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NYSAFLT's 96th Annual Conference



Buffalo, New York

October 11-12, 2013

Francesco L. Fratto, Chair

Keynote Speaker



Dr. Lori Langer de Ramirez



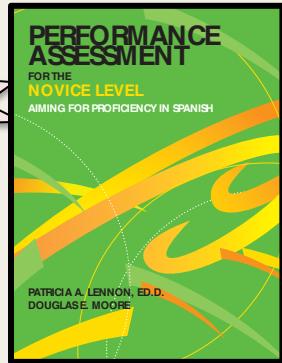
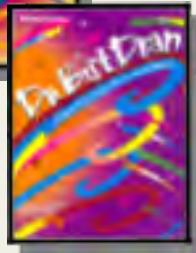
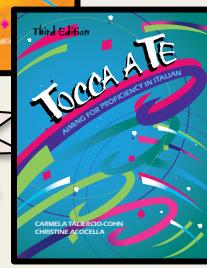
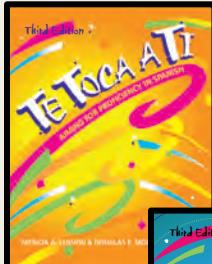
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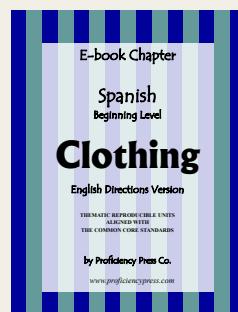
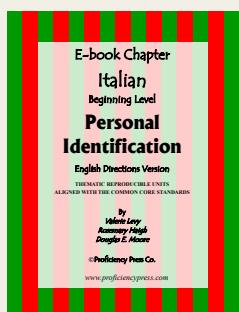
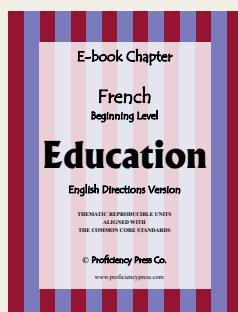


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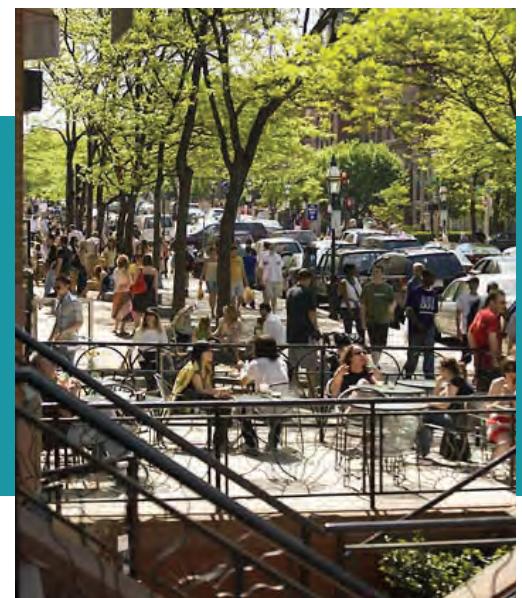


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Harry Tuttle

October 22 -- 4:00pm (1 hour)

"Mobile Learning for Improved Modern Language Communication"

Learn how your students engage in authentic culture through mobile activities. Learn what mobile learning is and why it is a growing trend in education. Learn the present status of mobile learning in modern language. Find out about many mobile learning activities that promote students' modern language communication skills, particularly their speaking skill. If you have a smartphone or tablet, you can participate in some activities. Discover how easy it is to implement in your classroom!

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Robert Dennis

November 12 -- 4:00pm (1 hour)

"Fiction & Nonfiction Reading Strategies in the Checkpoint C Classroom"

This webinar will explore a variety of different activities for teaching fiction and nonfiction text with emphasis on the checkpoint C classroom. The examples will be used from my experience with Italian and Spanish levels 4&5 AP and IB. The examples and strategies are in alignment with the six shifts of the Common Core in ELA.

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Noah Geisel

December 10 -- 7:00pm (1 hour) [note the special time]

"Engaging Students in Culture Study with Authentic Resources"

Second language speakers are a motivated bunch. While language study is key to gaining fluency, most of us were motivated to learn by our love of the culture: the sights, sounds, tastes and sites. In this webinar, we will examine ways in which we can engage language learners in culture study that is aimed at finding a connection between their individual interests and the culture studied. We will also consider one model to allow students to self-select their area of culture study. Dozens of concrete examples (mostly in Spanish) will be shared.

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Joshua Cabral

January 16 -- 4:00pm (1 hour)

"Interpersonal Communication: Refresh Your Teacher Toolbox"

Are you looking for fresh ideas to help students progress in their language proficiency and gain more confidence? This workshop will demonstrate innovative and concrete examples of activities that foster increased proficiency and confidence in communicating interpersonally. You will learn about new teaching possibilities as well as discover ways to extend the activities that you already use in the classroom. The techniques are applicable to all languages at any level.

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Lizette Liebold

February 11 -- 4:00pm (1 hour)

"Using Comprehensible Input Teaching Strategies to Remain in the Target Language"

It is a challenge for many of us to stay in the target language at least 90 per cent of the time as ACTFL charges us. When we do achieve this, it can be more and more difficult to keep the input that we deliver to our students comprehensible, as we know is vital for acquisition. Discover CI method based teaching strategies that can be used on an every day basis in the language classroom to stay in the TL while keeping our students engaged and ensuring their comprehension.

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Tara Tassani

April 15 -- 4:00pm (1 hour)

"FLES Success in the 21st Century"

This webinar will showcase the best practices of building and maintaining a sequential FLES Program for our 21st century learners. Participants will be provided with examples of innovative activities for FLES class that connect to the Common Core Standards. Learn how to instill passion and excitement for FLES through ePals, Skype, iPads, Voki Classroom and more! Examples will be provided for grade levels 2-6 Spanish, but may be adapted to any grade level or language.

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NYSAFLT will offer a series of webinars throughout the 2013-2014 school year that will address multiple facets of world language education. You are encouraged to register at your earliest convenience for any of the webinars below.

[Interested in viewing a sample of a NYSAFLT Webinar? [Click here!](#)]

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Planned Giving

Several years ago, NYSAFLT learned that we were to be the beneficiary of a very generous contribution from a former member who recently passed away. Sally G. Hahn felt so strongly about the benefits of early language instruction that she made it possible for NYSAFLT to make annual awards of up to \$3000 to support outstanding FLES programs and teachers in New York State. All award money comes from interest earned on the Hahn bequest, which has been carefully invested by our Financial Management Committee.

If you would like more information about how you can make a planned gift to NYSAFLT and impact a cause near to your heart, please contact John Carlino, Executive Director, at NYSAFLT headquarters.

From the Editor:

It's that time of year again when we're all trying to squeeze in some last minute summer fun and, at the same time, gear up for a new school year. This issue was designed to motivate and inspire you to meet new challenges and discover new possibilities.

The articles open with some words of wisdom, reminding us that sometimes we need to slow down to get ahead. Our research articles present two different approaches to assessing students' oral proficiency in the target language. The "Teacher to Teacher" section includes ideas for integrating literature into a Checkpoint C French class, implementing three "non-negotiables" for a robust classroom, and using speaking assessments for your SLO's.

The demands for reaching higher standards and fulfilling greater responsibilities continue, and NYSAFLT's membership continues to rise to the challenge. We LOTE teachers ask our students to do something no other content teachers have to do. It is what Charlemagne said, "To have another language is to possess a second soul." We're not just teaching them a new language; we're asking them to change who they are! That can feel like a pretty scary endeavor. We open doors for our students to worlds they may have never imagined.

Our winter issue's theme is "Checking in on Checkpoint A: Advocacy and Best Practices from K to 8 and everything pre-Checkpoint B." For most of our LOTE students they earn their one credit for graduation at Checkpoint A, usually middle school. What are we doing to make this the best learning experience possible for our beginning students? How do we get them "hooked" so that they continue on to Checkpoints B and C? What practices and policies do your schools have in place to support and encourage the learning of world languages? Please consider submitting an article for publication! The **deadline for submitting an article electronically is October 1st.** Or come to the session at the Annual Conference on how to get published in the *Journal*.

Happy reading and keep up the good work!

Carol S. Dean, Ed.D.
Editor, *Language Association Journal*

CALL FOR PAPERS
NYSFLT Language Association Journal

2013 Vol. 64, No. 2
Checking in on Checkpoint A: Advocacy and Best Practices
from K to 8 and everything pre-Checkpoint B.
Deadline for Submission: October 1, 2013

2014 Vol. 65, No. 1
Common Core State Standards and LOTE
Deadline for Submission: March 1, 2014

The Language Association Journal is the official peer-reviewed journal of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSFLT) and is published two times per year. It has a thematic approach and welcomes a spectrum of submissions ranging from scholarly articles to teacher-to-teacher exchanges regarding language learning and acquisition, instruction, curriculum, assessment, policy, advocacy, teacher education, and other areas of professional interest to language educators.

Submission Guidelines:

- the manuscript must not be previously published or considered for publication elsewhere
- the manuscript must be written in English (examples within the manuscript may be written in other languages and must be italicized and accompanied by translations)
- the manuscript should not exceed 8,000 words
- for a blind review, omit all references that would reveal the author's identity in the manuscript
- follow the guidelines, as outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition (2009) (APA style resource: <http://www.apastyle.org>)
- use Times New Roman font size 12 double-spaced
- proof-read the manuscript to ensure that it is as error-free as possible
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 - your name, title, affiliation, and contact information
 - your educational background
 - what languages, ages/grades, and language proficiency levels you have taught in your teaching career
 - professional affiliations or involvement in language education

All properly submitted manuscripts receive an e-mail acknowledgement from the Editor. Submission of a manuscript does not guarantee its publication. After an initial review by the Editor, those manuscripts that meet specifications are sent to one or two members of the Editorial Board for anonymous evaluation. Each of the reviewers is asked to make one of three recommendations regarding each submission: (1) publish as is, (2) publish after revising/rewriting, or (3) do not publish. When all reviews are received, the Editor makes the final decision regarding the manuscript's publication and notifies the author about the submission's status. All manuscripts accepted for publication are subject to editing.

Dr. Carol S. Dean
Editor, Language Association Journal
Associate Professor, Foreign Language Education
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Slowing Down to Get Ahead

Joanne M. Telfer

We LOTE teachers are always looking for ways to make learning more fun, more interesting, and more engaging. We attend workshops, conferences, seminars, and teaching symposia—or read an article in a journal—and then bubble over with excitement about all the new and innovative ideas we learned to improve our teaching and enhance our students’ learning. We are actors, parents, enthusiasts, and educators, and yet, as excited as we are to try these new approaches, our students are sometimes intimidated, fearful, or just plain uninterested. Did you ever have them respond, “Did you just go to a workshop or something?” We work hard to meet every student’s need, learning style, and interests, but often the truth is that we just can’t do it all, all the time. If there’s one thing I’ve learned over the years in my attempt to engage every student every day with every method I have learned, it is: *SLOWDOWN*.

With the wealth of information that we glean from these seminars, we have to *slow down* and take time to analyze what needs to be changed in our classroom before we try something new or different. I ask myself a few questions before I change anything:

- What have I been doing way too long in this classroom?
- What am I doing that I need to improve, change, alter, or eliminate?
- Am I promoting learning in my class or am I just going through the routine?

Once I answer those questions, then I can focus on something better. Motivation is great, and these seminars really pump us up to think we are the best of the best and we can do it all, perfectly. But, every educational situation is unique, and that means that we don’t all succeed as

quickly or as efficiently as we may like to think. We have to *slow down* and find the time to give careful thought to how the change of focus will help the students.

So, now what? We have a great new method or focus. We have wonderful ideas, and yes, we've even thought it out to be sure it will benefit the students. Now we have to take a breath, *slow down*, and give it our full attention so we can ensure that the new approach has the best chance for success.

First things first. Don't put the cart before the horse, as they say. Think about what needs to change and then figure ways to change it, *slowly!* Once you see the horse, you can figure out what cart needs to go behind it, and then we are ready to saddle up! Every situation is unique in education. Courses, teachers, and students are all different. Lay a positive groundwork for the change you want to effect, and then build on that groundwork in a deliberate manner. We need to prepare for the change. We have to be sure the change fits with the content and/or skill. If the change does not meet these criteria, how can we develop this? We have to ensure the new approach has the best possible chance of succeeding.

Spoon-feeding is a nice, slow, and effective way to get the taste of change to the palette. The change is being made...deliberately, slowly, and effectively. But, how do we know that the change is successful? Are you realistic in your expectations for success? Here's the wrench in the works: in these days with so much emphasis placed on assessment, it is only natural that we figure that a summative assessment will be the answer to these questions. But, let's face it. Sometimes success comes in the form of a smile, an "Ahhhh", or the ever wonderful side-comment that we educators overhear "that was fun." Everything we do in the class has a result. The changes we make may be better for some students, or some classes, or some days. The

important thing is that we remember that change is good and necessary in today's educational setting.

Try to take it slow. Enjoy. Be engaged with your students and keep your eyes open. In the words of Ritu Ghatourey, the two most powerful warriors are patience and time. Great achievements take time; there is no overnight success.

Joanne M. Telfer has been teaching for 18 years, 9 of those years as a Spanish teacher at Morris Central School. She is also the Senior Class Advisor, Senior Play Director, Drama Club Advisor, and Spanish Club Advisor. She is married with two sons, and lives in Hartwick, New York. She was the recipient of the NYSAFLT Travel Award to Cusco, Peru this summer.

**Use of the Harkness Conference Table Method
to Improve Proficiency and Critical Thinking Skills
in Second Language Acquisition**

Ida M. D'Ugo

Dr. Rosalba Corrado del Vecchio

Introduction

The need for individuals who are proficient in languages other than English is not new. According to Jackson and Malone (2009), from a security perspective this need was recognized during the Second World War and it led to the U.S. government's development of programs to promote second language acquisition. These programs became the precursors of the Army Language School (currently the Defense Language Institute) and the State Department's Foreign Service Institute (Clifford & Fischer, 1990). This requirement reemerged in the aftermath of the USSR's launching of Sputnik in 1956 (Parker, 1961) and again during the height of the Cold War in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Perkins et al., 1979). As Jackson and Malone (2009) also affirm, newer studies have reiterated the importance of expanding national language competence capacity. These studies include the President's Commission of Foreign Language and International Studies (Perkins et al., 1979); the late Senator Paul Simon's (1988) book, *The Tongue-Tied American*; and Richard Brecht and William Rivers' (2000) report *Language and National Security in the 21st Century*. Following the events of September 11, 2001, additional analyses of the need for proficiency in languages other than English include *Call to Action* of the National Language Conference (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2004); the Committee for Economic Development's (2006)

Education for Global Leadership: The Importance of International Studies and Foreign Language Education for U.S. Economic and National Security; and the Association of American Universities' (2006) *National Defense Education and Innovation Initiative: Meeting America's Economic and Security Challenges in the 21st Century*. Lastly, a report prepared for the Modern Language Association by an ad hoc committee chaired by Professor Mary Louise Pratt (2008) of New York University, entitled "Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World," examines issues corresponding to second language acquisition.

As indicated by Jackson and Malone (2009), language skills are a vital component of a well-educated citizenry that understands global perspectives so that all members can participate and prosper in the global community. As Thomas Friedman (2005) reported in *The World is Flat*, global communication and commerce are no longer controlled solely or primarily by governments or large multinational corporations. More and more, these activities have become part of the regular daily routine of small businesses and individual entrepreneurs. In order to effectively compete in this environment, all Americans require a basic functional knowledge of a foreign language and its culture. Finally, as more languages are spoken in the United States, it is critical that residents communicate "across domains, including medicine, business, education, science, technology, and law enforcement and the law" (Jackson & Malone, 2009, p. 4).

As with other content areas, mastery in a second language is achieved through continuous spiraling/sequencing, building upon prior knowledge. Without this continued or full course sequence in second languages, the necessary level of proficiency in order to effectively communicate in languages other than English will not be attained. The United

States will continue to rely on alternative or “quick fix” methods, such as intensive language programs, to quickly prepare individuals to assume strategic positions requiring the knowledge of foreign languages. Although these alternative methods may yield limited success in the short-term, they do not facilitate nor enhance the true process of language acquisition in the long-term. True second (or third, or fourth, etc.) language acquisition can best be accomplished through a well-developed, full course sequence-based curriculum with constant exposure to the target language in all of the communicative competencies (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), beginning in the elementary schools and continuing into the postsecondary schools.

Despite this emphasis on communication (and the corresponding communicative competencies), most programs and textbooks maintain a strong focus on grammatical structures as the basis in the selection and sequencing of materials (Thornbury, 1998; Legutke & Thomas, 1991; Eisenchias; 2010). In this respect, the purpose of classroom activities becomes to facilitate the acquisition of the formal properties of the target language rather than skills to communicate effectively in the target language (Eisenchias, 2010). Emphasis on grammar alone offers few opportunities for authentic communication between teacher and learner or between learner and learner. Eisenchias (2010) characterizes classroom interactions based upon grammatical structures as having, “teacher control, predetermined content, structures, conversational flow, and other features that set them aside from ‘natural’ conversations” (p. 6). Not surprisingly, according to research by the Center for Applied Second Language Studies [CASLS] (2010), in the United States,

The majority of students studying a foreign language in a traditional high school program reach benchmark level 3 or 4 by end of the fourth year of study, regardless of the language studied. These levels are similar to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) levels Novice-High and Intermediate-Low. (p. 1)

These levels are not advanced enough to allow full and effective conversations on a variety of topics in both formal and informal settings as the ACTFL Superior or Distinguished levels.

Since second language acquisition is stimulated and enriched by the linguistic environment, the quality and quantity of this environment plays an important role for students. For most students in U.S. high schools, proficiency in a second language must be acquired at school, given there is little opportunity to acquire it outside the classroom (CASLS, 2010). For this reason, methodologies concerning second language acquisition need to be re-evaluated and/or modified in order to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching by developing all of the four language skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), given the interdependence of language and communication (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

This article provides the rationale for incorporating the use of a pedagogical method that has been in use for over 150 years. In the 20th century, the Socratic Method assumed a new format: the Harkness Conference Table Method. The Harkness Conference Table Method originated in 1931 at Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire (Philips Exeter Academy, 2013). It was the creation of philanthropist Edward Harkness (1874-1940). He initiated the idea in an effort to make learning more

meaningful and interactive. His goal was to engage all learners, especially the more reticent ones. In fact, in making his gift to Exeter, Harkness was specifically concerned not about the smartest boys, nor the weakest—each of whom he believed already gained much attention from their teachers (Exeter was formerly an all boys' school.) Instead, he pushed the faculty to create a system of teaching that would bolster the "middling sort," the students who often went unnoticed in class. Rather than having a teacher positioned in the front of the classroom lecturing at a group of students, the concept associated with this method is to seat a teacher and up to twelve students around an oval table. The use of an oval table facilitates eye contact and conversation among students or peers without relying on the teacher for direction. It helps break students out of the habit of addressing all comments and conversation to the teacher. The practices of using eye contact with peers and of addressing students by name in discussion are not a natural or common practice for many students. In this respect, the seating arrangement promotes a student-centered, self-regulated, interactive learning process through discussion. For schools that do not have access to oval tables, the arrangement of desks in an oval or sitting students in an oval-shaped pattern is recommended.

While the Harkness Conference Table Method has been employed in over forty private schools in the United States, its use has not been documented in urban, public schools. In addition, even though studies have been conducted on the impact of collaboration and social interaction on second language acquisition (Nayan, 2010; Osman, Nayan, Mansor, Maesin, & Shafie, 2010; Lourdunathan & Menon, 2005), these were executed at the university or post-secondary level. For this reason, a research study was conducted in an urban high school utilizing this instructional methodology for

Spanish Checkpoint B1 or level 2, the second year of a three-year sequence for High School Foreign Language Study in New York State. The results of this nine-week study indicated that there was no significant impact on Regents Examination scores attributed to the treatment or Harkness Conference Table Method. Although the findings of this study did not support research on second language acquisition, a communication-based classroom focusing on the communicative competencies (speaking, listening, reading, writing), rather than on grammar or structure alone, and utilizing authentic texts and task-based activities is the best format (Carrigan, 2009) to promote second language acquisition thus warranting further investigation.

This teaching methodology should be taken into account when aligning the curriculum for Languages Other Than English (LOTE) to the Common Core Standards (National Governors Association, 2010), specifically the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading (LOTE is categorized under “Technical Subjects”). The instructional emphasis on the Common Core Standards for all subject areas is on reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These strands are the same four skills or communicative competencies LOTE educators have developed in order to promote second language acquisition, and are also components of the Harkness Conference Table Method. Furthermore, in order for schools to move beyond a focus on basic competency in core subjects (e.g., World Languages) to promoting understanding of academic content at much higher levels by incorporating 21st century interdisciplinary themes (e.g., Global Awareness), pedagogy must include the enhancement of critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking involves thinking reflectively and productively, and evaluating the evidence (Santrock, 2004). It is the cognitive process associated with analyzing,

inferring, connecting, synthesizing, criticizing, creating, evaluating, thinking, and rethinking, all of which are elements of Bloom's Taxonomy. Critical thinking involves the conceptualization, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and ultimate application of information so that a learner may reach conclusions or form independent judgments based upon what the learner has experienced combined with previous knowledge (Allen, 2008).

The American Philosophical Association (1990) Delphi Report details six central or core critical thinking skills: a) Interpretation: to comprehend and express meaning or significance; b) Analysis: to identify the intended and actual inferential relationships; c) Evaluation: to assess logical strength; d) Inference: to draw reasonable conclusions; e) Explanation: to state the results and justify one's reasoning; and f) Self-regulation: to monitor one's cognitive activities.

Enhancing students' abilities to think critically is one key objective of schooling (Marzano, 1995). As with any other objective, learning to think critically requires practice. Effective teaching of critical thinking is contingent upon setting a classroom tone that encourages the acceptance of diverse perspectives and free discussion. Emphasis should be on justifying or supporting opinions rather than only giving correct answers. Skills in critical thinking are best acquired in relation to topics students are familiar with. Self-reflection and metacognitive elements are inherent in the Harkness process. It permits participants to think not only about content but about the thinking process itself.

Historical and Theoretical Background

As with any type of learning, individual differences will have an impact on how well one will develop a proficiency in a second language (L2). According to Long and Robinson (1998), one's aptitude and motivation for learning a second language are second only to the age of the learner in impacting proficiency. Aptitude, defined as the ability to learn or perform specific tasks, is a more significant factor for adolescents and adults learning a second language in the classroom (Long, 1998). Second language or L2 aptitude includes sensitivity to sound (for pronunciation); sensitivity to structure (for grammar); and memory (for retention). Furthermore, the exact impact of an individual's second language aptitude is affected by three important variables: age, type of exposure to the language, and "linguistic distance," or the degree of difference between the native and second language (American Educational Research Association, 2006). This degree of difference or similarity between English (or any other first or native language referred to as L1) and the second language will determine in part the total number of class hours required to reach proficiency.

In conjunction with aptitude with respect to older students and learners, foreign language mastery is enhanced when a student is motivated (intrinsic motivation) to learn a language, e.g., to gain employment, travel, or integrate into a community (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Intrinsic motivation can be enhanced even more when students are provided with a choice among languages offered.

Approximately up to 720 hours of instruction are required for a student to achieve proficiency at the ACTFL Advanced level (one level below Superior). According to the Foreign Service Institute, a minimum of 1,320 hours is required for a native English speaker to achieve proficiency at the Superior level in language such as Russian

(Omaggio-Hadley, 2001). The number of necessary hours is determined by the foreign language's linguistic distance or difference from the native language or L1. Needless to say, several years of study (six to eight) are required to obtain the desired proficiency levels and abilities to effectively communicate in a second language under a variety of circumstances.

A major social component exists with second language learning, which is ignored in grammar-based methodologies or in the direct instruction method. Van Lier (1998) identifies this as the relationship between learners and their "interactants" (p. 128). In this respect, a person's relations with others determines his/her language awareness thereby increasing learning opportunities given that a person is a social being (Kurata, 2010). Yet, it is not necessarily easy for a second language learner, particularly at a relatively low-level, to create opportunities to use and learn a second language (L2) in informal natural settings due to diverse social and contextual factors. This point has been overlooked in previous research that views access to interactional opportunities in L2 as unproblematic (Kurata, 2010).

The importance of social interaction in learning is not a new concept. The most important contribution of Vygotsky's (1962) theory on cognitive development is its emphasis on the socio-cultural nature of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Karpov & Haywood, 1998). Vygotsky believed that learning occurs when children are working within their zone of proximal development (ZPD). The zone of proximal development describes tasks that a child has not yet learned but is capable of learning at a given time. It is based upon social interaction where instruction determines or guides development. Vygotsky's argument is that higher mental development finds its source in socio-cultural activity (e.g.

conversation and collaboration among individuals) before it exists within the individual.

Vygotsky's claim is very much in line with new findings in neuroscience. Studies in neuroscience have demonstrated the positive effect between second language acquisition and cognitive ability (Wenner, 2010). The microcosm of society, which exists in the classroom, is created through student and teacher interactions. It relies on language and accompanying gestures as well as other communicative competencies.

An idea derived from Vygotsky's concept of social learning is that of scaffolding: the assistance (e.g., through dialogue and social interaction) provided by more competent peers or adults that allows the student to grow in independence as a learner. As the student's competence increases, less guidance is offered by more competent peers or adults. For example, in reciprocal teaching, teachers lead small groups of students in asking questions about material they have read and gradually turn over responsibility for leading the discussion to the students (Palincsar, Brown, & Martin, 1987).

Furthermore with respect to language learning and social interaction, Harmer (1991) indicates that collaborative activities allow students to interact and cooperate with each other towards a common goal. Collaborative learning in a classroom can be defined as classroom learning techniques, which require students to work together in groups or pairs in learning tasks (Colbeck, Campbell & Bjorklund, 2000). Delucchi (2006) concurs that despite different levels of language proficiency and personalities, students work better in groups with less anxiety than when they work alone because they can exchange more opinions and ideas. Providing students with an opportunity to work collaboratively allows them to enhance their speaking abilities. Consistent with the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982), the affective variables of motivation, self-confidence, and

anxiety (or apprehension) indirectly affect second language acquisition. Learners possessing high motivation, self-confidence and a low anxiety level are more successful in acquiring a language (Ponniah, 2010).

The Universal Acquisition Hypothesis (UAH) or Acquisition Learning Hypothesis is also a dominant view in second language acquisition (Kenny, 2011; Krashen, 1988; Krashen, 2003, Krashen & Terrell, 2000; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). According to this hypothesis, classroom learning activities should be meaning-focused and should foster the development of implicit knowledge of the language—the same type of knowledge that is assumed to underlie the first or native language (L1) communicative performance. This position forms the basis of a variety of approaches that fall under the general guidelines of “communicative language teaching” (de Bot, Lowie, & Vespoor, 2005, p. 451-452; Legutke & Thomas, 1991). As Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) indicated, “some writers on language teaching have advocated provision of ‘natural’ language learning experiences for classroom learners, and the elimination of structural grading, a focus on form and error correction, even for adults” (p. 221).

Moreover, according to Larsen-Freeman (2003), language development is not linear. It does not proceed as a steady progression of accumulated units. In other words, language acquisition does not occur when students are learning and practicing grammar rules alone (Krashen, 2003; Ponniah, 2010). Rather it consists of a series of transformative experiences and diversified practices emphasizing aural and written comprehensible input, which is the basis of the Comprehension Hypothesis (Krashen, 2003). Comprehensible input does not include an instructor’s explanation of how the language works or is structured. Rather learners acquire a language when they understand

what is being said or what is being read. Comprehension is facilitated by the learner's linguistic competence or proficiency, e.g. his background knowledge. As maintained by the Monitor Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982; Ponniah, 2007), focusing on structure (and accuracy) or consciously learned language alone limits second language acquisition. For this reason, van Lier (2004) states that "In this view, grammar is not a prerequisite of communication, but a byproduct of it" (p. 2).

A main hypothesis of Stephen Krashen's (2003) theory of second language acquisition, the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, elaborates this distinction between acquisition and learning. Acquisition, or the acquired system, is the result of a subconscious process similar to the process children undergo while acquiring their first language. It is based upon meaningful interaction in the target language; i.e., natural communication in which speakers do not focus on the form or structure of their utterances, but rather on the communicative act itself. In this scenario, what is more important is what is communicated rather than how it is communicated. In essence, it is the way humans develop language naturally without instruction (Brown, 2000; Levine & McCloskey, 2009). Learning, or the learned system, is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a cognizant process, which results in conscious knowledge of the language; e.g., knowledge of grammar rules. According to Krashen (2003), 'learning' is less important than 'acquisition'.

Even though social interaction is the core of human activities, second language learners may lack opportunities to engage in social interaction in the L2 even while living in the L2 country (Roberts & Cooke, 2009). Language acquisition occurs when participants are active and engaged in a social environment. In other words, language is

acquired through conversations or immersion rather than learned through teacher instruction in a classroom (Kenny, 2011). Interactive conversation consists of more than monosyllabic responses to questions posed by the teacher similar to a drill practice. Interaction encompasses both social and personal input among learners. It involves emotions, creativity, agreement, disagreement, pauses, turn-taking, changes in intonation, gesturing, etc. (Counihan, 1998). According to the conversational analysis pedagogical approach in acquiring a second language (L2), "...conversational analysis can enhance students' learning by providing insights in talk-in-interaction, which can be used as a 'grammar' of interaction" (Barraja-Rohan, 2011, p. 481). Conversational analysis takes into account the social and cross-cultural component inherent in conversations. It reveals what Button and Lee (1987) call, the 'social organization of natural language-in-use' (p. 2). It is also through interaction and analysis of authentic texts that learners can think aloud and make inferences with respect to grammar rules (Morrison, 2005) rather than learn deductively from the teacher. Subsequently, an intuitive understanding of "talk-in-interaction" helps to develop interactional competence. Interactional competence involves precision timing, turn-taking, use of adjacent pairs (e.g., granting a request, refuting a request), paralinguistic activities (e.g., pauses, intonation, gazes, gestures), context, etc. (Barraja-Rohan, 2011). Interactional competence takes into account the dynamic process of human interactions which encompass collaboration, negotiation and accommodation, with a focus on communication rather than accuracy alone (Kramsch, 1986). Counihan (1998) also emphasizes the need of these essential interaction skills for effective communication.

Second-language research has provided evidence in support of more communication-based instruction. This has manifested itself in a shift of foreign language and second language teaching methodologies from teacher-centered instruction to student/learner-centered classroom focusing on communication in the form of the communicative competencies of listening, reading, writing, and speaking (Nunan, 1988; Tudor, 1996). Possessing communicative competence requires not only knowledge of the grammatical structures (grammatical competence), but knowing how and when to utilize these structures (strategic competence) in written and spoken discourse (discourse competence) and in a particular socio-cultural context (sociolinguistic competence) (Canale & Swain, 1980). Traditional practices of grammar-based methodologies, the audio-lingual method, and the direct method are being abandoned for the most part due to their limited comprehensible input and emphasis on conscious control of the language. The new principle of language teaching now focuses on communication-based classrooms (Carrigan, 2009).

A communication-based classroom focusing on the communicative competencies (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), rather than on grammar or structure alone, and utilizing authentic texts and task-based activities is the best format to promote second language acquisition. Communication-based classrooms develop communicative competencies by emphasizing the need for linguistic fluidity and spontaneity in the target language rather than attempting to replicate native-speaker accuracy (Carrigan, 2009). When instruction concentrates primarily on these competencies (listening, reading, writing, and speaking), instead of grammar alone, students are more likely to absorb or acquire the rules of the language naturally. Language that is first “absorbed” is easily

processed. In order for a learner to acquire the ability to produce a language, he/she must first comprehend it. Comprehension is facilitated by context and gestures.

Another vital element for language acquisition is the use of authentic materials or texts. Authentic materials preserve the reality or believability of the target language by focusing on meaning rather than structure. By using authentic materials in a communication-based classroom, “learners can connect materials and activities with their real-world counterparts” (Carrigan, 2009, p. 60). Finally, with respect to a communication-based classroom, tasks with easy-to-follow guidelines should be used in order to focus on the communication of ideas, thoughts, and opinions rather than the structure of language.

Instructional Methodology

Without a structured, spiraled course sequence, the Harkness Conference Table Method is infused into the foreign/second language curriculum as a method to enhance the development of the communicative competencies in the target language with minor adaptations for grade level and language proficiency level. It is a resource that is not limited to students in a secondary or postsecondary school setting alone.

The use of the Harkness Conference Table Method (whose precursor was the Socratic Method) incorporates these competencies:

1. Reading: assigned texts at the appropriate language level;
2. Listening: an inherent component of discussion which permits the processing of information;
3. Speaking: asking/responding to questions, expressing opinions;
4. Writing: reflection or essay on the discussion.

This pedagogical method also aligns itself with the Common Core Standards (National Governors Association, 2010), specifically with respect to the Six Shifts in English Language Arts:

1. Reading: Shift 1 – Balancing Informational and Literary Texts, Shift 2 – Knowledge in the Disciplines, Shift 3 – Staircase of Complexity;
2. Listening: Shift 5 – Text-Based Answers;
3. Speaking: Shift 5 – Text-Based Answers; and
4. Writing: Shift 5 – text-based answers; Shift 6 – Writing from Sources.

Fink-Chorzempa and Lapidus (2006) present some general guidelines for a successful Socratic seminar or Harkness discussion, which incorporate the communicative competencies.

Readings, quotes, or pictures generate the discussions. For this reason, it is important for teachers to select an appropriate text or story and become familiar with its elements. The selected text should be thought-provoking and at a level at which every member of the class can successfully read and comprehend. Contemporary and modern interpretations of an event, or accounts that are biased in some way, give the students something to consider and discuss. Most classes use some type of textbook, supplemented with primary sources or authentic readings. Textbooks can be difficult to read and disengaging; therefore, it is important to offset textbooks with interesting supplemental readings. The fundamental factor is to choose a reading that will provoke discussion. Students are required to make references to the text to support their arguments or opinions when answering a question (Fink-Chorzempa & Lapidus, 2006). This

competency involves the core critical thinking skills of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and self-regulation.

With respect to the competency of listening, all participants must listen attentively to one another; respecting the rule that one person speaks at a time. In addition, it is through listening that students process the information being shared by peers and formulate appropriate responses (Fink-Chorzempa & Lapidus, 2006). This competency comprises the core critical thinking skills of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, and self-regulation.

With regard to the competency of speaking, all students are given the opportunity to engage in the literary dialogue without raising their hands. All participants must wait for the other student to finish speaking before presenting his/her argument with specific references to the text. Since many of the activities are completed as a whole class and thoughts are articulated verbally, students do not have to write their thoughts down. This approach allows students who have difficulty expressing themselves in writing to share their higher level thinking in an open-discussion format. Moreover, students can assist one another with vocabulary and grammar (Fink-Chorzempa & Lapidus, 2006). This competency engages the core critical thinking skills of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation.

With respect to the competency of writing, students are asked to respond to a written prompt upon completion of the discussion. Students can also write about points made in the discussion and to support their statements with examples from the text. As previously mentioned, one of the purposes for holding the seminar or discussion is to help students identify their own thoughts on a topic and articulate their point of view in

writing (Fink-Chorzempa & Lapidus, 2006). This competency involves the core critical thinking skills of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation.

Some of the benefits of using the Harkness Conference Table Method in the acquisition of a foreign language are not just dissemination of information, but the development or sparking of interest in students in becoming active learners. It fosters a student-centered, self-regulated, interactive learning process through discussion. All that Harkness requires is an oval seating arrangement, a reading, the teacher's knowledge of the topic's demands (whether to use the direct instructional approach or not) and time constraints, patience, and time for reflecting and assessing the activity. By means of well-prepared discussions, students are critically engaged by the content and thus become empowered to speak their minds to their peers. They likewise become knowledgeable enough to base their comments or arguments on evidence found in the readings or in other sources. According to Brookfield and Preskill (2005),

It increases students' awareness of and tolerance for ambiguity and complexity...

It helps students recognize and investigate their assumptions... it encourages attentive, respectful living... It increases intellectual agility... It develops the capacity for the clear communication of ideas and meaning... It develops habits of collaborative learning. (p. 22)

The preceding review has provided the rationale, proposed outcomes, and benefits of using the Harkness Conference Table Method. The theoretical underpinnings often cited by those who would propose the Harkness Conference Table Method point to the impact it can make on communicative proficiency.

Conclusions and Implications for Future Research

As with other content areas, mastery in a foreign language is achieved through continuous spiraling/sequencing. Without this continued or full course sequence in foreign languages, the necessary level of proficiency in order to effectively communicate in languages other than English will not be obtained. True second language acquisition can best be accomplished through a well-developed, full course sequence-based curriculum with constant exposure to the target language, beginning in the elementary schools and continuing into the postsecondary schools. In order to promote proficiency, the use of the Harkness Teaching Method with its reliance on constant exposure to the target language should be considered as a viable teaching method. This alternative teaching method should likewise be taken into account when aligning the curriculum for Languages Other Than English (LOTE) to the Common Core Standards, specifically the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading. The instructional focus on the Common Core Standards for all subject areas is on reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These strands constitute the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. These are four skills or communicative competencies LOTE educators have been developing for a long time. These same competencies are referred to as interpretative (listening, reading), interpersonal (speaking, listening) and presentational (speaking, writing) communication in the National Standards for Learning Languages.

A communication-based classroom focusing on the communicative competencies (speaking, listening, reading, writing), rather than on grammar or structure alone, and utilizing authentic texts and task-based activities is the best format to promote second

language acquisition thus warranting further investigation. The use of the Harkness Teaching Method provides the necessary foundation for the communication-based classroom while promoting the development of critical thinking skills. By using the Harkness Teaching Method, students develop their listening, questioning, and analytical skills from observing their classmates' participation in the discussion more than they do from simply listening to a lecture. It is a more active or interactive way of learning than the passivity of taking lecture notes.

It has been demonstrated that the components of a Harkness discussion incorporate all the communicative competencies in a communication-based classroom:

1. Reading: assigned texts at the appropriate language level;
2. Listening: an inherent component of discussion which permits the processing of information;
3. Speaking: asking/responding to questions, expressing opinions; and
4. Writing: reflection or essay on the discussion.

It is through a communication-based instruction that second language acquisition effectively occurs.

A true Harkness discussion emerges and sustains itself on critical thinking skills. Learning to think critically requires practice. Effective teaching of critical thinking is contingent upon setting a classroom tone that encourages the acceptance of diverse perspectives and free discussion. Emphasis is on providing reasons for or supporting opinions rather than only supplying correct answers. These are all characteristics of the Harkness Teaching Method.

Through the implementation of this instructional method over time, the amount of time or exposure to the target language using a communication-based format will increase thereby enhancing proficiency. Furthermore, the various components or elements of the Harkness discussion (inherent in its format) provide an opportunity for all students to participate at a level commensurate with his/her learning style. Finally, the use of the Harkness Teaching Method establishes the classroom tone that encourages the acceptance of diverse perspectives and free discussion by relying on high expectations for all members.

While the amount of information and research on the Socratic Method abounds, specific reference to the use of this method or the Harkness Teaching Method in promoting proficiency and critical thinking skills in a second language are limited or non-existent. For this reason, the implications for educational research are more extensive qualitative and quantitative studies of the use of the Harkness Teaching Method in foreign language instruction across a variety of research settings.

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Peer Formative Assessment Improves Student Speaking Fluency

Harry Grover Tuttle, Ed. D.

Abstract: The author describes the advantages of using peer formative assessments for speaking, explains how peers can assess each other, and explains the range of the peer assessments. Through peer formative assessment students increase in their speaking fluency.

At the start of the school year, Jason, a Spanish Year 2 student, describes what is happening in a picture. He says a short sentence, pauses for a long time, says another short sentence, pauses even more, and, finally, says a third short sentence. He has said three short sentences in three minutes. By the seventh week into the course, he selects which restaurant he prefers and, with 6 ½ complex sentences (13 simple sentences), tells why within three minutes. Each sentence states a different preference term and the reason for each preference. For example, he says, “I really like the French fries in Bob's restaurant because they have a lot of salt.” Jason's fluency or the number of sentences said in a specific time has increased by 480%. Jason has improved because his partner listened to him speak, told him how many sentences he said each time, and gave him feedback so he could improve. Such peer formative assessment causes students' fluency to improve.

Increasing class time for student speaking

In many modern language classrooms, a teacher such as Mr. Okar, a German teacher, calls on students in a one-on-one or ping-pong fashion. Mr. Webster calls on Berko, and Berko answers. Then Mr. Okar calls on Aissa, and Aissa answers. As Mr. Okar goes through the class calling on each student, each student has to wait for the twenty-seven other students in the class to be called before he or she gets called on again. The teacher may spend fifteen seconds with each student in asking a simple question and receiving an answer. If the teacher does this for an entire fifty-minute period, then each student talks seven times or says seven sentences for a total of one minute and forty seconds of speaking time for an entire fifty-minute class. Each student speaks very little in the target language.

Likewise, in a ping-pong class when the teacher hears an error, the teacher usually recasts the statement in which the teacher says the correct form and then has the student repeat that correct form. Omaggio (2001) argues that this technique has proven to be ineffective. Students need to be able to understand the concept and practice the concept rather than just repeating the specific words back.

When the modern language classroom changes from a ping-pong game into a soccer game in which all players are on the field at the same time, then each student has more opportunities to speak. If students peer monitor and give feedback to each other, their speaking time increases drastically from a ping-pong class (Tuttle, 2010). In the first formative speaking assessment during the class, Hazel, a French student, explains to her partner in six sentences why she likes basketball, and then, in eight sentences, describes the basketball team for another in-class assessment. Within six minutes, she has said fourteen sentences. These fourteen sentences in just six minutes of a soccer style class far surpass the seven sentences in a fifty minute ping pong class; in fact, forty six minutes still remain in Hazel's class affording her opportunities to say even more. Since students speak with a partner, half the class is speaking at the same time instead of just one student at a time in the ping-pong class.

Preparing students for peer assessment

Students do well in peer assessments when the teacher helps them develop these skills (White, 2009). Furthermore, students will peer review when they know that the ultimate goal focuses on their own improvement. Tuttle (2009) adds that peer assessments work well when students know that peer assessment has no formative grade attached to it and when they know that peers will offer them suggestions for instant improvement.

The teacher starts the peer assessment process by sharing with the students the learning goal of speaking such as the New York State Education Department's (2009) statement that speaking is a major communication goal in modern language learning. The teacher explains to the students that speaking consists of many different language functions such as socializing, giving reasons, and contrasting. The educator shares examples of statements using these functions. Then the teacher plays a recording of a

narration about a party and illustrates to the students how he/she records the number of spoken sentences. Next, the teacher plays another recording and has the students record the number of sentences; the students use their fingers to indicate to the teacher how many sentences they recorded. The teacher verifies that the students can correctly count spoken sentences. Likewise, the teacher will go over a recording to indicate when spoken sentences are not appropriate, not comprehensible and not meaningful, and then play another recording for the students to practice identifying non-valid spoken statements.

Mr. Balewa, an Italian teacher, asks his students to form pairs for the peer assessment of speaking; one student becomes Student 1 and the other student becomes Student 2. Student 2, the peer reviewer, listens and records the number of sentences while Student 1 speaks. Student 1 speaks without the help or hindrance from the other student. Often when a student participates in a conversation, that student depends on the partner. If the partner does not answer the question, pauses a long time before answering, or answers the question incorrectly, the other speaker cannot demonstrate his/her own speaking proficiency. Therefore, these peer formative assessment focus on one student talking to the listening partner.

Having students do peer assessment

Mr. Balewa scaffolds the speaking in his class from mere identification up to questions and answers. At first, he has students in pairs simply identify objects in the house such as “a chair.” Next he has them describe things such as “The room has three windows.” Then, he has them say actions for things in the house such as “I sit in an arm chair.” Each time the partner records how many words, phrases or sentences the partner said, depending on the assignment. He monitors student progress. Finally, he assigns the peer speaking assessment of “describe your house to your classmate” to the pairs. Yamin, who is Student 1, speaks. Student 2, Zarni, listens and records the number of sentences. If Yamin does not finish a sentence, says a sentence that does not fit the topic, or says a sentence that does not make sense, then Zarni, the peer reviewer, does not record it. When Yamin finishes, Zarni first tells

her the number of simple sentences she said; he counts a compound or complex sentence such as, “My room is small but my parents’ room is big,” as two sentences.

Giving Peer Feedback

Then, Zarni gives his peer, Yamin, formative suggestions for additional things she could say in describing her house. Depending on his language ability, he may give the feedback in English or the target language. He may give her feedback by asking a single-word question such as, “Kitchen?” “Colors?” or “Chores?,” a phrase such as, “ living room furniture,” “cooking in the kitchen,” or “times in the room,” or questions such as, “What do you like about your room?”. “What do you do each night in your house?” or “Who does what in the house?” (Tuttle and Tuttle, 2012). As Zarni offers these suggestions, Yamin writes them down on her formative assessment sheet. Then she uses these suggestions to say additional sentences to describe her house. If Yamin originally said six sentences and now says sentences for Zarni’s four more topics, she has increased her number of sentences from six to ten—an increase of 40%.

Peers provide a valuable role in widening the speaking perspective of their partners. To illustrate, when Diego narrates his weekend activities to his partner, Rowan, he talks about the sports he plays. Diego runs out of things to say since he only talks about sports. Rowan makes suggestions to Diego to speak about what he eats, where he goes, what he does with his friends, what TV shows he watches, and how much he sleeps. Diego only has had a sports focus while Rowan thinks of many other aspects of a weekend. Diego’s reaction of, “Oh, I forget about those things. I’ll put those in,” indicates that he has widened what he can narrate about his weekend.

The peer assessors can do more than count the number of sentences. The assessors can indicate how many things from a checklist the speakers include in the speaking assessment. For example, a checklist may contain the question words and Eugene checks off each question word as Charlotte includes it. Peers may also choose to use a more complex checklist. An “I can” checklist contains different functions about the same topic. To illustrate, an “I can” checklist for the topic of school

classes may contain such items as identifying classes and the teachers of each class, describing one teacher, narrating what happens in the class, expressing likes and dislikes for a class, and explaining some changes they would like in the class. The peer reviewers have to carefully listen to see if the partners have included all of the items in the checklist.

Using peer assessment as screenings and data

Some teachers may feel that students may not be as critical or as thorough as the teachers. These teachers might want to consider the peer assessments as initial screenings with the teachers doing any necessary follow up. For example, Alberto listens to Helena and reports that she only says two sentences for the function of explaining why she likes certain foods. The teacher then listens to Helena and realizes that she lacks adjectives to describe foods. The teacher provides her with such a list and Helena practices so she can speak more fluently about her food choices. Students do become very proficient at counting their partners' sentences and at listening for different language functions so they can help their speaking partner.

After the peers generate the speaking data and provide initial formative feedback, the teacher analyzes the information from the peer review sheets. As the instructor goes over a speaking assessment on which many students scored poorly, he/she can ascertain which students did well and ask them to share their strategies with their peers. Raju offers that, as he narrates his day, he sees himself doing each of the actions. Meanwhile, Zaw suggests another strategy in which he uses the time he does things, such as getting up at 6:30, to be able to narrate a variety of things about his day. Students hear from their peers who have been successful and they select one of the strategies to help themselves be better speakers.

Peer formative assessment provides a dynamic assessment process for daily assessments and for daily improvements with a commitment of very little class time. Students involved in peer assessment of speaking become fluent in their speaking, they improve the number of sentences they can say in a specific time.

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Bridging with Beckett:**Spiraling from Checkpoint B to Checkpoint C with Samuel Beckett's *En Attendant Godot***

Carol S. Dean, Ed.D.
Fabien L. Rivière

Since the 1980's, the teaching of Languages Other Than English in New York State has benefited greatly from second language acquisition (SLA) research (Shrum, 2010). That research informed our state syllabus, Modern languages for communication (University of the State of New York, 1992) and now ACTFL's Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st century (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006). While languages had been taught for decades through a grammar-translation approach, described by Shrum & Glisan (2010) as "...focused on translation of printed texts, learning of grammatical rules, and memorization of bilingual word lists," (p. 47), SLA research informed and geared a shift toward communicative competence, "... or the ability to function in a communicative setting by using not only grammatical knowledge but also gestures and intonation, strategies for making oneself understood, and risk-taking in attempting communication" (p. 13); i.e., the ability to communicate in a language other than English in an authentic context.

As research (Shrum, 2010; Omaggio, 2000; National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2006) continues to prove that reading literature, translating, conjugating verbs and writing papers do not foster communicative competence as such, this article proposes a unit of literature for high school and college students of French, where literature-based curricula may be meaningful and justified. This unit thus offers an opportunity for LOTE teachers to spiral their students' interactions with the language from the listening/speaking stage of Checkpoints A and B, to a more critical reading and writing stage of Checkpoint C, while increasing oral proficiency and fluency at the same time within the parameters of communicative competency.

UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING THE STUDENTS

This unit should be taught 100% in French, exceeding the recommendation by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (2012) for 90% target language use, which is also supported by the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (2010, p. 13). At these upper grade levels, students should have the prerequisite linguistic skills to comprehend the text and to understand the teacher's presentational materials, while being challenged to participate actively in discussions about the literature.

Who are the typical students in Checkpoint C French classes? Jeffries (1994) found that they "...are not the super elite group of college bound students one might expect them to be" (p. 9). Jeffries, then a professor in the School of Education at the University at Albany, participated in a graduate workshop there which explored the issue of collaboration between high school and college-level language curricula. Jeffries discovered that Checkpoint C students did not match the college teachers' perceptions; rather, students were diverse in ability level (some with low ability) as well as in terms of their level of motivation (some of whom took the language just for fun.) Moreover, their listening and speaking skills were generally stronger than their reading and writing skills. Of particular relevance to the unit of study presented in this article was that the average Checkpoint C student has had:

- limited experience in reading (informal or literary) texts of more than one or two paragraphs;
- little or no experience with the target language literature. (Poems, fables and fairy tales are sometimes, but not always, incorporated into checkpoints A and B);
- some experience in writing in the target language...;
- little or no experience in stating and developing a thesis in writing or orally (in the target language)... (pp. 9-10).

That workshop also made recommendations for course content in a student's first post-Checkpoint B class: it should "continue development of listening and speaking skills...reinforce and expand on mastery and application of grammatical rules...introduce writing as a composing process...and create opportunities for application of language skills" (p. 10). Furthermore, the workshop suggested that portfolio assessment be used in the effort to increase independent work and research skills, and that teachers "challenge higher order thinking skills" in the Checkpoint C curriculum so that students will be able to "...state and defend an opinion, evaluate a work of literature, or develop and test hypothesis" (p. 10). The unit of study, *En Attendant Godot*, presented in this article has been developed precisely in alignment with these aforementioned recommendations.

It is hoped that by using Beckett's writing as a springboard for enriched language acquisition, students will begin bridging the gap from language learning to the more complex stage of critical discourse in a second language. To that extent, this foray into the world of French literature—perhaps the first for many students—shall prepare them for college French while enabling them to appreciate the complexities of any French literature.

RATIONALE

At the attainment of the learning objectives for Checkpoint B, students now take a locally designed summative assessment for the language they have been studying. It is after that point that students may elect to continue their foreign language studies, sometimes in Advanced Placement or college credit-bearing courses. It is also the point at which teachers are presented with the difficult task of preparing them for the next step—college language study. College and high school educators have coined the phrase, "Bridging the Gap" to describe this special task that befalls the teachers—Beckett's play, *En Attendant Godot*, can serve to bridge that gap between high school and college French.

Samuel Beckett won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1969—*En Attendant Godot* is his most recognized work. Though Irish by birth, Beckett wrote in both French and English. His works are not translations from English to French; rather, he wrote in both French and English. When his work appears in both languages, it is because he wrote it in both languages himself, or collaborated with someone. Beckett wrote *En Attendant Godot* in French first, and later in English. His writing affords students at this level the opportunity to learn language and to broaden their appreciation of French literature. The language, style and concepts Beckett employs are within the grasp of understanding for post-Checkpoint B French students.

How does *En Attendant Godot* teach the curriculum when the focus is on language, not literature; communication, not conjugation? Literature can serve as an excellent vehicle for learning language; e.g., *Godot* offers a natural opportunity for the study of the subjunctive tense and slang.

Alignment with State Syllabus

For each of the three checkpoints, the state syllabus has identified learning outcomes within four major categories: functions, situations, topics, and proficiencies.

The functions are: socializing, expressing personal feelings, providing and obtaining information, and getting others to adopt a course of action. Highlighted below are those of particular relevance to the objectives of this unit of study.

- Socializing: apologizing.
- Expressing personal feelings: opinions, attitudes.
- Providing and obtaining information: needs, opinions, attitudes, feelings.
- Getting others to adopt a course of action: suggesting, requesting, directing, advising, warning, convincing, praising.

Different functions require different parts of speech. When the characters in the play are expressing their feelings and persuading each other, it requires the use of the subjunctive mood, with which Checkpoint B students would likely be less familiar than past and present tenses. The characters in *Godot* use the subjunctive when expressing their beliefs or doubts about Godot's arrival, and when making suggestions, e.g., why don't we hang ourselves? Students will be able to practice the subjunctive when discussing the play. Some of the activities planned for this unit of study were designed precisely with the linguistic objective of practicing the subjunctive. The use of slang is sprinkled generously throughout the play, frequently as part of socializing.

The situations identified in the state syllabus are listening, speaking, reading, writing and culture. As designed by the syllabus, Checkpoint C contains all the situations from the previous checkpoints. Only listening and writing, however, add new contexts: "songs, live and recorded," "feature programs on television, in movies, and on the radio," and "short examples of expository or creative writing" (p. 19)—all of which logically and meaningfully integrate into this unit. The use of video recordings of French productions of the play can provide opportunities for students to rehearse and perform parts of the play in class at a later stage.

There will be considerable spiraling and extended practice in the other situations (reading, speaking, culture) as well; e.g., group discussions with peers, informal presentations to groups of peers and familiar adults, excerpts from poetry and prose for cultural appreciation, and brief describing of simple situations and sequences of events. The study of *Godot* will further provide increased practice in reading, and the activities derived from it will also provide opportunities for enrichment in the other four situations.

There are 15 topics in the syllabus, which focus on specific vocabulary. Spiraling from, and extended practice of, all topics will also occur throughout the study of this play. Listed below are topics exclusive to Checkpoint C, with examples of how they correspond to *En Attendant Godot*.

- Family life: rapport among family members (Didi and Gogo)
- Community and neighborhood: responsibilities/expectations, rapport among members of the community (interactions between and among characters)
- Physical environment: impact on human life, ecology, and aesthetics (the setting)
- Mealtaking/Food and Drink: socializing in public establishments (usage of slang)
- Earning a living: relations with colleagues and employer (Pozzo and Lucky)
- Current events: social classes and their relations, current social issues, individual perceptions (Godot and Boy)

The syllabus's proficiencies refer to the level of communicative competence expected of the learner at each checkpoint. Of the proficiencies exclusive to Checkpoint C, the following are of particular interest in this unit of study.

- Listening: Can sometimes detect emotional overtones and understand inferences.
- Speaking: Limited control of more complex structures may interfere with communication.
- Reading: Can read excerpts from literature for pleasure. Is able to separate main ideas from lesser ones and thus begins to analyze material that is written for the general public. Is able to use linguistic context and prior knowledge to increase comprehension. Can detect the overall tone or intent of the text.
- Writing: Is able to show good control of the morphology of the language and of the most frequently used syntactic structures, but errors may still occur. Can express complex ideas sequentially with simple language.

- Culture: Is able to use the context to guess at the meaning of some unfamiliar cultural behaviors. Shows some initiative and ease in using culturally appropriate behaviors acquired by observations of authentic models. (pp. 28-29)

Because the study of *En Attendant Godot* requires reading, it is important to understand the expected ability level designated for checkpoint C:

Can understand most factual information in nontechnical prose as well as some expository texts on topics related to areas of special interest. Can read excerpts from literature for pleasure. Is able to separate main ideas from lesser ones and thus begins to analyze material that is written for the general public. Is able to use linguistic contexts and prior knowledge to increase comprehension. Can detect the overall tone or intent of the text. (p. 28)

The syllabus recognizes the unrealistic expectation of native fluency after only three years of high school French, and it identifies the types of errors that are admissible. Through videos of French performances of the play, students will have multiple opportunities to listen to the language both inside and outside of class, as the syllabus acknowledges the students' needs for "some repetition and rewording" (p. 28) when listening. In re-creations of the play, the students' improved listening ability will enhance their reading of lines. When speaking, students "may need help with any complication or difficulty" (p. 28). Students are expected to use circumlocutions to get their point across, and they will have "limited control of more complex structures [which] may interfere with communication" (p. 28).

Following is a sample from the unit of study for Beckett's *En Attendant Godot*. It includes learning objectives, sources, activities, assessments and daily lesson plans.

EN ATTENDANT GODOT

A Unit of Study for Post-Checkpoint B Students of French

Overall Objective

Students will be able to:

- express their opinion,
- express doubt and disbelief,
- make recommendations about another person's choices,
- call people names,
- identify objects using colloquial terminology,
- discuss basic biographical information about Samuel Beckett,
- relate Beckett's life and works to those of his contemporaries.

SOURCES

- Beckett, Samuel, *En Attendant Godot*. Available in various publications.
- *Beckett Rencontre Beckett : En Attendant Godot*. YouTube videos of 1989 French production directed by Samuel Beckett. Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79GSWYVavcY> (Part 1) and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsTpMppttr8> (Part 2).
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LINGUISTIC STRUCTURES

Subjunctive: Suggestions for introducing, treating and practicing the subjunctive:

- Identify verbs that are in the subjunctive--can students discern their infinitives?
- Probe to get students to suggest why it is in the subjunctive rather than the indicative (good opportunity for cooperative learning): Is there doubt or uncertainty in the meaning of the verb? If there is doubt, who is doubtful? Is it a definitive action? Is it an emotional issue? Is someone

trying to convince/persuade? Is someone giving advice to someone or ordering someone to do something? Is it a warning about something? Is someone expressing an opinion?

- Commonly used examples (*il faut que j'aille*) should be practiced and rehearsed so that students use the subjunctive because “it just sounds right.”

Passé simple

Slang

Length of Study

The unit is divided into 35 “scenes,” each of which can be easily read by students in one day.

Teachers can combine scenes or use additional time, as necessary. The teacher and/or the students may desire to supplement with performance, language development, biographical study, etc. lesson plans are given for each scene, and can be used in their entirety or in part.

Another option is to choose individual scenes for study, e.g., one act, Lucky’s speech, the end of the play, the boy’s scenes, scenes when 4 characters are on stage, etc.

Assessments

Summative:

- Performance of the play for school and community, staged reading or reader’s theater presentation of the play or scenes.
- Videotaping of the play or scenes to be used for future classes.
- Reading of Beckett’s poetry with explication.
- Debate: Who is Godot?

Formative:

- Vocabulary quizzes—applying the proper use of slang in other authentic situations.

- Subjunctive quizzes—demonstrating the proper use of the subjunctive through discussions or writings about the play or other topics.
- Interpersonal speaking assessments; e.g., interviews
- Presentational speaking assessments; e.g., role playing of characters and scenes
- Reading comprehension quizzes or daily assignments.

Sample lesson plan

Included in each lesson plan:

- Begin and Stop points for each scene.
- Key target language vocabulary for each lesson or scene
- Scaffolded questions.
- Complementary activities.
- Structures. Because an overall objective of this unit of study is for students to be able to express opinions and doubts, the subjunctive mood will be highlighted, including irregular verbs that use the subjunctive for the imperative.
- Supportive or supplemental work, including assignments to be completed outside of class.

Act 1, Scene 1

- Presentation of overall learning objectives and syllabus
- Biographical sketch of Samuel Beckett; e.g., other works, Nobel Prize, self-translator, contemporaries, historical background, personal, etc.
- Distribution of first scene or copies of play to students
- Viewing of corresponding scene in video
- Class oral reading of Act 1, Scene 1, through Vladimir's « *Ça devient inquiétant.* » (*Silence. Estragon agite son pied, en faisant jouer les orteils, afin que l'air y circule mieux.*)

Vocabulary (in order of appearance)

- s'acharner
- ahaner/en ahanant
- haleter/en haletant
- écarter
- froissé
- épaté
- les ossements (m.)
- accable
- la saloperie

Scaffolded questions for discussion :

- Qui sont-ils ? Où sont-ils ?
- Comment sont-ils ?
- Qu'est-ce qui ne va pas ? Pourquoi est-ce qu'ils attendent Godot ?
- Et vous, attendriez-vous ?
- Croyez-vous qu'ils aient raison d'attendre ?

Activities:

- Students act out to demonstrate understanding of actions.
- Students read lines according to stage directions to demonstrate understanding of adjectives and adverbs.
- Linguistic structures.
- Subjunctive: Estragon's « Qu'est-ce que tu veux que je te dise...? »
- Subjunctive as imperative: Vladimir's « sois raisonnable. »

Conclusion

En Attendant Godot can introduce students to French literature. It is an excellent vehicle for learning and practicing the subjunctive mood and slang. The issues presented in the play will lead students into discussions of many topics, and, as a play, it offers many creative possibilities for practicing French.

Amusez-vous bien!

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Using a Speaking Student Learning Objective (SLO) for Teacher Evaluation

Harry Grover Tuttle, Ed.D.

Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) make up 20% of the state growth component in the new teacher observation system (New York State United Teachers, 2012). In order to be considered highly effective, modern language teachers have to be able to show student growth from a baseline or pre-test to the post-test evidence of growth. Although many teachers have opted to use a grammar point such as the present tense as their target measure, a speaking target is not only easily achieved but also more consistent with modern language goals.

Mlle. Enhaut, a French teacher, states she will measure the SLO, "students will be able to perform basic everyday communicative functions in the target language orally and in writing," through their ability to say ten sentences about school in the target language. She bases this on the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012* (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012) for speaking at the Intermediate Mid level. For a pre-test at the beginning of the quarter, her students pair up and take turns either saying sentences about school or recording the total number of sentences spoken by their partner. Most students might not be able to say one full sentence, and others might be able to say only one or two. The teacher then collects these partner sheets, and transfers the data to her official sheet or directly into a spreadsheet.

As her students study the Education topic and associated verbs, she prepares them for their speaking by introducing each vocabulary word, and then teaching an accompanying action for it, such as "I open the door." She helps scaffold or provide structure for her students by having them tell, in sequence, about what happens from when they enter the school to when they leave it, or to talk about what they see in the classroom (Tuttle and Tuttle, 2012). Mlle. Enhaut has them speak about school on an every other day basis. During each class she has them use one more different verb to describe what

they do in school. She monitors their progress through the additional partner sheets. Although almost all of the class has demonstrated significant growth in the number of sentences said, she continues working one-on-one with a few students who still have a speaking gap. She gives them the strategy of saying a sentence about each object that they see as they stand up and turn around in a full circle. These students practice saying their sentences until they demonstrate their growth by saying ten sentences. She then gives the post-test in which her students say their ten sentences. All of her students easily say ten sentences about what they do in the school or class such as "I study. I do my homework. I work a lot. I write. I have three pens. I work with a classmate. I speak in Spanish. I look at pictures. My Spanish book is big. My teacher teaches." Again, the students narrate these sentences to their partners who tally the number of spoken sentences and record them, and then they switch roles. Mlle. Enhaut collects these partner sheets and again records the data on her official sheet or puts them directly into her spreadsheet.

Finally, Miss Enhaut enters all the data in a spreadsheet to show both individual growth and class growth. She has the spreadsheet program produce a chart that illustrates the very low class average score in the beginning, and the very high speaking class average score at the end. She also graphs individual achievement. She can document the students' growth from not being able to say any full sentences about a common topic, to saying ten sentences about a common topic.

Her administrator, Mr. Oreland, sees Mlle. Enhaut's results, and he is doubly satisfied—not only has she shown students' growth but she has done so through their speaking in the target language, which is what he agrees is the main goal of modern language study. He also appreciates that this speaking assessment mirrors what her students will have to do on their French final, and how such speaking demonstrates how the students are advancing through the ACTFL proficiency levels for speaking.

How will you show your students' speaking growth?

Dr. Tuttle has taught Spanish in middle and high school, foreign language methods courses, and taught Spanish at Onondaga Community College. He has been active in ACTFL, AATSP, and NYSAFLT. Dr. Tuttle has written over one hundred articles and chapters in language and education publications, published five books, and spoken at international, state and regional conferences. His modern language blog is <http://bit.ly/imprml>, his spontaneous speaking activities are at <http://bit.ly/tptuttle>, and his ebook, *90 Mobile Learning Modern Language Activities*, at Smashwords.

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Three Considerations for Maintaining a Robust Classroom

Nathan Lutz

In these days of high stakes test scores, we must be mindful of ensuring that our students extend themselves to live up to our increasingly high expectations. This may not be the easiest thing to do when we find ourselves mired in the day-to-day hustle and bustle of teaching, advising, coaching, and comforting students in need of some extra TLC—some teachers might be tempted to let some things slide. Here are three non-negotiables that I try to remember, even in my most stressed-out times.

1. Ensure that the learners are engaged: Busy does not equal engaged. Just because the classroom is filled with students who are—or at least appear to be—on task, that does not necessarily mean they are fully engaged in learning. You do not necessarily want your students to read a piece of text and merely answer factual questions. Consider taking things to the next level by creating a presentation on a topic—actually delving into the complexities of the content at hand. By striving to create activities that push students to tap into higher order thinking, you can maximize their level of engagement. Moving beyond “busy work” yields a student body that is not only empowered intellectually, but also socially and emotionally.
2. Get students to be responsible for their own learning: Traditional classrooms are very teacher-directed. This generally looks like students coming into a classroom, sitting down, and waiting for the teacher to instruct them on what to do next. Some teachers employ a strategy of “bell-ringers” or “do now” activities, which are still teacher-directed. In either case, the teacher is responsible for telling the students what to do. Imagine handing the reins over to the students so they can create their own learning

plans, read comments provided by their teacher, and start plugging away at a work schedule they helped create. The teacher is still involved in the process by directing—and even redirecting, if need be—when students require additional resources or guidance. This is still a carefully structured environment, but students are responsible for their own learning vis-à-vis clearly articulated expectations and consequences.

3. Vigorous academics: *Rigor* is an educational buzzword, but I prefer to consider the word *vigor* instead. Consider the Latin roots: *rigor* brings to mind rigidity (even death), whereas *vigor* makes one think of strength and growth (life!). If students are engaged and taking responsibility for their own learning, then a vigorous academic program comes naturally. “Old School” techniques like drills and memorization of facts and figures do not increase learning; they merely allow students to show off that they can memorize lists of facts. As we move through the 21st century, we’re going to see a shift from fact memorization to thinking and problem solving. We need to consider which is more important – which *facts* students can easily *find* simply by searching on Google, or which *problems* they can actually *solve* using their reasoning skills.

The problem with *rigor* (or even *vigor!*) is that it is an unquantifiable measurement. Most people agree that it means thorough and demanding high expectations; however, in the high stakes testing arena, the word becomes hotly disputed by educators—from State Ed all the way down to the classroom level. By framing *rigor* as being extremely thorough, demanding, and demonstrative of a certain level of acquisition of the target language, we can come to consensus. This is why we need to turn to ACTFL’s standards and proficiency targets.

So rather than thinking of making our curricula *rigorous* in the sense of being difficult, let's transform our thinking of it as challenging all our students at their individual levels through differentiation, thus providing appropriate challenges for progress.

Nathan Lutz is the Primary School French Teacher at Kent Place School, an independent girls' school in northern New Jersey. He is most recently Lower School World Language Teacher at Manlius Pebble Hill School in DeWitt, New York. He has been teaching for over 15 years. Nathan is formerly the National Networking Coordinator for the National Network for Early Language Learning (NNELL) and the Webmaster and Past President of Language Educators of Central New York (LECNY). In 2007, Nathan was chosen to be one of five participants in NYSAFLT's Leaders of Tomorrow Program.

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