task could be carried out in small groups. The information could be then presented using video-conferencing applications facilitated by the instructor and discussion could be extended to discussion boards in the Learning Management System employed.

In the fully online environment, basic practices such as sharing of treats in class would have to be re-imagined. Instead of the instructor providing the treats, learners would have to be directed towards making the treats themselves, through live, web-cooking tutorials that could incorporate high impact learning practices which are very effective. Classroom cultural videos can go from the passive reception of information, to becoming a source of inspiration for learners to learn how to make artifacts. For example, the isolated instance of a student sharing with the instructor how after watching a video in class on how to make Arabic jewelry, she decided to make a piece of jewelry herself, could become a whole-class assessment method. The assessment would be making the jewelry after watching the video. This would be a very tangible and fun learning outcome. Hands-on training provides language instructors with a unique opportunity to enrich the minds of students in new and engaging ways. The transformation of pedagogies accelerated by the migration to online modalities can become a push for innovative ways to integrate Intercultural Communicative Competence into the language classroom.

Interaction between people from different linguistic backgrounds requires a level of cultural competence for understanding to fully take place. Instructional models that become more of a tour of the senses, guided by the products, practices and perspectives, revealing significant aspects of the target cultures’ worldviews represent a potential road towards ICC. At the same time, this integration of linguistic ability and cultural proficiency has the potential to spark enough curiosity in learners to

move them towards second language courses, improving the likelihood of more bilingual professionals who can successfully and effectively navigate the globalized job market.

Current pressure from different sources such as low-enrolled language courses/programs and pandemics are changing the way languages are taught. Widespread migration of second language programs to online formats presents risks favoring linguistic proficiency at the expense of cultural competence, which could deter the objective of achieving Intercultural Communicative Competence. Therefore, the need to remain vigilant in this new era of second language learning and teaching is significantly heightened. Leaving behind the interaction between products, practices, and perspectives within the target language would hinder learners' ability to question, reflect, and understand global issues important to a 21st century future professional, and to anyone seeking to function effectively in the current globalized economy. The globalization of the job market, then, threatens to leave behind employment-seeking professionals who are not able to offer the skills and dispositions 21st century employers seek. Providing second language learning experiences that emphasize intercultural competence is one way to empower today's learners to successfully enter this challenging workforce, without forgetting the added benefit of boosting enrollment and retaining healthy/sustainable numbers in second language programs too. By sharing our experiences with the integration of Intercultural Communicative Competence in our classrooms, language educators will feel better equipped and empowered to commit to ICC, regardless of limitations caused by current and future world crises.

Conclusion

The development of ICC is a continuous journey that enriches individuals and makes them aware of others while promoting self-transformation. Teaching culture by addressing meaningful products, practices and perspectives that relate directly to specific professions or intercultural encounters through language learning is the vehicle to form a stronger workforce and global citizens. Understanding others is crucial to succeed and exceed in this multicultural society and to become a long time learner through self-reflection, interaction and communication with native speakers. Cultural knowledge is the key to thriving in the workplace as it facilitates the development of deeper and more meaningful relationships with native speakers from the target language, and ultimately using this advantage in the marketplace. There is really no app that could replace all that.

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Evaluating the Impact of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) in Spanish Class

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Abstract

This action research study evaluated the impact of Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) among Novice-High/Intermediate-Low students of Spanish using a mixed methods design. Participants (n=35) provided pre-test/post-test data to inform the project's influence on quantity of books read for pleasure, perceived enjoyment of reading in Spanish, and perceived confidence reading in the target language. Participants (n=17) also offered comments and suggestions regarding the FVR experience. Results indicated that participation in the experience increased the quantity of books that participants read for pleasure as well as their perceived enjoyment of reading in Spanish. There was no significant impact on participants' perceived reading confidence. Qualitative responses indicated an overall successful and enjoyable experience. The impact of this study's results on the classroom and research limitations are also discussed.

Introduction

In the era of proficiency development, all language teachers are faced with a similar challenge: provide compelling, communicatively embedded target language input that serves to promote language acquisition among our students. A shortcoming of a one-size-fits-all curriculum, however, is that interests and readiness are often widely varied among student populations. How can language teachers more closely approximate our students' interests and abilities in the target language? One strategy that has been gaining considerable attention in the field is through the implementation of a process called Free Voluntary Reading (FVR).

FVR is a concept that has existed under other monikers for some time. Some may refer to this time as sustained silent reading, pleasure reading, or recreational reading. Regardless of its name, it can be understood as "reading because you want to, no book report, no questions at the end of the chapter. FVR means putting down a book you don't like and choosing another one" (Krashen, 2004, p. 10). In the language classroom – especially those that regard the authoritative Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) – FVR is a means to ensure students interact with rich and compelling target language input. Krashen, Lee, and Lao (2017) described this specific subcategory as "input that is so interesting that the acquirer 'forgets' what language he or she is reading or listening to" and that "when input is 'compelling,' only the message exists" (p. 1).

Recognizing the potential impact and benefits of having language students engage in FVR in the target language, I acquired an extensive library of reading material (e.g., novels, magazines, graphic novels, current events, etc.) and structured access to these materials during instructional time throughout an entire semester. (See Appendix A for a list of titles that were available for students in the classroom library.) Eager to understand the impact that this experience had among the students, I collected data before and after the experience in the form of a mixed methods action research study

(Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). As such, this report presents and analyzes the data that respond specifically to the following research questions:

RQ1: How much did my students read for pleasure in English before taking my course? Does the amount of pleasure reading differ significantly after concluding my course and engaging with the FVR project?

RQ2: How much do my students enjoy reading for pleasure in the target language (i.e., Spanish) before taking my course? Does my students' enjoyment for pleasure reading in the target language differ significantly after concluding my course and engaging with the FVR project?

RQ3: How confident are my students when reading in the target language? Does their reading confidence differ significantly after concluding my course and engaging with the FVR project?

RQ4: What are students' general opinions about the implementation of FVR in their Spanish class?

Literature Review

Research regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of language acquisition through pleasure reading and storytelling is well documented in academic literature. This approach to language acquisition supports one of Krashen's (1982, 1985) fundamental hypotheses known as the Input Hypothesis. This hypothesis claims that "we acquire [language] only when we understand language that contains structure that is 'a little beyond' where we are now" (Krashen, 1982, p. 21). From this assertion, language educators are encouraged to increase the exposure of compelling and comprehensible input as a means to promote organic language acquisition. As a byproduct of input-oriented language acquisition, students will gain fluency and confidence in their target language abilities (Krashen et al., 2017; Renandya, Krashen, & Jacobs, 2018).

The use of FVR in classrooms has gained popularity in world language classrooms focused on teaching with comprehensible input since Krashen (2004, 2011) began documenting its effectiveness in supporting world language curricular goals and general proficiency development. As such, it is easy to find a variety of informal teacher blogs dedicated to sharing their personal experiences and suggestions for others in regard to their use of FVR. Reviewing these first-hand experiences and reports from teachers in the field engaging in various forms of FVR shows that some teachers dedicate time in class daily, weekly and/or monthly to this endeavor (e.g., Breckley, 2019; Fernandez, 2020; Peto, 2015; etc.). Moreover, some teachers herald FVR in its purest form while others encourage students to write reviews/reactions for future students or for accountability purposes. Regardless of the classroom and/or curricular format, students' self-selection of texts and their ability to engage with the target language in a safe, compelling, and comprehensible manner is at the heart of this approach (Krashen, 2011; Krashen et al., 2017).

Enriching Students' Experience

The evidence to support pleasure reading – both in students' first and second language – is well established. The literature describing the enhancements and enrichments positively linked to pleasure reading were outlined by Clark and Rumbold (2006) as:

- reading attainment and writing ability (OECD, 2000) for reading that is done both in school and out of school (Krashen, 1993; Anderson et al., 1988; Taylor et al., 1990);
- text comprehension and grammar (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992; Cox & Guthrie, 2001), even after a variety of health, wealth and school factors were statistically controlled for (Elley, 1994);

- breadth of vocabulary (Angelos & McGriff, 2002), even after other relevant abilities such as IQ or text-decoding skills are controlled for (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998);
- positive reading attitudes (Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999), which are linked to achievement in reading (McKenna & Kear, 1990);
- greater self-confidence as a reader (Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999);
- pleasure reading in later life (Aarnoutse & van Leeuwe, 1998).

More broadly, Clark and Rumbold (2006) also cited the following aspects positively impacted by pleasure reading:

- general knowledge (e.g. Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998);
- a better understanding of other cultures (Meek, 1991);
- community participation (e.g. Bus, van Ijzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995);
- a greater insight into human nature and decision-making (Bruner, 1996).

In summary, the literature clearly indicates positive impact for students from engaging in pleasure reading whether it be during school or outside of the classroom. Coupling the myriad of aforementioned extrinsic benefits with the theoretical foundation of second language acquisition principles and processes provided by Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis, FVR emerges as a highly valuable strategy for language teachers to achieve their expressed curricular goals.

Methodology

Research Design

This study is best defined as a form of action research. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) described this research methodology as “a type of applied research that focuses on finding a solution to a local problem in a local setting” (p. 84). In order to best address the four research questions identified at the outset of this report, a convergent mixed methods approach was utilized. The aforementioned authors described this as “research that involves not only collecting, analyzing, and interpreting both quantitative and qualitative data by also *integrating* conclusions from those data into a cohesive whole” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 311, emphasis in original). In convergent research designs such as this study, Leedy and Ormrod (2010) also suggested that

the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data in parallel, usually at the same time and with response to the same general research problem ... [giving] similar or equal weight to the two types of data and strives for triangulation, with the hope that analyses of both data sets lead to similar conclusions about the phenomenon under investigation. (p. 313)

To that end, the first three research questions were explored quantitatively via a pre-test/post-test quasi-experimental design and the fourth question was explored qualitatively via a one-shot case study design. The results were then synthesized to enlighten a unified conclusion.

Participants

A total of 35 students from two separate sections of Spanish classes in a suburban public school district outside of Philadelphia responded voluntarily to both the pre-test and post-test data collection instruments used in this study. Five students did not participate in one or both data collection stages resulting in a participation rate of 88%. These students largely demonstrated Novice High proficiency entering the course and Intermediate Low proficiency upon the course's end as evidenced by robust performance assessments (Adair-Hauck, Glisan, & Troyan, 2013) tied to ACTFL's (2012) Proficiency Guidelines. Given that the research design demands that pre-test results

are evaluated as they are paired with post-test results, participation was not initially anonymous and participants were advised that there would be no circumstance in which they would be penalized for non-participation.

Information Collection

The first three research questions were explored quantitatively via a pre-test/post-test quasi-experimental design (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010)) in which Novice High/Intermediate-Low Spanish students (n=35) responded to a questionnaire at the outset of the course to identify baseline data (pre-test) and once again at the culmination of the semester to provide data after the intervention (post-test). At the outset of the course, participants were prompted at the end of a standard student information questionnaire to respond to three questions pertaining to their perceptions and practices regarding reading for pleasure. This information served as the study's baseline data set. First, participants identified how many books they read in a given year for pleasure (regardless of language), then they evaluated their perceived enjoyment and confidence regarding reading in the target language (i.e., Spanish). At the end of the course, students were given the choice to participate in the post-test data collection. This instrument consisted of three questions pertaining to the first three research questions and one pertaining to the last. The first three questions mirrored the pre-test asking how many books did they read in Spanish during the semester, how much do they enjoy reading in Spanish, and how confident they are in their abilities to read in Spanish. Questions pertaining to perceived enjoyment and reading abilities were provided a 10-point scale in which 1=not at all and 10=very much. Given that the fourth research question prompted a more qualitative approach, the final data collection instrument closed with the question "Do you have any other comments or suggestions regarding the free reading experience in this course?"

Procedures

During the summer preceding the 2019-20 school year, I acquired a grant that provided funds to develop an extensive classroom library of reading materials in addition to furniture that permitted comfortable flexible seating options and aesthetic organization of the materials that permitted access (see Figure 1). In recognition of the multitude of benefits of pleasure reading - both in the first and target languages - this project intended to develop a classroom library of reading material with which students could engage freely according to the range of their abilities and interests. A classroom library that truly meets the needs of diverse learners requires certain characteristics: 1) diverse themes, 2) diverse and compelling characters, 3) tiered access, 4) varied literary genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, biography, magazines, graphic novels, etc.), and 5) a comfortable and safe space that invites focused pleasure reading. As such, this project requested funds to develop a library of over 100 titles (see Appendix A) obtained from a variety of publishers dedicated to creating target language materials designed for the language learner within a wide variety of abilities. Small furniture items related to material organization and flexible seating options were also purchased. The materials were organized primarily by their accessibility level as evidenced by characteristics such as total word count, unique word count, visual scaffolds, use of cognates, etc.



Participants engaged voluntarily with the baseline data collection instrument via a Google Form (as described in the previous section) at the outset of the course. Once the course began, the project was implemented for a total of 113 class minutes over a period of 14 class meetings (approximately eight minutes per FVR session) from October 2019 to January 2020. Time dedicated to FVR was generally programmed into individual lessons by providing independent reading time at the beginning of the course. On rare occasion, FVR was available at the end of a lesson that finished sooner than anticipated.

As students entered the classroom, there was a prompt projected electronically that communicated that class would start with free reading time. Students quickly developed routines throughout the semester that involved perusing and selecting books of their interest as well as establishing flexible seating that allowed for comfortable reading free from distractions. While students were reading independently, the instructor engaged in two simultaneous activities: modelling free reading along with the students while also periodically assessing the group's attention to the texts. When it appeared that students' attention to the texts had begun to wane, students were directed to finish their paragraph or page, mark their spot, and return the text to its original place in the classroom library.

At the culmination of the course, students were given the opportunity to participate in the final data collection phase. An invitation to provide their activity and perceptions was shared via the course's learning management system and their responses were collected via a Google Form.

Information Analysis

The primary means of analysis for the first three research questions was a paired samples t-test which allowed for the statistical comparison of means between two time intervals (Pallant, 2013). In the case of this study, the two time intervals are the pre-test and the post-test data collection stages. Additionally, the third research question prompted further analysis and, as such, the implementation of a correlation analysis of the paired samples was conducted. The fourth research question prompted a qualitative analysis of participants' free responses (n=17). The responses were coded and categorized into like themes from which an overarching conclusion could be made (Saladaña, 2016). These results combined to inform the broader evaluation relative to the project's efficacy and fitness for inclusion in subsequent semesters.

Ethical Considerations

This study utilized a type of applied research (i.e., action research) within a classroom setting. As such, it was imperative to meet certain ethical considerations in addition to receiving local approval. First, various district administrators reviewed the proposal and evaluated the classroom research project without objection. Upon conducting the data collection, students were made aware at each stage of the process that their participation was voluntary and non-participation was under no threat of penalty or critical judgement. In fact, as mentioned above, 12% of eligible students declined to participate in the pre-test and/or the post-test data collection phase. Furthermore, participants' names were immediately de-identified by replacing them with arbitrary numbers as soon as pairs were confirmed and before specific data was analyzed as a means of eliminating the prospect of penalty. Lastly, local administration reviewed both the specific steps that were taken to protect the

participants from harm as well as the draft manuscript before providing final approval to ensure that sufficient ethical considerations were met.

Results

This study investigated the impact of implementing FVR in a Novice-Low/Intermediate High Spanish class on qualities such as frequency, enjoyment, and perceived reading confidence. To that end, four research questions were developed to guide the analysis and evaluation. Each of the research questions described in the opening section are listed below with their respective results.

RQ1: How much did my students read for pleasure before taking my course? Does the amount of pleasure reading differ significantly after concluding my course and engaging with the FVR project?

Descriptive statistics reveal that the participants (n=35) in this action research study read on average approximately 1.5 books for pleasure (in English) each year upon entering the course. This data ranged from a maximum of 6.5 and a minimum of zero. On average, after the implementation of the FVR project from October 2019 to January 2020, participants approximated the amount of books they read for pleasure in Spanish as almost 5.5 on average (see Table 1 and Figure 2). To give a more appropriate comparison, given that the baseline data was relative to the amount of pleasure reading participants did in English in a given year, the results of their pleasure reading in Spanish after four months was extrapolated to an estimated full year of instruction (see Figure 2).

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics from Pre- and Post-test Questionnaire*

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Pleasure Reading # (pre)	35	6.5	.0	6.5	1.429	1.8196
Enjoyment (pre)	35	8	1	9	5.40	2.316
Confidence (pre)	35	6	2	8	6.57	1.520
Pleasure reading # (post)	35	14	1	15	5.40	3.070
Enjoyment (post)	35	9	1	10	6.74	1.651
Confidence (post)	35	6	4	10	6.91	1.422
Valid N (listwise)	35					

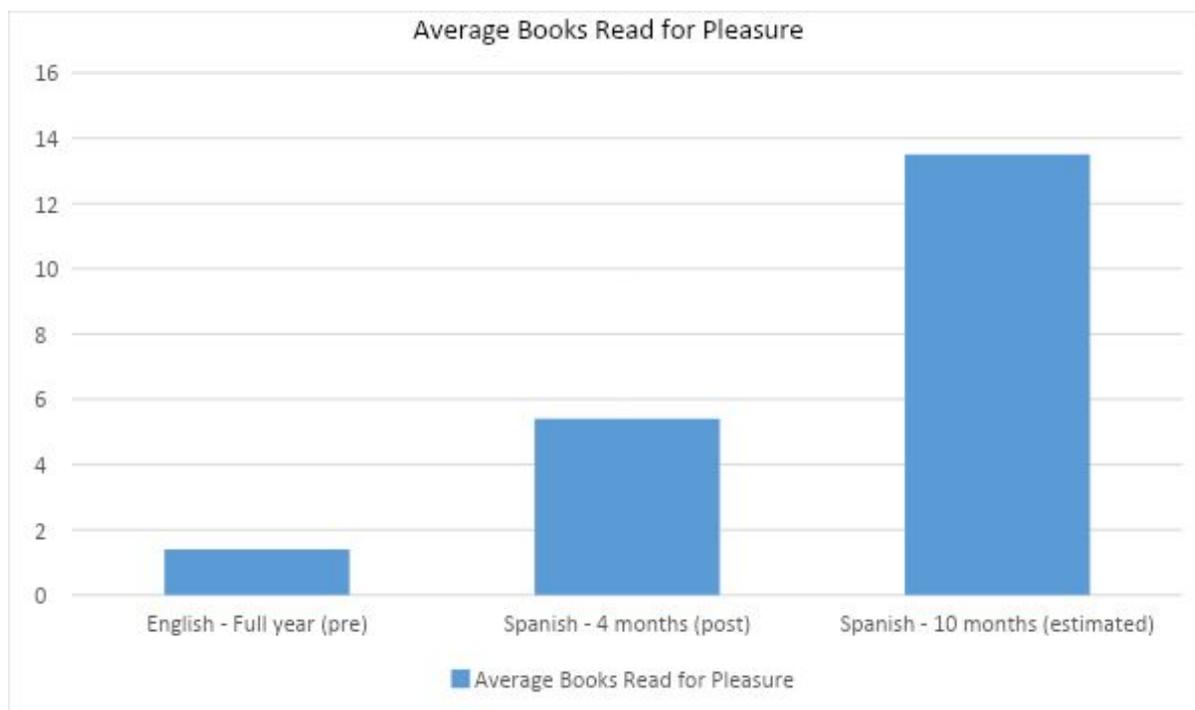


Figure 2. Graph showing the average amount of books read for pleasure based on pre- and post-test questionnaire data and an estimated extrapolation.

A paired-samples t-test was conducted as per Pallant (2013) to compare the amount of books read for pleasure in English in a given year and in Spanish during the 4-month in-class trial. There was a significant difference in the amount of books read for pleasure in English ($M=1.43$, $SD=1.82$) and Spanish ($M=5.40$, $SD=3.07$); $t(34) = -5.78$, $p < .001$. These results (shown in Table 2) suggest that the implementation of free voluntary reading in Spanish class significantly increases the overall quantity of books students are reading for pleasure.

Table 2. Results of Paired Samples T-test

		Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	n	Sig.
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pleasure Reading (pre) - Pleasure reading (post)	-3.9714	4.0655	.6872	-5.3680	-2.5749	-5.779	34	.000
Pair 2	Enjoyment (pre) - Enjoyment (post)	-1.343	2.520	.426	-2.208	-.477	-3.153	34	.003
Pair 3	Confidence (pre) - Confidence (post)	-.343	1.259	.213	-.775	.090	-1.611	34	.116

RQ2: How much do my students enjoy reading for pleasure in Spanish before taking my course? Does my students' enjoyment for pleasure reading in Spanish differ significantly after concluding my course and engaging with the FVR project?

Descriptive statistics reveal that the participants (n=35) in this action research study only moderately enjoyed reading for pleasure in Spanish upon entering the course (M=5.4 on a scale from one to 10 where 1=not at all at all and 10=very much). This data ranged from a maximum of nine and minimum of one. On average, after the implementation of the FVR project, participants' perception of their enjoyment of pleasure reading in Spanish rose to an average of 6.74 (see Table 1 and Figure 3).

Table 3. *Paired Sample Correlations*

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pleasure Reading (pre) & Pleasure reading (post)	35	-.340	.046
Pair 2	Enjoyment (pre) & Enjoyment (post)	35	.228	.188
Pair 3	Confidence (pre) & Confidence (post)	35	.636	.000

A paired-samples t-test was conducted as per Pallant (2013) to compare participants' perceived enjoyment of reading in Spanish before the 4-month in-class trial and the perceived enjoyment after the 4-month in-class trial. There was a significant difference in participants' perceived enjoyment before (M=5.40, SD=2.32) and after (M=6.74, SD=1.651); $t(34) = -3.15$, $p < .005$. (See Table 2.) These results suggest that the implementation of FVR in Spanish class has a positive overall effect on the enjoyment that students perceive having in regard to reading in the target language.

RQ3: How confident are my students when reading in Spanish? Does their reading confidence differ significantly after concluding my course and engaging with the FVR project?

Descriptive statistics reveal that the participants (n=35) in this action research study had a moderate confidence in their abilities when reading for pleasure in Spanish upon entering the course (M=6.57 on a scale from one to 10 where 1=not at all and 10=very enjoyable). This data ranged from a maximum of eight and minimum of two. On average, after the implementation of the FVR project, participants' perception of their confidence in their abilities when pleasure reading in Spanish rose only slightly to an average of 6.91 (see Table 1 and Figure 3).

A paired-samples t-test was conducted as per Pallant (2013) to compare participants' perceived confidence of reading in Spanish before the 4-month in-class trial and their perceived confidence after the 4-month in-class trial. There was not a significant difference in participants' perceived confidence before (M=6.57, SD=1.52) and after (M=6.91, SD=1.42); $t(34) = -1.61$, $p = .116$. (See Table 2.) However, a paired sample correlation was also conducted to explore the relationship between the pre- and post-test results (see Table 3). There was a quite strong, statistically significant positive correlation between the two data sets, $r = .64$, $p < .001$. These results indicate that, while the

implementation of FVR did not increase students' perceived confidence reading in the target language, it did show that students who were more likely to be confident L2 readers before the experience were more likely to perceive themselves as confident L2 readers after as well. As such, these results suggest that identifying students with lower perceived L2 reading confidence and providing support and guidance to identify appropriate L2 reading materials for their level may serve as a worthwhile intervention to improve students' perceived L2 reading confidence overall.

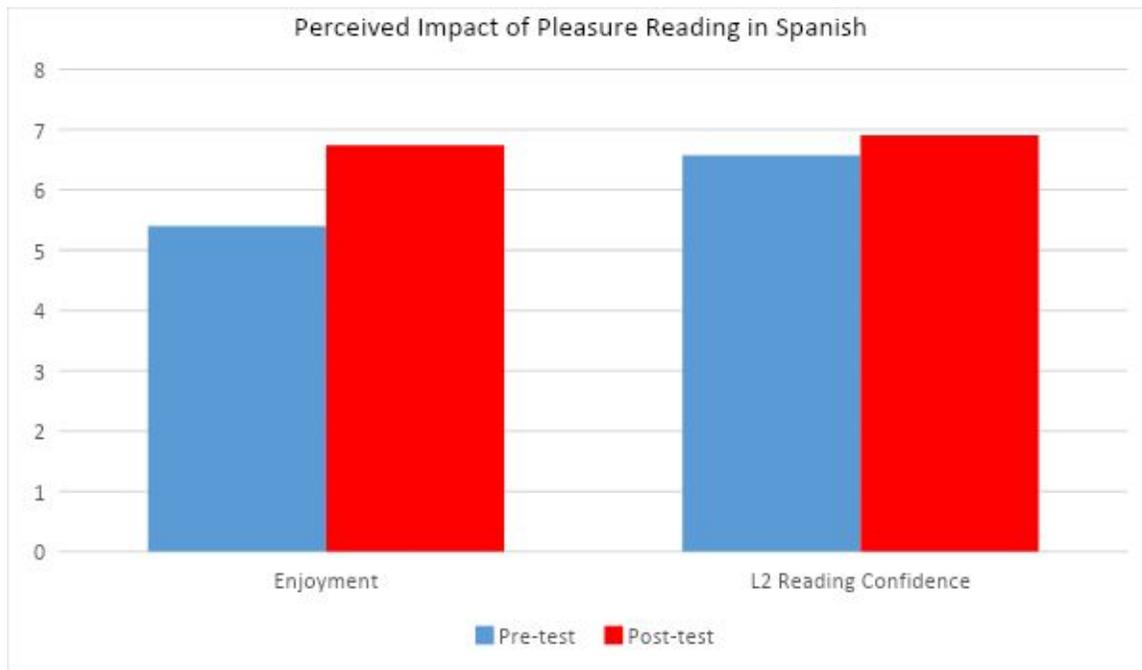


Figure 3. Graph showing the perceived impact of pleasure reading in Spanish.

RQ4: What are students' opinions about the implementation of FVR in their Spanish class?

To inform the fourth research question, 17 participants offered additional free-response thoughts to share their opinions and perceptions related to their experience with the FVR program. The responses were coded initially and categorized into like themes as per Saladaña (2016). The most frequent theme was that of a general positive experience. For example, one student wrote: "I like the fact that you give us time to read." Others left comments like "it was nice to read by myself" or "I thought it was cool to be able to read and understand another language." This theme was followed in frequency by the comments about learning new target language vocabulary through this experience as evidenced by one student's comment: "I think it was helpful in expanding my Spanish vocabulary." Similarly, another student added: "I really like the books where they had the footnotes at the bottom, it helped me with the words I did not understand." Another theme that emerged was that the experience improved target language reading ability as exemplified by the comments: "it was beneficial in teaching me new words, showing me more conjugated verbs and improving my fluency to read fluently [*sic*]" and "in [*sic*] helped me to get a better understand [*sic*] and made me feel more confident in reading in Spanish." All of the comments have been summarized in Table 4 below based on the general theme of the responses that emerged.

Table 4. Student Comments regarding their Perception of the FVR Project

Theme	N	Example Comment
Overall positive experience	7	I like the fact that you give us time to read
Learned new vocabulary	5	I think it was helpful in expanding my Spanish vocabulary
Improved reading ability	3	It was beneficial in teaching me new words, showing me more conjugated verbs and improving my fluency to read fluently
Supported fluency	2	read as much as you can because it helps you a lot with conjugating and fluency in general.
Suggesting more time than what was allotted in class	2	More time that just 8 minutes every few days. I think we should have like 8 min every day because I learned many new words reading the book or the glossary.
Improved reading confidence	1	in helped me to get a better understand and made me feel more confident in reading in spanish
Appreciated that the leveled readers had glossaries to look up new words	1	I really liked the books where they had the footnotes at the bottom, it helped me with words I did not understand.
Wishing books could be brought home	1	If we could take books home it could have been better. Otherwise, it was pretty good.
Suggesting to prompt student to choose more challenging books to read	1	At some point maybe limit the amount of easier level books available for students to read. It would help to remove that kind of crutch that these easier books provide, allowing them to push themselves more rather than being dependent on these types of things

Discussion

Implications for the Classroom

The literature to support implementing FVR in language classes reviewed in this report indicated to expect positive washback on students' abilities, perceived confidence, and opinions on pleasure reading in Spanish. The results from the action research presented here confirm that 1) students read for pleasure more (both in English and Spanish) as a result of this program, 2) students enjoy reading for pleasure in Spanish more. and 3) students have an overall positive view of having participated in this program. More broadly, it is clear that the project was a successful and welcomed addition to the curriculum.

The results of this project also provide suggestions for how to support students' perceived confidence in reading in Spanish as future students engage with the materials in the classroom library. For example, given that there was not a significant increase in participants' perceived confidence after having participated in the FVR experience, a worthwhile intervention may be to identify students that express lower confidence early in the semester and provide specific support and guidance. This support could come in the form of strategies to identify more appropriate L2 reading materials for their level and/or to more regularly check on progress or comprehension. Either way, it is clear from this experience overall that explicit guidance regarding title selection and identifying materials that match most appropriately with learner abilities are recommended at the outset of any FVR implementation and, as we see from this study, may also serve as a worthwhile intervention to improve students' perceived L2 reading confidence overall among other possible benefits.

Limitations

The results presented in this report are certainly limited by the pool of participants available for analysis given that sample sizes in classroom-based studies are a product of enrollment. As a result, its limited sample decreases the results' generalizability. Moreover, while this study included participants of confirmed Novice-High to Intermediate-Low proficiency levels, more robust insight could be garnered from the participation of students from more varied ability levels. This conclusion is evidenced by the reality that as students climb the proficiency ladder, their access to a wider range of texts and titles expands thus increasing the likelihood to engage with stories that compel due to greater personal interest.

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APPENDIX A: Titles available to students in classroom library

*Denotes authentic source (i.e., book intended primarily for first language learners)

¡FIESTA! CINCO DE MAYO*	EL EKEKO: UN MISTERIO	LAS TRES PRUEBAS
¡QUÉ NERVIOS! *	BOLIVIANO	LEYENDAS IMPACTANTES
¿CÓMO DICEN TE QUIERO LOS	EL ESCAPE	LIBERTAD
DINOSAURIOS? *	EL ESCAPE CUBANO	LLAMA EN LIMA
¿CÓMO VAN A LAS ESCUELA LOS	EL JERSEY	LOS 3 AMIGOS
DINOSAURIOS?	EL NUEVO HOUDINI	LOS BAKERS VAN A PERU
48 HORAS	EL POMBERO	LOS NIÑOS DETECTIVES
AGENTES SECRETOS	EL RATÓN PABLITO	LOS PIRATAS DEL CARIBE Y EL
AHORITA	EL SILBÓN DE VENEZUELA	TRIÁNGULO DE LAS BERMUDAS
BAJO EL AGUA	EL ÚLTIMO VIAJE	LOS SUEÑOS DE XOCHITL
BART QUIERE UN GATO	EL VIAJE DE SU VIDA	MARCOS Y LOS REYES MAGOS
BERTO Y SUS BUENAS IDEAS	EL VIAJE DIFÍCIL	MARIA MARIA
BERTO Y SUS BUENOS AMIGOS	EL VIAJE PERDIDO	MATA LA PIÑATA
BIANCA NIEVES	ESPERANZA	MI DEDO MEÑIQUE*
BIBLIOTECA GRÁFICA: DELFINES*	FELIPA ALOU	MI MASCOTA: LOS GATOS*
BIBLIOTECA GRÁFICA: DESIERTOS	FIESTA FATAL	MI MASCOTA: LOS HÁMSTERES*
BIBLIOTECA GRÁFICA: MONOS Y	FROGGY SE VISTE*	MI PROPIO AUTO
SIMIOS	GRITOS EN GRANADA	NO DEJES QUE LA PALOMA
BIBLIOTECA GRÁFICA:	HASTA EL SEPULTURA	CONDUZCA EL AUTOBÚS*
MONTAÑAS*	HELEN KELLER: UNA VIDA DE	OSO PARDO, OSO PARDO, ¿QUÉ
BIBLIOTECA GRÁFICA: OSOS*	AVENTURA*	VES AHÍ? *
BILINGÜE	HUEVOS VERDES CON JAMÓN*	PANCHO Y LAS MOMIAS
BILLY Y LAS BOTAS	ISABELA CAPTURA UN CONGO	PAPACITO
BIZCOCHO ENCUENTRA UN	JULIANA	PATRICIA VA A CALIFORNIA
AMIGO*	JULIUS EL REY DE LA CASA*	PERRO GRANDE... PERRO
BOLSILLO PARA CORDOUROY*	LA BELLA MENTIRA	PEQUENO*
BRANDON BROWN DICE LA	LA BELLA Y LA BESTIA*	PETER VA A COLOMBIA
VERDAD	LA CALACA ALEGRE	PINOCHO*
BRANDON BROWN HACE TRAMPA	LA CAPERUCITA ROJA*	PIRATAS DEL CARIBE Y EL MAPA
BRANDON BROWN QUIERE UN	LA CASA DEL DENTISTA	SECRETO
PERRO	LA CHICA NUEVA	PLANETA ZOMBILANDIA
BRANDON BROWN VERSUS	LA CLASE DE CONFESIONES	POBRE ANA
YUCATAN	LA ESPÍA HUÉRFANA	POBRE ANA - MODERNA
CASA DIVIDIDA	LA ESTATUA	POBRE ANA BAILÓ EL TANGO
CASI SE MUERE	LA FAMILIA DE FEDERICO RICO	POBRECITA ANA
CENICIENTA*	LA GALLINITA ROJA*	PROBLEMAS EN PARAÍSO
CINCO PESOS	LA GUERRA SUCIA	REBELDES DE TEJAS
COMO CRECEN LOS PERROS*	LA HIJA DEL SASTRE	RINO-MANÍ*
COMO SALIR DE LA ZONA DE	LA ISLA MAS PELIGROSA	RIVAL
AMIGOS	LA LIEBRE Y LA TORTUGA*	ROBO EN LA NOCHE
CUENTOS ESPANOLES*	LA LLORONA DE MAZATLÁN	SELENA
DANIEL EL DETECTIVE	LA MADRE PERFECTA	SOY LORENZO
DON QUIJOTE, EL ULTIMO	LA NIÑERA	TEXCATLIPOCA
CABALLERO	LA PEQUEÑA LOCOMOTORA QUE	TUMBA
DONDE ESTA EDUARDO	SÍ PUDO*	UN AMIGO DE VERAS
DOUBLE FUDGE*	LA PEREZOSA IMPACIENTE	MARAVILLOSO*
EDI EL ELEFANTE	LA PERIODISTA	UN PERRO MUY DIFERENTE*
EDUARDO: CUMPLEANOS EN LA	LA PINATA DE RENATA	UNA DESAPARICIÓN MISTERIOSA
PISCINA*	LA VAMPIRATA	VECTOR
EL CAPIBARA CON BOTAS	LA VIDA LOCA DE MARTA	VIDA O MUERTE EN CUSCO
EL CHICO GLOBAL	LAS AVENTURAS DE ISABELA	VIDA Y MUERTE EN LA MARA
EL COCHINO BLANCO Y OTROS	LAS JIRAFAS NO PUEDEN BAILAR*	SALVATRUCHA
CUENTOS	LAS LÁGRIMAS DE XOCHITL	VIDAS IMPACTANTES
	LAS SOMBRAS	VIVA EL TORO

Pennsylvania Language Forum (PLF): Peer Review Process

Updated October 2020

Aim and Scope: *Pennsylvania Language Forum* (PLF) is PSMLA's annual publication. Beginning in fall of 2020, the journal will feature a selection of original scholarly articles that are chosen by a peer review process.

The Editorial Board of *Pennsylvania Language Forum (PLF)* welcomes original scholarly, research-based articles that address issues directly related to world language teachers in Pennsylvania. Topics may include original, empirical research studies and application of high-leverage practices in the World Language Classroom. Peer Reviewed articles should maintain a classroom relevance for world language educators at all levels in Pennsylvania. Articles focusing on language proficiency development are also of interest. Articles on literary topics or interdisciplinary topics are welcome, provided the article is focused on classroom applications. Dissertations should be refined and re-focused, as dissertations are too long and detailed for a published article.

All classroom based research projects must follow appropriate district and IRB permission protocol and a brief description of those procedures should be included in the Methodology section.

Peer-Review Process: All manuscripts follow a blind review process and are reviewed by the editor(s) of the journal and then sent for blind review by members of the Editorial Board.

Deadlines: Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis but must be received by September 1 in order to be reviewed and included in the Fall volume.

Manuscripts must follow the submission guidelines below.

Manuscript Preparation Guidelines

1. Submissions must be original work that has not been previously published or be presently under review by another journal.
2. Submissions must be written in standard academic English. Authors should follow APA guidelines consistently.
3. All submissions are initially reviewed by the Editor and then if deemed appropriate and *all* guidelines were followed, sent out to a group of appropriate experts for blind review. Submissions should include a title page as a separate document that includes:
 - a. Article Title
 - b. Article abstract
 - c. Name(s) of author(s)
 - d. Affiliation(s)
 - e. Language(s) taught
 - f. Intended level(s), when relevant
 - g. [Release Form](#)(s)

4. The anonymity of the author(s) *must be ensured* by removing all identifiers from the manuscript. This can be done by referring to any identifying information as “Author X, University X, etc.)
5. All manuscripts must be submitted as .doc, docx, or rtf files. Use Times New Roman 12 point, double space.
6. Tables and Figures will be numbered sequentially and need to be prepared as either WORD or jpeg files. (Do *not* use pdf files for tables and figures.) They need to appear at the end of the article following References. Place a note [insert Table X/ Figure Y here] in text to indicate their suggested locations.
7. All in-text quotes require page numbers or paragraph sources for unpaginated sources. Use *italics* for emphasis; not quote marks.
8. Word limitations are as follows: Title [15 words]; Abstract [150 words]; Key Words [5]; full article, approximately 5,000 words (roughly 15 pages)
9. All submissions should be sent via the electronic form on <https://psmla.org/pennsylvania-language-forum>
10. All questions may be sent electronically to the Editor(s) at (PALanguageForum@psmla.org).
11. All submissions will be acknowledged by the Editor(s) within 2 weeks of receipt.
12. Authors are responsible for securing publication rights when using images.

Submissions for the peer-reviewed section of the journal should generally include the following Sections:

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology (Including appropriate District and IRB Protocol for classroom research)
- Discussion and/or Results
- Implications for the Classroom
- Conclusion
- Acknowledgements
- Reference / Works Cited

Additional article types may be accepted but should follow the general constructs of academic research and be applicable to the World Language Classroom in Pennsylvania.

	Exceeds	Meets Expectations	Further Development Required
Relevance	Article is very relevant and timely both to the Aim and Scope of the PLF and World Languages.	Article is relevant to Aim and Scope of PLF but some improvements should be considered by the editor(s).	Article topic not relevant to Aim and Scope of PLF.

Citations	Article is well cited, following APA citation guidelines as identified in the Author instructions.	Article is well cited, following APA citation guidelines, but there are a few errors that will require attention from the editors.	Article is missing citations or citations are largely inaccurate.
Mechanics	Article is very well-written, free of typographical or structural errors.	Article is well-written and free of typographical errors but may have a few sections that will require the editor(s) attention.	Article contains significant typographical errors or structural errors beyond what the editorial process can support.

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