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Exploring the Feasibility of a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies in Introductory Foreign Language Courses

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The 2007 MLA Report calls for large-scale reform in university foreign language (FL) departments to integrate the study of language, literature, and culture and move beyond the language-content dichotomy that has characterized the undergraduate curriculum for decades. This article explores the implications of these recommendations for introductory FL courses, arguing in favor of a pedagogy of multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996; Kern, 2000) as one pathway toward curricular reform. The adoption of a multiliteracies framework in response to calls for curricular change is not entirely novel, yet most scholarship to date has focused on the need for more explicit attention to students' linguistic development in advanced-level content courses rather than on pedagogical models for integrating textual content into introductory language courses. To support our position, three challenges to realizing curricular change and fostering literacy in introductory FL courses are discussed – pedagogy, course content, and departmental buy-in – and strategies to address each challenge are proposed. We conclude that in light of the changing landscape in U.S. higher education today, a pedagogy of multiliteracies represents a means of keeping the introductory FL curriculum relevant to students as well as to the broader intellectual mission of the university.

INTRODUCTION

In the changing climate of U.S. institutions of higher education, foreign language (FL) departments find themselves in a difficult position: programs must demonstrate their relevance to the university's larger mission beyond the teaching of verb conjugations or cultural generalities. One strategy for increasing relevance is to find ties between the instructional goals of FL departments and those of the broader university community and to instantiate programmatic change accordingly. The development of *academic literacy*, defined as the teaching of textuality and genre in cultural contexts, is one such tie. Indeed, as Swaffar and Arens (2005) convincingly argue, the development of academic literacy through the study of texts is the core matter of the humanities and the specific mission of FL programs[1]:

> Literacy describes what empowers individuals to enter societies; to derive, generate, communicate, and validate knowledge and experience; to exercise expressive capacities to engage others in shared cognitive, social, and moral projects; and to

exercise such agency with an identity that is recognized by others in the community (p. 2).

However, the development of academic literacy in a FL is typically carried out in advanced undergraduate courses and often conflicts with the more pragmatic focus of the introductory curriculum, wherein linguistic development is the primary aim (Byrnes, 2006; Maxim, 2004; Kern, 2000).[2] Moreover, this two-tiered structure is characterized by differing pedagogical goals: literary-cultural interpretation, on the one hand, and functional, interactive language use on the other. These goals are typically seen as incompatible, given the skill-based orientation of the lower levels, in which texts function as a vehicle for language practice and cultural content is explored superficially, failing to adequately prepare learners for the textual analysis required at more advanced levels. This incompatibility is compounded by the fact that 63% of upper-level FL courses are taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty members, whereas lower-level courses are overwhelmingly staffed by part-time and graduate student instructors (Jaschik, 2010; Steward, 2006). Furthermore, as a 2006 MLA survey revealed, FL enrollments have dropped over the last 50 years and enrollments in advanced-level courses are dangerously low (Furman, Goldberg & Lusin, 2007), suggesting that the two-tiered system is no longer serving students' needs and interests.[3] Given these realities and the well-recognized fact that development of both linguistic competence in a FL and academic literacy are long-term processes, FL departments can no longer maintain the *status quo*: significant changes that foster the development of language and literacy simultaneously across the undergraduate curriculum are imperative.

In the past, researchers in applied linguistics and FL pedagogy have argued in favor of merging language and content across the undergraduate curriculum (e.g., Byrnes, 2001; Frantzen, 2002; Paesani, 2004; Schultz, 2002; Swaffar, 1998). In fact, the call for curricular change was never more evident than in the 2007 MLA Report, which recommended the elimination of the traditional language-content structure of FL programs in favor of "a broader and more coherent curriculum in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole" (p. 3). The Report proposed that this reform be accomplished through development of students' "translingual and transcultural competence," or "the ability to operate between languages," (pp. 3-4) and increased emphasis on cultural narratives that present FL texts such as poetry, prose, film, and journalism.

While its recommendations are laudable, the 2007 MLA Report failed to address how FL departments might bring about the large-scale changes necessary to develop integrated, text-based curricula or which pedagogical approaches might facilitate implementing such curricula. A stream of recent scholarship (Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010; Geisler, 2008; Levine, Melin, Crane, Chavez, & Lovik, 2008; Maxim, 2009a; Pfeiffer, 2008; Pireddu, 2008; Schechtman & Koser, 2008) has acknowledged these and other lacunae in the Report. For example, Pfeiffer (2008) criticized the Report for not providing more explicit learning goals for achieving translingual and transcultural competence. In addition, Allen and Negueruela-Azarola (2010) and Schechtman and Koser (2008) underscored the Report's failure to address how the future FL professoriate should be trained to implement the Report's recommendations. Levine et al. claimed that the Report did not go far enough in questioning the two-tiered system,

arguing for a focus on the constructs of *literacy*, *genre*, and *discourse* to overcome the curricular divide.

In spite of these contributions, there is a curious absence of pedagogical models for carrying out integrated, text-based FL instruction at the introductory level.[4] We argue herein that a *pedagogy of multiliteracies* (Gee, 1990; Kern, 2000; New London Group, 1996; Swaffar & Arens, 2005) is one such framework. According to Kern (2003), multiliteracies instruction

> offers a way to narrow the long-standing pedagogical gap that has traditionally divided what we do at the early levels of language teaching and what we do at the advanced levels. That is, it offers a way to reconcile the teaching of 'communication' with the teaching of 'textual analysis' (p. 43).

Within this framework, Kern (2000) defined literacy as

> the use of socially-, historically-, and culturally-situated practices of creating and interpreting meaning through texts. It entails at least a tacit awareness of the relationships between textual conventions and their contexts of use and, ideally, the ability to reflect critically on those relationships… It draws on a wide range of cognitive abilities, on knowledge of written and spoken language, on knowledge of genres, and on cultural knowledge (p. 16).

In the remainder of this article, we consider the consequences of the curricular reform called for in the 2007 MLA Report and discuss the feasibility of implementing a pedagogy of multiliteracies in introductory FL courses. We chose to focus on this level because research in this area remains limited, especially in comparison to publications on intermediate (Redmann, 2008; Schultz, 2004) and advanced multiliteracies instruction (Allen, 2009a; Byrnes & Maxim, 2004; Byrnes, Weger-Guntharp & Sprang, 2006). Further, the introductory FL program is often seen as a self-contained entity, marginalized from the rest of the undergraduate curriculum "as a purely skills-based, functional, utilitarian endeavor" (Walther, 2007, p. 7). Nonetheless, because acquisition of academic literacy in a FL is long-term process, introductory courses *should* play a central role in its development. In the following sections, we discuss three challenges to realizing change and fostering academic literacy in introductory FL courses: pedagogy, curricular content, and program member buy-in. We see these as critical issues in ongoing discussions about curricular and pedagogical change, in general, and about introductory language programs, in particular.

CHALLENGE ONE: PEDAGOGY

In the U.S., communicative language teaching (CLT) has been the dominant pedagogical framework in introductory FL courses for several decades. However, unlike early versions of CLT, in which language learning was viewed as engaging with other members of a community or social group through oral and written language production and interpretation tasks (e.g., Breen & Candlin, 1980; Canale & Swain, 1980), "in [current] programmatic and pedagogical practice, the notion of communicative competence has come to be associated primarily with interactive, transactional oral language use"

(Byrnes, 2006, p. 244). As such, current iterations of CLT have more instrumental goals, with reading and writing functioning as secondary support skills.[5] In recent years, however, CLT's appropriateness for collegiate FL instruction has been called into question. Specific criticisms of CLT have included: a preference for oral language use in generic contexts rather than in a range of discourse contexts; a lack of emphasis on accuracy of expression; limited success in developing students' abilities to interpret and create written texts; and development of communicative abilities to the exclusion of thinking and intellectual abilities (Allen, 2009b; Kern, 2000; Kramsch, 2006; Meyer, 2009; Schulz, 2006; Swaffar, 2006). Indeed, CLT may not be the best framework for developing the kinds of linguistic competencies and familiarity with FL discourses that university departments need to foster to maintain the intellectual integrity of their programs (Byrnes, 2006; Levine et al., 2008). Further, according to Byrnes (2006), "because of [CLT's] propensity to separate language and content, particularly literary-cultural content, such a focus may unintentionally sustain the long-standing bifurcation of FL programs into language courses and content courses with all the attendant negative consequences" (p. 244). Based on these factors, we advocate a pedagogy of multiliteracies as an appropriate framework for introductory FL instruction.

The adoption of a multiliteracies framework in response to calls for curricular or pedagogical change is not entirely novel. Several scholars have argued for a pedagogy of multiliteracies in collegiate FL instruction, yet most have focused on the need for more explicit attention to students' linguistic development in advanced-level content courses. In what follows, we outline the elements of a pedagogy of multiliteracies and discuss obstacles and potential solutions to its implementation in introductory-level courses, wherein learners have little or no FL experience.

A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

The multiliteracies framework (Gee, 1990; Kern, 2000; New London Group, 1996; Swaffar & Arens, 2005) extends the more traditional definition of literacy – the ability to read and write – to encompass "dynamic, culturally and historically situated practices of using and interpreting diverse written and spoken texts to fulfill particular social purposes" (Kern, 2000, p. 6), with the goal of preparing FL learners to participate in diverse discourse communities, both at home and in the target culture (e.g., with other FL students, target language youths, online communities, etc.). Within this framework, reading and writing are integral to meaning construction rather than support skills. Further, in lieu of carrying out text-centric literary analysis, learners are encouraged to interpret, transform, and think critically about discourse through a variety of contexts and textual genres. Kern identified seven principles of literacy that link it closely with communication: *interpretation, collaboration, conventions, cultural knowledge, problem solving, reflection* and *self-reflection*, and *language use*. According to Kern, "this seven-point linkage between literacy and communication has important implications for language teaching, as it provides a bridge to span the gap that so often separates introductory 'communicative' language teaching and advanced 'literary' teaching" (p. 17).

A key element of a pedagogy of multiliteracies is design of meaning (Kern, 2000; New London Group, 1996). *Design* is an active, dynamic process that encompasses the creation of form-meaning connections through interpretation or creation of texts. Design includes three interrelated concepts: Available Designs, Designing, and the

Redesigned. *Available Designs* include all resources – linguistic, social, cultural – that a learner brings to a text to create meaning. To interpret or create a text, a learner uses these resources to engage in *Designing*, the "process of shaping emergent meaning [that] involves re-presentation and recontextualization" through reading, viewing, or listening (New London Group, p. 75). The result of Designing is a transformed representation of Available Designs called the *Redesigned*. Two components of effectively integrating textual interpretation and creation into introductory FL instruction are making learners aware of their existing Available Designs (in both their L1 and the FL) and helping them determine which L1 Available Designs will be useful for their current FL-learning experiences and which should be supplanted by new FL Available Designs. Thus, designing is a process of accessing, applying, and recycling known concepts in fresh ways (Kern, 2000). For example, to design the meaning of the French text *Défense d'afficher* 'Post no bills,' learners must have an understanding of *vocabulary* and *grammar*, of *background knowledge* regarding the July 29, 1881 law that places restrictions on public advertising, and of the *stories* related to the law and its application over time present in the media or elsewhere. Learners use these Available Designs to construct meaning and access the linguistic, social, and cultural content of the text. They then further use these Available Designs to engage in Designing and thereby transform the text by modifying its grammar, adding additional details, or rewriting the text to better represent modern society. Each of these three "transformations" is an example of the Redesigned.

The four curricular components – situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice – provide the pedagogical structure to organize multiliteracies instruction and engage learners in acts of meaning design (New London Group, 1996).[6] These curricular components are neither hierarchical nor sequential; they are sometimes overlapping parts of a complete pedagogy that may be implemented in whatever order best meets students' literacy needs. *Situated practice* activities provide learners the opportunity to immerse themselves in spontaneous language use and involve "the use of Available Designs in a context of communication but without conscious reflection, without metalanguage" (Kern, 2000, p. 133). In Directed Reading-Thinking Activities, for instance, learners occasionally pause as they read to predict and reflect on a text's content by considering what will happen next and why. Students explicitly build upon existing Available Designs in *overt instruction* activities. These activities encourage learners to systematically analyze the formal and functional features of texts so that they may use them to construct meaning on their own. One example of overt instruction is semantic mapping to explore a word or idea present in a text in a non-linear fashion and to identify relationships between that word or idea and other textual elements. *Critical framing* "involves drawing on the metalanguage developed through overt instruction to direct conscious attention to relationships among elements within the linguistic system as well as relationships between language use and social contexts and purposes" (Kern, p. 133). Critical framing activities, such as critical summaries or comparisons, therefore encourage learners to reflect on the relationship between design of meaning and communicative, social, and cultural contexts. Finally, in *transformed practice* activities, students engage in Designing to create "new texts on the basis of existing ones, or [reshape] texts to make them appropriate for contexts of communication other than those for which they were originally intended" (Kern, p. 134). Examples of transformed practice include rewriting a text from a different perspective or elaborating an original text to express additional ideas or intentions.

Obstacles to Instantiating a Pedagogy of Multiliteracies

Typically, CLT-oriented introductory FL courses are characterized by situated practice and overt instruction activities, incorporating critical framing and transformed practice activities less systematically, as these tend to be relegated to more advanced literary-cultural courses. One reason for this is the assumption that because introductory-level students have limited linguistic abilities, they cannot engage in activities requiring critical thinking, reflection, or interpretation, nor can they explore social, historical, or cultural perspectives using the FL (Meyer, 2009; Walther, 2007). This assumption further supposes that learners cannot interact with authentic FL texts conducive to this more sophisticated thinking. Another reason for a lack of critical framing and transformed practice activities is the belief that introductory courses and materials for those courses must include explicit instruction of language forms separate from content; a literacy-based pedagogy, with its focus on contextualized language use through texts and on grammar as a resource for meaning making, seems incompatible with this belief. Indeed, published literature that exemplifies the multiliteracies framework provides suggestions regarding text selection and text-based lessons but does not explicitly address instruction of linguistic forms beyond the inclusion of overt instruction activities that emphasize form-meaning connections, or how selected texts might integrate with other parts of the introductory curriculum (Byrnes et al., 2006; Kern, 2008; Maxim, 2006; Swaffar & Arens, 2005).

If we are to implement a pedagogy of multiliteracies as an alternative or complement to CLT, it is important to identify salient differences between the two frameworks. On its own, CLT does not contribute to a department's academic literacy goals, in large part because this framework does not reflect some principles inherent in a multiliteracies approach such as interpretation, problem solving, reflection, and self-reflection. Moreover, several principles that appear to be shared by CLT and a multiliteracies framework are, in fact, fundamentally different.

One such principle is *collaboration.* As a learner-centered pedagogy, CLT focuses more on individualistic oral self-expression through pair, group, and teacher-led activities rather than on collective social engagement with content (i.e., texts). The role of collaboration in CLT is typically to practice language forms through the exchange of information about oneself, often implemented in a socially de-contextualized setting. Moreover, reading and writing are viewed as solitary rather than collaborative acts, often taking place outside of the classroom. In contrast, collaboration in a multiliteracies framework is socially situated through interaction with texts and others within a classroom community. For example, writers collaborate by considering their audience as they make decisions about what must be said; readers collaborate by contributing their own experiences and knowledge to textual meaning-making. As such, collaboration allows students to be immersed in texts and construct meaning jointly as they give and receive assistance in textual creation and interpretation (Kern, 2003).

A second principle shared in part by each framework, yet fundamentally different between the two, is *language use*. Kern (2000) characterized the literacy-based principle of language use as follows: "Literacy is not just about writing systems, nor just about lexical and grammatical knowledge; it requires knowledge of how language is used in spoken and written contexts to create discourse" (p. 17). Language use within a literacy-oriented

approach, therefore, is always contextualized, involving both linguistic and sociocultural knowledge. Much of this language use can occur through encounters with oral and written FL texts that characterize the secondary discourses of public life such as book reviews, biographies, or questionnaires. Yet, as is the case for collaboration, an important goal of CLT is to facilitate students' practice of language forms through exchange of information about familiar topics. Indeed, because CLT emphasizes language use for the purpose of practicing targeted forms, instruction is often limited to contexts and genres that characterize the primary discourses of familiarity such as personal narratives, casual conversations, or journal entries (Byrnes, Crane, Maxim & Sprang, 2006; Gee, 1998; Maxim, 2004). Indeed, Kern (2000), expanding on Widdowson's (1978) distinction between communicative medium and communicative mode, suggested that this is a contrast of *usage* versus *use*. That is to say, whereas CLT focuses on language usage, or the interpretation and production of accurate forms, a pedagogy of multiliteracies focuses on language use, or the interpretation and creation of meaning, and its relationship to language usage.

The *conventions* principle also differs significantly between CLT and multiliteracies frameworks. Within CLT, the instructional focus is primarily on acquisition of linguistic conventions (e.g., writing systems, grammar, vocabulary, and cohesion and coherence devices) to carry out specific functions such as narrating in the past or asking for directions. In a multiliteracies framework, conventions are viewed as culturally situated, shaping how people read and write, and evolving over time. Thus, conventions include linguistic resources yet extend beyond these to include schematic resources related to a broad spectrum of written and spoken genres (e.g., advertisement, novel, editorial, conversation, etc.), their organizational patterns, and their particular ways of using language. According to Kern (2000), awareness of specific genres and their associated conventions is essential "because it allows [learners] to make connections between particular instances of discourse and others we have experienced previously" (p. 87) such as interviews, fairy tales, or poetry, and makes "them aware of the characteristically patterned ways that people in the community use language to fulfill particular communicative purposes in recurring situations" (p. 183).

A further challenge to implementing a pedagogy of multiliteracies relates to the professional development of FL instructors. Given the predominance of CLT in introductory-level textbooks and pedagogical materials, graduate teaching assistants (TAs) and part-time instructors teaching in introductory programs are by necessity trained in CLT, and thus may have limited or no knowledge of alternative frameworks, such as the multiliteracies approach, or how to apply them in the classroom. Further, instructors may see contradictions between a CLT-oriented textbook and alternative instructional approaches and hesitate to teach in a way that differs from the textbook. These factors, combined with the fact that commercially available FL methods textbooks reflect the predominance of CLT, make teacher training in multiliteracies pedagogy challenging, at best.[7] One way to overcome this challenge, as Allen (in press) recommended, is for introductory FL instructors and language program directors (LPDs) to reflect on potential conceptual differences between CLT-focused textbooks and multiliteracies pedagogy and then to collaborate regarding existing gaps in pedagogical training and specific strategies to help carry out instruction consistent with a multiliteracies framework.

Certainly, professional development initiatives related to a multiliteracies framework must address issues identified above related to the four curricular components (New London Group, 1996), the seven principles of literacy (Kern, 2000), and how literacy-based constructs relate to the existent introductory FL curriculum and instructional materials. Moreover, this training must articulate specific pedagogical strategies and tools for instructors' use in the classroom. Just as development of academic literacy and linguistic competence in a FL are long term-processes, so too is the development of conceptual knowledge and strategies for effectively implementing a pedagogy of multiliteracies. As Allen (in press) found in her longitudinal case study of conceptual development in two graduate TAs of Spanish,

> [E]vidence of the ability to think through concepts of literacy in structuring teaching practices did not emerge … until four semesters after [participants] started teaching, illustrating what a gradual and often difficult process teachers' conceptual development is, requiring multiple, sustained opportunities for dialogic mediating, scaffolded learning, and assisted performance (p. X).

Indeed, to instantiate a pedagogy of multiliteracies, ongoing professional development should include varied opportunities for FL instructors' engagement with and appropriation of related concepts and pedagogical strategies. Such opportunities should go well beyond the methods course to include workshops, informal discussions, lectures from outside experts, or additional coursework in applied linguistics or FL pedagogy. In addition, professional development activities should model the multiliteracies framework and reflect the four curricular components and integration of principles of literacy such as collaboration, interpretation, reflection, and language use.

Overcoming Obstacles: A Sample Instructional Sequence

In the Appendix, we present a model literacy-based curriculum for a second-semester introductory French course that illustrates the pedagogical application of the four curricular components. This curriculum merges language and content and develops learners' linguistic competence through meaningful interaction with authentic texts. Each unit in the curriculum presents one vignette from Philippe Delerm's *La Première gorgée de bière et autres plaisirs minuscules* (English title: *We Could Almost Eat Outside: An Appreciation of Life's Small Pleasures*) (1997) along with two additional texts representing a variety of genres such as print advertising, song lyrics, and art. This curriculum extends beyond the CLT-oriented focus on functional, oral language usage to include integrated language use: reading, writing, listening, viewing, and speaking tasks are developed as complementary modalities within and across instructional units. Moreover, activities in this model focus on the seven principles of literacy, including those that are lacking or underdeveloped in CLT. For instance, students *reflect* on texts and language use; *collaborate* by interacting with texts and other learners to create meaning; *use language* to focus on linguistic forms and contextualized discourse; and analyze *conventions* in multiple genres to express linguistic, cultural, and social perspectives.

For example, the unit entitled "From Market to Table" demonstrates how the four curricular components work in concert to develop students' academic literacy and linguistic competence. We present these components here in an instructional sequence

intended to engage students in design of meaning and to explore various linguistic, cultural, and social aspects of FL texts. The unit begins with *situated practice* to tap into students' Available Designs through interaction with visual images. Students look at pictures of French pastries and match them with the appropriate name. They then scan the Delerm vignette, "Le paquet de gateaux du dimanche matin" (English title: "A Sunday morning box of pastries") and analyze why the pastries might have the names they do. This activity prepares students to explore the social and linguistic aspects of the texts in further detail in subsequent activities. The unit continues with *overt instruction* in which students compare the representation of pastries in two genres: the Delerm vignette and a print advertisement for a French pastry shop. Through this comparison, students identify differences in the use of conventions to describe similar items. Delving deeper into the content of the Delerm vignette, students engage in *situated practice* through a readers' theater activity (Kern, 2000) in which they work in groups to transform the vignette into a script with multiple voices without modifying the original text. This activity immerses students in language use through collaborative interaction with the text and one another. Students then focus on linguistic and discourse conventions in an *overt instruction* activity that requires them to identify structural relationships and differences between dialogue and description in the Delerm text. In a *critical framing* activity, students answer critical focus questions (Kern) targeting cultural notions expressed through lexical items in the text such as *gâteau* 'cake', *paquet* 'package', or *dimanche* 'Sunday'. First, they explore relationships between the meanings of the words and their use in the title of the vignette and then on the meanings of the words within the discourse context of the whole text. As such, students see that word meanings change in context and are linked to cultural phenomena such as attending church on Sunday morning. Finally, students reflect on whether these notions have a similar meaning in their own culture, how these notions may have evolved over time, or whether their meaning differs in urban versus rural contexts. In addition to forming the basis for in-class discussion, written answers to these questions can be turned in as a formative assessment. The unit concludes with *transformed practice* in which students expand on the readers' theater activity and engage in small group oral text elaboration to express ideas, intentions, or relations suggested but not explicitly stated in the vignette by adding additional commentary. For instance, they might add a personal reaction (e.g., "How beautiful!"), indicate who said what (e.g., "The baker asked.." or "I responded…"), or elaborate on the Sunday morning context (e.g., "After church, we stopped by the bakery…"). As such, students apply the linguistic and cultural knowledge they have acquired over the course of the unit in a creative and expressive way. Finally, students perform their elaboration orally. This performance can be digitally recorded and serve as a summative assessment for the unit.

CHALLENGE TWO: CONTENT

A second challenge to realizing the 2007 MLA Report's call to teach language, literature, and culture as a continuous whole and implementing a multiliteracies pedagogy is the question of what content should be taught in the introductory FL curriculum. In pondering the question of identifying what content is or should be taught in introductory FL courses, we found Maxim's (2006) description of an elementary German course revealing:

> Using the communicatively-oriented textbook ... students spent time outside of class reading grammar explanations, learning vocabulary lists, and completing exercises in a workbook that practiced recently introduced grammar points and vocabulary items. Class time focused on using this newly learned information in a series of textbook activities to activate the students' knowledge of specific grammar and vocabulary ... the activities, although requiring meaningful communication, placed great emphasis on grammatical mastery (p. 22).

What is clear in this description is a focus on practicing new linguistic forms rather than engaging in meaningful language use or interpreting texts, a description that is highly representative of many so-called communicative classrooms.

Indeed, the dominance of grammatical content and lack of meaningfully integrated textual content as instantiated in communicative collegiate FL textbooks have long been criticized (Brager & Rice, 2000; Lally, 1998; Rifkin, 2003; Swaffar & Arens, 2005). Further, several empirical studies based on analysis of textbook materials (Aski, 2003; Wong & VanPatten, 2003) and interviews and questionnaires with FL instructors (Allen, 2008; Askildson, 2008) have uncovered a continued reliance on form-focused, mechanical exercises and a lack of engaging content in communicative textbooks. Among these, Askildson's survey of 48 graduate TAs and faculty members teaching lower-level French courses in four universities revealed that the textbook played a role in both modeling the type of language to be emphasized (i.e., standard written French) and, by its notable absence in textbook materials, language to be downplayed (i.e., informal French) in the classroom. In other words, teachers in Askildson's study felt that textbooks influenced not only what they taught but also how they communicated with students.

In addition to serving as a model of language use for teachers and students, textbook materials often function as "the bedrock of syllabus design and lesson planning" (Kramsch, 1988, p. 63), meaning that content in introductory FL courses is largely predicated on themes included in the textbook, which are set in a particular order respected by most instructors and LPDs. These themes normally correspond with students' immediate world, such as family, university life, hobbies, time and seasons, home and household activities, travel, and food (Meyer, 2009; Swaffar, 2006). Although familiar to students, these may be perceived as banal themes about which they have little desire to communicate with others. Moreover, themes of potential interest to college-age students (e.g., alternative lifestyles, politics, value systems) are often viewed as taboo, running counter to U.S. social norms and the risk-averse publishing market (Brager & Rice, 2000). Further, thematic content in textbooks is typically introduced in a culturally neutral fashion with language not directed at any particular audience rather than serving as a starting point for interrogating the social, political, or cultural dimensions of content (Swaffar, 2006). The lack of engaging content in textbooks is exacerbated by the absence or restricted use of authentic texts. When texts are included, they often involve clear intent and unambiguous meaning rather than cognitively challenging content that can be used to analyze language choice, author intent, or differing cultural viewpoints (Maxim, 2006).

But is it justified to place the blame for the slow rate of change in FL instructional materials on those who design and publish them? According to Dorwick and Glass,

editor and publisher with McGraw Hill Higher Education, textbook content mirrors what typical teachers ask for and a gap exists between policy (such as the Proficiency movement or National Standards) and teachers' actual classroom behaviors:

> In our world, it is the norm for professors using our textbooks to tell us that they "never cover the culture; there's just no time for it." And in our world, it is our consistent experience that the single most important determining factor in adoption decisions at the college level is the grammar sequence around which a given textbook is constructed (2003, p. 593).

As a result, there is a lack of real change in textbook materials based on the informal standards set by teachers themselves for what is published and how students learn languages through textbook materials. Instead, what changes most over time are surface features such as labels and prefaces rather than actual content (Dorwick & Glass, 2003). This viewpoint is supported by Blyth and Davis (2007), who critiqued FL textbooks as products of a complicitous relationship among publishers, textbook writers, reviewers, and LPDs.

Reframing Content in Introductory FL Courses from a Multiliteracies Perspective

Regardless of where the responsibility lies for the limitations of textbook content, typically the curriculum "by default" (Byrnes, 1998, p. 269) in introductory-level courses is the textbook and its pre-set choice of themes, grammar explanations, and vocabulary items. But while recognizing a reliance on textbooks is a reality of current instructional practice, a multiliteracies approach entails a reconsideration of the role of instructional materials in the lower-level FL curriculum in tandem with the larger question of what kinds of texts, themes, and linguistic competencies we wish to explore and develop with our students (Swaffar & Arens, 2005).

Although a multiliteracies approach does not prescribe specific content appropriate for introductory FL courses, it foregrounds the role of authentic texts of all types – both literary and non-literary – as the core element of instruction. Further, this approach questions the widely accepted practice of using short informational texts in lower-level FL courses based on the premise that these are easier to comprehend and thus more appropriate. As Swaffar and Arens (2005) noted, "[R]eading passages rarely exceed five hundred words in first-year textbooks, even when they are authentic. Students have no practice in breaking down or chunking larger patterns into manageable units and are encouraged instead to read word for word" (p. 36). Given that shorter texts lack redundancy and clear breaks in structure, they may actually be *harder* for learners to read than longer texts and may inhibit learners' use of metacognitive reading strategies (Swaffar & Arens). Instead, introductory FL instruction should capitalize on adult learners' cognitive and extralinguistic capabilities from their first language to scaffold interactions with longer FL texts (Swaffar, Arens, & Byrnes, 1991).

Given that little research exists describing the feasibility or outcomes of multiliteracies-oriented FL instruction at lower levels, many questions remain as to best practices for integrating a strong textual focus while also facilitating linguistic development in introductory courses. For example, how might we move beyond the

textbook as the primary source of content and vehicle for organizing instruction? How can cognitively challenging textual content be mapped onto a textbook-based curriculum? What principles should guide the selection and sequencing of textual content?[8] Although we do not seek to convey definitive responses to these questions, we believe that they merit consideration and reflection by FL departments. To that end, below, we discuss several models for integrating language and content, each of which has been successfully implemented in an introductory university-level FL course.

A first model is described by Maxim (2006), in which one textual genre (i.e., the romance novel) complemented the use of a CLT-oriented elementary German textbook. The rationale for integrating the novel was to begin developing students' academic literacy in German through reading extended authentic discourse. The selection of a popular novel was based on that textual genre's accessibility to U.S. students familiar with related genres such as soap operas and romance films. As Maxim explained, the "predictability" of the novel's structure and character development helped to compensate for students' limited linguistic abilities, which can make top-down processing overwhelming at times. In addition, the novel's semantic and contextual redundancy aided students' ability to comprehend and react to its characters, plot, and language use.

Collaborative reading, analysis, and interpretation took place during half of each class session over a ten-week period. For example, a recurrent in-class activity was reading analysis completed by pairs of students after they had identified major events in a passage of the novel. In this activity, a worksheet with three columns (people/situations, their characteristics, resulting actions) facilitated students' ability to locate textual language that conveyed certain details related to major events in the passage. During the other half of each class session, students engaged in contextualized grammar activities related to the linguistic functions and themes covered in the textbook.[9]

A second model (Meyer, 2009) targeted the development of elementary Spanish students' "critical understanding of the meaning of 'country' and how its images and realities are represented in paintings" (p. 88). Although Meyer did not posit literacy as the course's framing approach, its focus is highly compatible with multiliteracies instruction:

> The course design tightly integrated objectives (linguistic, content, and conceptual), materials, and assessments in order to facilitate students' developing understanding of Spain and the concept of country. Language and content functioned as the vehicles for concept development ... language was the means for their learning, not the end goal (p. 91).

In particular, the course focused on several aspects of sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain – daily life, social class, and the Church – as foundations for understanding Spain today. Unlike Maxim's (2006) model, this course did not use a textbook to anchor students' acquisition of new vocabulary and grammar, instead using paintings as texts to teach not only content but also language. Meyer explained that the choice of paintings as the primary text type around which the course was organized was based on both their accessibility and varied layers of meaning: "[S]ome representational aspects are immediately understandable, some culturally marked details need to be deciphered, and some indicative elements ... require interpretation" (p. 89). For example, during an early unit, a fifteenth century painting entitled "The Virgin of the Catholic Kings" facilitated students learning new vocabulary for colors and prepositions as well as artistic

terminology (e.g., foreground, background, focal point), and, at the same time, analyzing power relations among the King, Queen, and the Church based on the size and positions of figures in the painting. Further, the painting served as a point of entry for introducing historical information related to the kingdoms of Spain in the fifteenth century. In this way, focus on language forms served as a tool for textually oriented communication and development of content knowledge. In addition to the paintings, students read other texts to support their new understandings of concepts focused on in the course and to introduce new linguistic forms. Throughout the course, this type of content-based instruction led to students making claims, explaining their points of view, and responding to others' views on representations of Spain.

In a third model, Mills (2009) integrated content and language use in an Accelerated Elementary French course using a semester-long project: a virtual voyage in which students played the role of investigators for a French travel guide (*Guide du Routard*). Like Meyer (2009), Mills did not focus explicitly on literacy to frame the course, yet the manner in which linguistic modalities were integrated and language functioned as a tool for constructing meaning rather than an end in itself were consistent with multiliteracies instruction.

For example, informal writing took the form of a weekly travel blog, wherein students conducted research on specific European Francophone locations based on online materials (e.g., France's national railway site, *office de tourisme* sites for various cities) that they read and took notes on as the basis for related blog entries that they wrote. These entries served as a tool for discussions, comparisons, and oral presentations. In addition, a textbook was incorporated as a reference tool from which students could access and review grammatical explanations and vocabulary related to the course's thematic content.

A variety of text types tied to the course's cultural content were used including informational texts such as recipes and excerpts from the *Guide du Routard*, a comic film about travel complications, poems, and songs. The course culminated with a collective guidebook in which pairs of students worked together to prepare both a written chapter and a promotional I-Movie slideshow related to a city in Francophone Europe. Thus, both intertextuality and linkages among the linguistic modalities functioned as key elements of the final project.

As illustrated in the Appendix, a last model of integrating language and content illustrates four theme-based units of a multiliteracies-based introductory curriculum. Delerm (1997) vignettes, in combination with complementary texts of various genres, form the content for each unit. This collection of texts facilitates students developing an awareness of discourse expectations and conventions, learning about cultural practices in specific French contexts (some relics of a bygone time and some still relevant in contemporary France), and serve as a jumping-off point to consider how particular cultural practices described in the texts differ in certain French contexts and in their own community. In this regard, the goal of reading is not for students to arrive at native-like interpretations but to explore multiple meanings and to understand why their own interpretations might vary from those of French people (Kern, 2008). The vignettes expand on informational cultural blurbs found in the textbook by introducing a specific cultural product or practice based on the author's memories and habits. Although the texts include sophisticated vocabulary, structures, and stylistic elements, this is counterbalanced by the accessible subject matter. In addition, given that *Première gorgée*

also exists in audio version, various linguistic modalities can be readily integrated during activities requiring interaction with both oral and written versions of the text and reflection on how textual meaning evolves as one moves from reading the text to listening to it or vice-versa.

For example, in the unit entitled "Personal Relationships," the Delerm vignette "Invité par surprise" ("Potluck") describes the pleasure of being invited into the kitchen to help prepare dinner during a visit to a friend's home. In it, direct discourse and descriptions of the evening and the narrator's emotions are intermixed as are uses of the past and present tenses. This text is analyzed along with an excerpt from a book entitled *Evidences Invisibles* (Carroll, 1991) focusing on differing conceptions of space and privacy in France versus the U.S., and later a music video about refusing a dinner invitation, whose lyrics play with ways in which to express this refusal. In a culminating writing activity, students transform the "Invité par surprise" text into a dialogue, requiring a focus on both expressing emotions and narrating in the past using either the *passé composé* or the *imparfait* forms. In this way, throughout the unit, a theme from the textbook that might not typically engage college-age students is enhanced by a focus on texts, critical thinking, and cultural differences.[10]

Taken together, these four models suggest that it *is* feasible to implement a content-oriented introductory FL curriculum. As Kern (2008) pointed out, a key element of making such a curriculum feasible is the textual genres selected for inclusion. In each model presented above, authentic texts were chosen for their accessibility in addition to their value as cultural signifiers. Regarding the outcomes of student participation in such courses, encouraging empirical findings by Maxim (2006) on reading recall and vocabulary gains and by Mills (2009) on self-efficacy gains support the notion that even learners with extremely limited FL capabilities are able to engage with culturally rich textual content and that such engagement, in turn, facilitates linguistic development.

CHALLENGE THREE: BUY-IN

Reflecting on the 2007 MLA Report's recommendation to replace the two-tiered language-literature structure with broader, more coherent curricula, Porter (2009), herself a past president of the MLA, described reactions by collegiate FL departments as reflective of what she called "understandable anxiety":

> They want adjuncts to help plan the curriculum, and tenured faculty members to teach language classes? ... How could we possibly reduce our offerings in literature when we don't have enough coverage as it is? Who would develop and teach all the new courses we'd have to have? ... How could we keep telling our literature professors they have to publish or perish and also ask them to start paying attention to language instruction? (p. 17)

These questions each implicitly address an adamant message in the Report: that curricular transformation will take place only "through sustained collaboration among all members of the teaching corps" (p. 6). Indeed, such collaboration is often non-existent, particularly for Ph.D.-granting departments wherein less than eight percent of introductory FL courses are taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty, leaving most

lower-level courses staffed by non-tenure-track faculty, adjunct instructors, and graduate TAs (Maxim, 2009a; MLA, 2007).

According to Maxim (2009a), many FL departments are aware of their curricular incoherence and have attempted to address the two-tiered structure reflected in their course offerings. Yet, as he explained, rather than undertaking large-scale curricular redesign, departments have tended to take "just one small step" (p. 124) toward more coherent curricula by focusing their attention on "bridge" courses, whose purpose is to transition students between lower-level language courses and upper-level content courses. We concur with Maxim and further argue that the introductory FL curriculum is where collaboration is most critical if departments want to create an integrated, coherent sequence of courses, focused *from the beginning* on the long-term development of students' academic literacy in a FL.

Given the afore-mentioned obstacles, how might all members of a department collaborate in the redesign of the content and pedagogy of its introductory language courses? Furthermore, is such collaboration feasible, in particular for departments wherein little communication occurs among those who teach introductory and those who teach advanced undergraduate courses? What concrete steps are necessary to begin the process of collaborative curricular transformation? Below, we consider three different constituencies within FL departments whose input, cooperation, and feedback are essential for curricular reform, and we provide suggestions for how each constituency might be better integrated into the process of rethinking introductory FL instruction.

The first group is *tenured and tenure-track faculty* with teaching assignments (particularly in Ph.D.-granting departments) in more advanced literature and cultural studies courses. These faculty are usually peripheral to introductory-level decision making and, consequently, their knowledge of the lower-level curriculum may be limited to information garnered during a meeting, a conversation with the LPD, or anecdotes shared by students. As such, all faculty may not be aware of the specific goals and objectives of introductory courses or instructional materials used in them. Yet despite the fact that all faculty members may not be involved in the day-to-day teaching of introductory courses, they are ongoing stakeholders in students' learning outcomes. That is to say, curricular changes at the introductory level have a potential ripple effect later in students' learning trajectories; thus, understanding the pedagogy, content, and outcomes of the introductory curriculum is of importance for all faculty. Furthermore, an ability to communicate the relevance of the departmental mission and introductory FL curriculum beyond the department level are critical, and therefore, a strong departmental leader among this constituency – be it the Chair or the LPD – is essential (Byrnes, 2001).

A very simple starting point for enhancing communication and knowledge sharing among faculty members is by creating mechanisms for doing so. For example, a secure-access internet site can be created to facilitate the sharing of syllabi, course descriptions, examples of instructional materials and assessments, and level-by-level program goals and objectives. Using such a tool, various members of the undergraduate faculty can begin to see linkages (or possible inconsistencies) among different courses and think collectively about building a consciously designed curriculum. Information archived in such a site can then serve as data to inform curricular planning and program assessment and faculty members can be asked to review and reflect on these materials in relation to ongoing curricular projects.

Beyond such sharing, to bring about more coherence between the lower- and upper-level undergraduate curriculum, soliciting tenured and tenure-track faculty's input on the content of the introductory FL curriculum is critical. Given that a multiliteracies approach aims to envelop the textual within the communicative (i.e., anchor communicative language learning and use in texts of various literary and non-literary genres), collaboration with literature and cultural studies faculty regarding the specific texts and genres used in introductory courses can increase involvement by this constituency. Constructing a document together such as the table found in the Appendix could be a valuable starting point for collaboration. In addition, as "subject experts," individual tenured and tenure-track faculty members might be invited to share their passion and knowledge of literature and culture by presenting short, interactive lectures in introductory courses in relation to a specific theme, text, or cultural or historical event.

The second group who, on first consideration, might be overlooked in terms of buy-in related to the lower-level FL curriculum are *those primarily charged with teaching introductory courses*, i.e., non-tenure track faculty, adjunct instructors, and graduate TAs. Particularly when seeking to instantiate a pedagogy of multiliteracies, given its absence from commercial textbooks and professional development materials, we cannot assume that introductory-level instructors understand how to implement this approach or view it as desirable. In fact, a longitudinal case study of two TAs with extensive professional development related to multiliteracies-based FL instruction found that although it was perceived as a dynamic and meaningful framework, literacy-based pedagogy was also seen as requiring more effort from instructors and students (Allen, in press). This finding deserves particular consideration given that those charged with teaching introductory courses are often teaching numerous courses or attempting to balance time spent on teaching with graduate coursework or dissertation writing.

Therefore, varied strategies should be implemented to increase the commitment of instructors teaching introductory courses to carrying out a pedagogy of multiliteracies and to illustrate that such an approach is feasible. Beyond professional development activities such as workshops or graduate coursework aimed at equipping instructors with techniques for multiliteracies-based instruction, other mechanisms can increase collaboration among this constituency. For example, given the central role that texts play in a multiliteracies approach and the need for substantive materials development, an internet-based archive can facilitate sharing resources such as texts, classroom activities, lesson plans, and assessments. Working together with the LPD, individual instructors can assist with text selection by finding and archiving different genres of texts that each address a common theme. In this regard, instructors' own interests and experiences with the FL and its culture(s) can be meaningfully integrated in a way not possible in a textbook-focused curriculum.

This type of input relates to a second strategy for increasing collaboration, which is including introductory-level instructors, to the extent possible, in curricular planning. According to Maxim (2009a), particularly for FL graduate students, curricular thinking is typically not emphasized over the course of their studies or professional development experiences, resulting in future professors not understanding the various levels of the undergraduate curriculum. To improve this situation, TAs and other instructors should be provided with opportunities to reflect and provide feedback on the content, goals, and outcomes of courses they teach with an emphasis on curricular continuity and facilitating students' transition from one level to the next. This might be accomplished

through a series of observations of different undergraduate courses to draw attention to the instructional focus, modes of student participation, and challenges present in various curricular levels. A second strategy would be to have each instructor prepare an end-of-semester reflective report for the course or courses he or she taught and observed, accompanied by a group discussion of instructors' reports among introductory-level teaching staff, the LPD, and other faculty such as the undergraduate advisor and department chair.

A third constituency whose opinions related to the introductory curriculum are often overlooked are *students enrolled in those courses*. Given that many students with previous language study at the high school level choose to repeat introductory FL courses in college, they may not possess learning strategies needed for extensive reading and writing in the FL and may be skeptical as to the viability of text-based instruction. In addition, the motivations for language study held by both true and "false" beginners may not be compatible with curricular goals and objectives in place. In relation to this notion, Porter (2009) called for reflection on and incorporation of students' own needs and goals as critical elements of curricular construction, asking, "Who are our students? What are their goals in taking our classes? How do we *know* what their goals are? What do students need to know to succeed in our courses and programs?" (p. 19). Thus, it is critical that, following a multiliteracies approach, regular opportunities be provided to students for *reflection* on the process of language learning and *self-reflection* on their engagement in this often-difficult process. These opportunities might include a language-learning autobiography and ongoing self-evaluation using quantitative metrics such as rubrics or open-ended data such as journaling. In addition, documents such as the course syllabus should describe in student-friendly language what a multiliteracies approach is and what types of language-learning activities and modes of participation are entailed in this approach. One further strategy to complement explicit statements about the approach in the syllabus is to hold a required session at the semester's start to orient introductory students to the goals of a multiliteracies-based curriculum and to provide suggestions as to how language learning can be maximized both in and outside the classroom. Given that research (Bernaus, Moore, & Avezedo, 2007; Williams, 2004) has found that language-learning motivation levels decline as the initial enthusiasm for learning a FL wanes, strategies such as acquainting students with the instructional approach, giving concrete ideas for succeeding in such an approach, and providing opportunity for reflection and self-reflection may help to sustain students' motivation to persist in language study.

A final point regarding the need for buy-in from various departmental constituencies is that although involving any one group more fully is promising for beginning the process of curricular reform, ultimately, cooperation is needed *across and within constituencies* to build a consensus-based curriculum. In this regard, the multi-year curriculum renewal project "Developing Multiple Literacies" undertaken by Georgetown University's German Department and described by Byrnes (2001) offers valuable lessons to other departments. For example, faculty-graduate student teams collaborated on developing instructional materials and assessments for the four-year undergraduate curriculum over several semesters and summer breaks. Needs-based faculty development workshops were also conducted with attendance expected of all teaching staff, regardless of rank. Given that little institutional financial support was available to aid the project, an

external grant was secured to bolster efforts to create, refine, and implement the new curriculum. Byrnes described one of the project's outcomes as follows:

> [W]e realized ... that intense collaboration brought about a notable change in departmental culture toward a confident and openly shared competence, vis-à-vis both our program as a whole and our teaching as a public good. I attribute this change to the redistribution of participant structures and responsibilities, both among the faculty and between the faculty and the graduate students (p. 520).

Thus, extensive intra-departmental collaboration and a reconfiguration of the roles played by various constituencies within the department in relation to curriculum design brought about not only curricular reform but also a new programmatic vision. As Byrnes (2001) demonstrated in her description of a multiliteracies-based undergraduate German curriculum, a four-year instructional sequence, including introductory courses, can and *should* be constructed collaboratively by all faculty and graduate students in a department. That said, different constituencies can play different roles based on their involvement in the curriculum and the knowledge each group can contribute. Taken together, such collaboration stands to strengthen both the curriculum and the sense of ownership held by all members of the department.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding sections, we posited a multiliteracies approach (Kern, 2000; New London Group, 1996; Swaffar & Arens, 2005) as the most appropriate instructional framework for teaching language, culture, and literature as a continuous whole in introductory-level collegiate FL courses. Further, we argued that if the lower-level FL curriculum fails to focus on developing students' academic literacy in favor of functional and transactional language use, it serves as an incubator for maintaining an unproductive programmatic divide impacting both students and teaching staff. Given the substantial complexity of carrying out multiliteracies-based instruction and students' limited experience and knowledge of the FL at the introductory level, we discussed three challenges: pedagogy, content, and departmental buy-in. Throughout our discussion, we explored the question of whether a pedagogy of multiliteracies is feasible at the introductory level and, if so, what the implications are for FL departments.

Although we described several models of introductory FL courses to exemplify our position related to the feasibility of multiliteracies instruction, at the same time, we do not wish to understate the commitment and collaboration necessary to implement such curricula. These are not recipes that can be easily replicated in any setting. Rather, they are examples of best practices that we hope will serve as a point of departure for departmental conversations about pedagogical and curricular reform.

In conclusion, given the current scrutiny faced by many FL departments in light of a global economic crisis that has triggered elimination of numerous collegiate FL programs, Bernhardt and Berman's (1999) call for change, published over a decade ago, is even more salient today:

> First-year language courses have to become as intellectually exciting as any course on campus. Settling for less will be fatal because we will have thereby conceded that the

> largest portions of our departments' offerings are not competitive with the rest of the university curriculum (p. 24).

Indeed, the stakes are now higher than ever in U.S. universities regarding *how* and *what* we teach in our introductory FL courses. It is our opinion, therefore, that multiliteracies instruction is not just feasible but essential to the relevance and intellectual rigor of undergraduate FL programs.

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NOTES

1. In keeping with a multiliteracies approach, we define texts broadly to include written, spoken, visual, and audiovisual documents.

2. Throughout, we define *introductory* as the first year of language instruction whose content is typically an elementary-level textbook.

3. It should be noted that from 2002-2006 there was 13% spike in university foreign language enrollments, most probably driven by reactions to 9/11 and the need to develop critical languages like Arabic and Chinese.

4. Some exceptions include Kern (2008), Maxim (2006), Meyer (2009), and the well-documented curricular innovations of Georgetown University's German program (see, for example, Byrnes, Crane, Maxim & Sprang, 2006).

5. See Kramsch (2006) and Swaffar (2006) for commentary on the evolution of the concept of communicative competence and its associated pedagogies.

6. Kalantzis and Cope (2005) and Cope and Kalantzis (2009) suggested a reframing of the four curricular components as pedagogical acts. They refer to these reconceptualized components of the multiliteracies pedagogy as *experiencing*, *conceptualizing*, *analyzing*, and *applying*.

7. To date, university-level methods books anchored in literacy-based pedagogy are inexistent. Hall's (2001) literacy-based methods book is targeted to middle and high school instructors.

8. A full discussion of best practices in sequencing content for elementary FL courses following a multiliteracies approach is beyond the scope of this article. Maxim (2009b), in keeping with topological classification of genre proposed by Gee (1998), proposed a curriculum that moves progressively from primary discourses of familiarity to secondary discourses used in public and institutional spheres. The question of how such a genre-based continuum would be structured and which texts would be included at the introductory levels remains unanswered and deserves future treatment.

9. It should be noted that in Maxim (2006), the author reported the results of an empirical study that included a control group (i.e., Elementary German class taught with a linguistically based syllabus and communicative language approach) and a comparison group (i.e., Elementary German class taught with a linguistically based syllabus, a communicative language approach, and reading of a romance novel). Students in both groups were required to complete identical exams, which were focused on both functional and grammatical objectives of the course. Therefore, the way that grammar was presented to students in the comparison group was related more to the existing curriculum than the researcher's own instructional priorities.

10. Including critical thinking and consideration of cultural difference is not an inconsequential challenge in introductory-level courses, given students' limited experience expressing complex or abstract ideas in the FL. For this reason, instructors may leave open the option for students to write or speak using their L1 during opportunities for reflection and self-reflection, one of the seven principles of literacy outlined by Kern (2000).

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Appendix

Model Design of an Introductory-Level (Second Semester) Literacy-Based French Curriculum

	Textbook Unit[a]	*From market to table*	*Our home*	*Personal relationships*	*Activities for all seasons*
CONTENT	Primary Genre[b]	"Le paquet de gateaux du dimanche matin"	"Le dimanche soir"	"Invitée par surprise"	"La bicyclette et le vélo"
	Secondary Genres	- Images (pastries) - Advertisement (French pastry shop)	- Artwork ("Le dimanche," Chagal; "Un dimanche après-midi," Seurat) - Song ("L'escalier", P. Piche)	- Cultural reading ("La maison," Carroll, 1991) - Music video ("Le dîner," Bénabar)	- Website (www. jeprofitedelavie avelo.com) - Images (casual vs. competitive cycling & cyclists)
	Linguistic Functions	- Ordering / talking about meals / dishes - Describing past events	- Describing your home - Making suggestions - Describing settings in the past	- Expressing opinions and emotions - Narrating in the past	- Talking about weather - Extending, accepting, refusing invitations - Giving advice
PEDAGOGY[c]	Situated Practice	- Description & analysis of pastry names & images - Reader's theater (conversion of primary genre into a "script")	- Description & analysis of paintings - Class survey (typical Sunday activities at home, university)	- Description & analysis of video images & lyrics - Directed reading thinking activity (guided interpretation of "La maison")	- Class survey (reasons for bike riding in U.S.) - Description & analysis of images (clothing, colors, activities, etc. of cyclists)
	Overt Instruction	- Genre comparison (representation of pastries in primary vs. advertisement genres) - Identification of discourse structure relationships (description vs. dialogue)	- Semantic webbing (typical Sunday vs. Sunday in primary text) - Identification of syntactic relationships (phrases that imply suggestions; alternative ways of suggesting)	- Word identification & genre comparison (public/private space, intimacy in both texts) - Identify syntactic relationships (use of past vs. present)	- Semantic mapping (define *bicyclette* vs. *vélo* based on text and student ideas) - Sentence reformulation (advice regarding bike use & safety)

	Critical Framing	- Critical focus questions (significance of *gâteau, paquet*, and *dimanche* in text: Do these words have the same meaning in your culture?, etc.)	- Reflective journal entry ("home" in primary genre vs. students' experience) - Concept comparison ("home" in primary genre vs. song)	- Written summary (definition of public & private based on texts; comparison with U.S.)	- Reflective summary & comparison (website; bike safety and use in France vs. U.S.)
	Transformed Practice	- Oral text elaboration (express ideas, intentions, etc. suggested but not explicitly stated)	- Genre reformulation (write song lyric about students' concept of "home")	- Dialogic transformation (rewrite text as dialogue)	- Text reformulation (characterize two similar activities or things, e.g., run vs. jog)

a. The textbook referenced here is *Chez nous: Branché sur le monde francophone* (Valdman, Pons, & Scullen, 2010), however the themes are common to most elementary French textbooks.

b. All primary genre texts are short stories from Philippe Delerm's *La première gorgée de bière et autres plaisirs minuscules* (1997).

c. Activity types are adapted from Hall (2001) and Kern (2000). Activities are organized according to the curricular components and do not represent a chronological instructional sequence, per se. See the text for a discussion of how the activities are sequenced for the unit entitled "From market to table."