From Licensure Coursework to the Student-Teaching Internship: Building Bridges in the Era of ACTFL/NCATE Standards

An Introduction

And

Review of the Literature

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Introduction

In 2002, the *Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers* written by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) were approved by the National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). As a result, the ACTFL/NCATE standards have become the newest set of benchmarks that indicate what pre-service foreign/world language teachers should know and be able to do (Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006; McAlpine & Dhonau, 2007). A copy of these standards can be found in Appendix A. Even with these standards in hand, preparing pre-service foreign/world language teachers for the realities of the cognitive, linguistic, and cultural diversity of today's foreign/world language learners is a challenge for many teacher education programs. Couple this with the variability in size and design among teacher education programs, and the challenge of meeting the requirements for NCATE accreditation becomes quite complex (McAlpine & Dhonau, 2007). Many programs are left with the question of how best to bridge the gaps between what pre-service teachers are asked to do during their coursework and what they are expected to accomplish during their student-teaching internship. And, since many licensure programs culminate with the completion of a professional development portfolio, how might these course projects and internship experiences transform in to the necessary evidence of pedagogical knowledge, understanding, and professionalism in the era of ACTFL/NCATE standards?

This paper will examine the literature that supports the process that one university underwent in order to align the licensure coursework and the student teaching internship to the ACTFL/NCATE standards. The process began with a collaborative effort by several faculty members in order to design course projects that are aligned to the ACTFL/NCATE standards. The faculty members, all full-time professors, teach the seven courses that teacher candidates are

required to complete prior to their student teaching internship. The result of their collaboration has been the development and implementation of course specific performance-based assessments and grading rubrics. The next step was to bridge these performance-based assessments to the anticipated experiences of pre-service teachers during their student-teaching internship. To do so, the student-teaching internship manual (STIM) was re-written to meet the specific needs of foreign/world language interns. It too was aligned to the ACTFL/NCATE standards with particular attention paid to the guidelines for the professional development portfolio. Although the mechanics of the alignment process cannot be understated, to truly understand the complexity of this process, one must consider the underlying theoretical lenses through which these changes were made.

Changing Paradigms in the Era of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning

Highly Qualified Teachers

The current concern with developing standards-based teaching and learning at the teacher-training level is related to national, state, and local education policies. Specifically, the standards for developing highly qualified teachers (HQTs) are a result of the revisions made in 2002 to the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), a bill constituted to law in 1965. These revisions, commonly referred to as the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), were designed with the goal of closing the achievement gap that has continued to expand across minority groups based on race, ethnicity, and socio-economic (SES) status. Two distinct components of NCLB include the application of standardized assessments with all K-12 students in publicly funded schools, and the call for improving teacher education programs in order to ensure the training of HQTs.

In addition to meeting new requirements for the development of HQTs according to NCLB, those in the field of foreign/world language education were also in the nascent stage of adapting the *Standards of Foreign Language Learning* (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) to their curriculum and instruction. A copy of these standards can be found in Appendix B. These standards, known as the Five Cs of communication, connections, comparisons, cultures and communities, define what the K-12 foreign/world language learner should know and be able to do with the language and culture being studied. Now, five years after the inception of NCLB and the ACTFL/NCATE standards and eight years after the birth of the Five Cs, the study of world languages is no longer reserved for the academically gifted and talented. Within this new paradigm of standards-based teaching and learning, one must ask, how will teacher education programs better prepare foreign/world language teachers to meet the diverse cognitive, linguistic, and cultural needs of today's language learners?

Sociocultural Theory and Critical Pedagogy

The last decade has seen a marked increase in the work of second language acquisition (SLA) researchers and scholars regarding the application of sociocultural theory and dialogic approaches to the teaching and learning of languages and culture (Norton, 1997; Hall, 2002; Hawkins, 2005; Lantolf, 2005; Ricento, 2005). Additionally, special attention has been placed on the use of dialogues to transform power and privilege by means of instructional practices. Grounded in critical pedagogy, the goal of these practices is to give a voice to the populations of students who have historically been marginalized in education. Moll and González (2004) offer a framework that teachers may use to conduct ethnographic studies of their students and their families in order to understand and give value to previously unfamiliar languages and cultures. Their work seeks to change the messages that schools have sent to students regarding whose

languages and cultures have value in the classroom. Recognizing the need to do more than acknowledge cultural diversity, their term "funds of knowledge" refers to the cultural and linguistic knowledge that is necessary for an individual to survive and thrive within a particular social group. For Moll and González, true change in the messages we send to our students will come only if educators take time to learn not just *about* their students, but to learn *from* them and their families.

It is unfortunate that for many generations, the knowledge that has been valued in the home or community has been different from that which has been valued in the classroom. The result has been the production and reproduction of programs that are based on a deficit model. In education, deficit models seek to identify and remedy deficiencies that learners are believed to have prior to receiving instruction (Moll & González, 2004; Hawkins, 2005). Interestingly, these deficiencies are often identified by educators who do not share the same race, ethnicity or SES background as the learner. In the field of world languages, deficit models may be evident in both the overall program and/or the individual classroom. Asking questions such as "what languages are being offered, when, how, and to whom?" may reveal the presence of deficit models in world language programs. If there is little evidence of growth in the variety of languages offered and if there are restrictions in place to limit who is eligible to learn them, there is most likely the presence of a deficit model. As Canagarajah (2005) notes, educators are mistaken when they withhold world language education from minority students because they assume they lack the knowledge and critical thinking skills to learn a language. This is simply not true as critical practitioners understand that critical thinking can be expressed in a multitude of ways (Canagarajah, 2005). When we focus on deficiencies instead of what we can learn from one's funds of knowledge, we send a clear message to minority students and heritage language learners

about their value in the classroom. The result is an inevitable delay in the progress of the transformation of power and privilege to minorities in our educational system.

Identifying issues within a system is essential for implementing systemic change. In the case of foreign/world languages, systemic changes have been created to address the diverse cognitive, linguistic and cultural needs of today's language learners. Many programs now include a course in multicultural education that focuses on the identification of power and privilege within individuals, classrooms, schools, and programs (Moll & González 2004). Pre-service teachers are asked to explore and write about their own backgrounds in order to identify stereotypes and prejudices. Course projects now include ethnographic studies of students and their families who do not share the same language, culture, race, or SES status as the pre-service teacher. And, many methods courses now place emphasis on the need for what Canagaranjah (2005) refers to as a "toolbox approach" to theory. The recognition that a "one size fits all" mentality will no longer suffice has led to multiple approaches to teaching and assessing (Hall Haley, 2001, 2004). Pre-service teachers are expected to have knowledge of multi-modal, multi-sensory instructional practices and performance-based assessments. Encouraging pre-service teachers to use these new tools is based upon the findings in SLA research that has shown multi-modal instructional practices and performance-based assessments benefit all students (Hall Haley, 2001, 2004) especially those who may not understand the traditional ways of post-colonial Western education (Norton, 1997; Canagaranjah, 2005; Sternberg, 2007).

The call for change is being answered. There is clear evidence of a shift in the paradigm for teaching languages to diverse student populations. These are exciting times for world language educators for a number of reasons. The increased interest in non-Western languages such as Arabic and Chinese has become evident in the number of school districts that now offer

these languages in their world language programs. And, more school districts are now expanding their language programs by offering heritage language courses as well as foreign language in the elementary school (FLES). However, these positive changes bring with them a whole new set of issues, especially for foreign/world language teacher education programs. Preparing highly qualified teachers according to NCLB that are able to meet the ACTFL/NCATE standards is a complex task. If language teachers are going to be able to meet the needs of their diverse student populations, they will need to do more than teach the language and culture. To educate the next generation of global citizens, they will need to gain an understanding of the connection between language and identity.

Creating Hybrid Spaces and Educating Global Citizens

Improving the coursework in pre-service teacher education programs is only half of the equation to the development of pre-service teachers who will be highly qualified to educate the next generation of global citizens. What pre-service teachers learn during their coursework must somehow transfer to what they do in the classroom during their student teaching and beyond. In order to accomplish this rather daunting task, world language teachers must come to understand the connection that each language learner makes with the language and culture being studied. For Norton (1997) and Ricento (2005), the significance of this connection is tremendous as it becomes part of the learner's individual identity. Originally seen as static and unchanging, the idea of identity development is now understood to be in a state of constant change and evolution in response to the social world. When learners invest time in learning a new language and culture, that new language and culture become part of their identity. How they use the language in their individual lives may vary quite differently. It is within these variations, or hybrid uses of languages and cultures, that new spaces are created. When these spaces are nurtured and valued

by language teachers, the language learner's identity evolves to reflect this new social reality. However, if these new spaces are not acknowledged by language teachers as having value, the resulting affect on the language learner is often negative (Norton, 1997; Moll & González, 2004; Hawkins, 2005).

The creation of hybrid spaces in the classroom has been addressed by Hawkins (2005), who has called for the development of classroom ecologies that recognize and promote the social, linguistic, and cognitive development of each individual learner. With the recognition that learning is no longer a simple, linear matter of transmitting knowledge from teacher to learner, Hawkins (2005) notes that young learners should be provided with the space they need to negotiate between and among their multiple social worlds, i.e. their homes, their schools, and their communities. This holds especially true for young language learners who are also struggling to negotiate meaning using a new symbolic system that may conflict with their existing social identities (Norton, 1997; Hawkins, 2005). In reality, creating classroom ecologies according to Hawkin's (2005) model is no easy task for the experienced veteran teacher, let alone a pre-service teacher who is transitioning from coursework to internship. This is yet another challenge for teacher education programs in their preparation of HQTs. Somehow, today's language teachers must do more than help their students develop translation skills. They must provide multi-sensory input and the necessary space for students to make the language their own if they hope to teach them how and when to say what to whom.

To cultivate a generation of global citizen's one must create classroom ecologies where differing funds of knowledge are valued; where individuals are encouraged to make use the language and culture in hybrid spaces; and where the importance of the connection between language and identity is understood and nurtured. Byram and Feng (2005) have explored another

aspect to language learning that is often overlooked by both teacher and learner. It is what they call "the pursuit for intercultural competence" (Byram & Feng, 2005, p. 911). The concept of intercultural competence is grounded in sociolinguistics as it relates to the intercultural communication that occurs during discourse. According to Byram and Feng (2005), misunderstandings in intercultural communication are either external or internal in nature. External misunderstandings occur when the meaning that society associates with the setting or location of communication is misconstrued. Internal misunderstandings are more common and are related to the individual's perceived meaning of a particular discourse (Byram & Feng, 2005). Essentially, intercultural competence is learning when and how to say what to whom. In the era of standards-based teaching and learning, the development of intercultural competence is directly related to the ACTFL Five Cs (see Appendix B). Once again, the burden of preparing pre-service foreign/world language to teach the Five Cs, including the development of intercultural competence, is on the shoulders of teacher education programs.

Byram and Feng (2005) provide a framework for the pursuit of intercultural competence that is based on the principles and methods of ethnographic research. Because meaning can vary greatly from culture to culture, Byram and Feng (2005) believe that language teachers can reduce the occurrence of internal misunderstandings by helping their students achieve intercultural competence through ethnographic studies of the target cultures. It is through the use of observations, comparisons, analyses, and reflections, that Byram and Feng (2005) believe language learners will develop a more meaningful understanding of the moral and political aspects of cultural differences. Their model provides extensions that would enable language learners to share their ethnographic findings through dialogic approaches. They also encourage language learners to report their findings by using technologies that promote reading and writing

in the target language. Although Byram and Feng's model fits nicely into our discussion on funds of knowledge, hybrid spaces, and the connection between language and identity, many pragmatists are probably questioning the feasibility of this type of learning in today's world language classroom. Is it possible for language teachers to incorporate this type of cultural exploration considering the limited time they have with their students?

Recent SLA research has focused on the implementation of the ACTFL standards for culture (see Appendix B) in world language curriculum and instruction. According to this standard, language learners should be able to identify with the products, perspectives, and practices of the cultures being studied. In a study involving 22 foreign language teacher education candidates, Fox and Diaz-Greenberg (2006) specifically sought to determine if the dialogic approaches used to teach pre-service teacher candidates about culturally sensitive pedagogy would then transfer to teaching practices once they entered their own classrooms. What Fox and Diaz-Greenberg (2006) found is that the teacher candidates involved in this study were able to create dialogues and hands-on learning with their students in order to promote deeper levels of cultural understanding. According to the data collected via surveys and questionnaires, the researchers believe that the teacher candidates used what they learned during their licensure coursework in order to assess the content provided in the students' textbooks and then create supplemental activities that apply dialogic approaches and critical thinking skills to cultural lessons (Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006). A significant implication of this study is that the experiences that candidates have during their licensure coursework can (and do!) transcend into effective teaching practices. As Fox and Diaz-Greenberg (2006) note, "dialogue can provide a common ground for communicating between cultures, for understanding minority and majority population issues, and for initiating discussions about how to approach and achieve social

justice" (p. 417). This is perhaps what is needed if we are to transform power and privilege to include those who have been traditionally marginalized in foreign/world language education.

To this point, there has been something notably missing in our discussion. It is the use of instructional technology to facilitate the ways in which language educators can employ multi-modal instructional practices, performance-based assessments, and ethnographic approaches that promote the teaching of the ACTFL Five Cs and the development of intercultural competence. It should be noted that while both the ACTFL *Standards of Foreign Language Learning* and the ACTFL/NCATE *Standards for the Preparation for Foreign Language Teachers* imply the use of instructional technology, there is currently no specific standard in the field of world languages for its application. Yet, there has been a growing interest in the intersection between the use of instructional technology and the recent advances in neuroscience that have improved our understanding of how the brain learns.

Neuroscience and the Digital Native

A discussion on the cognitive, linguistic, and cultural diversity of today's world language learners would be incomplete if it failed to acknowledge recent advances in neuroscience and how they might apply to a new generation of learners who access information on their own through the use of television, the Internet and other digital technologies. Marc Prensky (2001a) coined the term "digital native" to describe this new generation of learners who have been raised entirely in the digital age. Digital natives are fluent in the language of digital technologies and do not understand why they would be asked to unplug from the Internet or other digital resources in order to learn (Prensky, 2001a). As Prensky (2001a, 2001b) notes, there are significant pedagogical implications when one considers that digital natives have been socialized differently than their teachers and parents. Although many parents and educators are considered "digital

immigrants," another of Prensky term that describes those who have learned to use digital technologies, they may never achieve the same fluency of digital natives. Simply put, digital natives are different. And, they learn differently from the ways in which our educational system was originally designed to teach (Prensky, 2001a). One remedy for closing the gap between how digital natives want to learn and how digital immigrants choose to teach is to provide pre-service teachers with the knowledge, skills and experiences to incorporate meaningful use of technology in their lessons. It is again, in the hands of teacher preparation programs to adequately prepare teacher candidates to address the diverse needs of their digital native language learners.

Prensky, (2001a, 2001b)) notes that digital natives have been socialized in a digital age that is quite different from the socialization processes of previous generations. Closely related to Prensky's work with digital natives are the recent advances in neuroscience research that have allowed those in the field of education to dispel myths about now the brain learns. For much of the 20th century, the concept of intelligence had been defined as one-dimensional. Often referred to as the *g* factor, intelligence was measured by testing one's ability to quickly and accurately retrieve and recall complex information. This limited model of intelligence went relatively unchallenged until Howard Gardner (1983) published his theory of multiple intelligences (MI). Gardner's seminal work provides the rationale for eight intelligences that are defined as cognitive processes in the brain that operate and develop based on biological and cultural influences. According to Gardner (1983), the impact of cultural influences on intelligence had been a critical factor missing in previous models of intelligence. He believes that this omission has led to a limited view of intelligence which has also impacted our methods for teaching and testing in education.

Closely related to Gardner's work on intelligence is the work of Robert Sternberg. In his most recent publication, Sternberg has sought to explore how intelligence is viewed among different cultures. In applying his research findings to Western education, Sternberg (2007) has found that a gap often exists between what is meaningful to the learner and what is considered intelligent by the teacher. He has also found that the gap becomes more pronounced when the teacher and student do not share similar ethnic, linguistic, cultural, or SES backgrounds (Sternberg, 2007). In summarizing the current policies and practices in our educational system, Sternberg (2007) notes that we have been slow to acknowledge the divorce between academic content and the cultural realities of many students. Additionally, our educational policies continue to employ a narrow range of assessments that reflect *g* factor intelligence instead of assessing for practical problem solving skills and social competence. Therefore, even though there is clear evidence of a shift in the paradigm for teaching languages to diverse student populations, the recent findings of Prensky (2001a, 2001b) and Sternberg (2007) are a reality check for teacher educators. As previously stated, there is still much work to be done in the field of SLA research and foreign/world language education.

From Coursework to Internship

In the era of standards-based teaching and learning, what we expect K-12 students to know and be able to do with the language being studied will require more than teaching the four basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. It will require a deeper cultural understanding than simply memorizing the foods, festivals, fashion, and folklore of the target cultures. If we are truly going to prepare a generation of global citizens, we will need to re-think the role of such topics as culturally responsive pedagogy, multiculturalism, and the development of intercultural competence. As Fox and Diaz-Greenberg (2006) have noted, "teachers have a

unique opportunity to move well beyond the 'facts and foods' type of cultural study where students can use the language to enter a home and understand its people" (p. 406). However, this will also require a new generation of language teachers who are better equipped to teach language and culture in more meaningful ways. Therefore, it is essential that pre-service teachers have multiple opportunities to develop their own intercultural competence during their coursework and internship experiences. And, these experiences must include the use of instructional technologies that appeal to the new generation of digital native language learners.

This literature review is by no means complete. The challenges and issues raised here have specifically focused on what foreign/world language teacher education programs need to consider when aligning their coursework and student teaching internship to ACTFL/NCATE standards. Topics such as critical pedagogy, intercultural competence, and the use of ethnographic research methods have often been left to those who teach multicultural education courses. However, the need to incorporate these topics among and across licensure coursework can no longer be ignored. Although there is a paucity of research that specifically examines the connections that foreign/world language pre-service teachers make between their coursework and their practice in this new era of standards-based teaching and learning, there are positive indications that candidates are able to transfer what they have learned during their coursework to their own classroom teaching practices (Fox & Diaz-González, 2006). The call for more research is justified in response to the pressing need to educate the next generation of global citizens so that they know how and when to say what to whom.

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Appendix A

The ACTFL/NCATE Standards for the Preparation of Foreign Language Teachers
(The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages/National Council on the Accreditation of Teacher Education Teacher Standards).

Available online at: http://www.actfl.org **and at:** http://www.ncate.org

1. **Language, Linguistics, Comparisons.** Candidates (a) demonstrate a high level of proficiency in the target language, and they seek opportunities to strengthen their proficiency (See the following supporting explanation and rubrics for required levels of proficiency.); (b) know the linguistic elements of the target language system, recognize the changing nature of language, and accommodate for gaps in their own knowledge of the target language system by learning on their own; and (c) know the similarities and differences between the target language and other languages, identify the key differences in varieties of the target language, and seek opportunities to learn about varieties of the target language on their own.
2. **Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts.** Candidates (a) demonstrate that they understand the connections among the perspectives of a culture and its practices and products, and they integrate the cultural framework for foreign language standards into their instructional practices; (b) recognize the value and role of literary and cultural texts and use them to interpret and reflect upon the perspectives of the target cultures over time; and (c) integrate knowledge of other disciplines into foreign language instruction and identify distinctive viewpoints accessible only through the target language.
3. **Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices.** Candidates (a) demonstrate an understanding of language acquisition at various developmental levels and use this knowledge to create a supportive classroom learning environment that includes target language input and opportunities for negotiation of meaning and meaningful interaction and (b) develop a variety of instructional practices that reflect language outcomes and articulated program models and address the needs of diverse language learners.
4. **Integration of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction.** Candidates (a) demonstrate an understanding of the goal areas and standards of the *Standards for Foreign Language* Learning and their state standards, and they integrate these frameworks into curricular planning; (b) integrate the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* and their state standards into language instruction; and (c) use standards and curricular goals to evaluate, select, design, and adapt instructional resources.
5. **Assessment of Language and Cultures.** Candidates (a) believe that assessment is ongoing, and they demonstrate knowledge of multiple ways of assessment that are age- and level-appropriate by implementing purposeful measures; (b) reflect on the results of student assessments, adjust instruction accordingly, analyze the results of assessments, and use success and failure to determine the direction of instruction; and (c) interpret and report the results of student performances to all stakeholders and provide opportunity for discussion.
6. **Professionalism.** Candidates (a) engage in professional development opportunities that strengthen their own linguistic and cultural competence and promote reflection on practice and (b) know the value of foreign language learning to the overall success of all students and understand that they will need to become advocates with students, colleagues, and members of the community to promote the field.

Appendix B

ACTFL Standards for Foreign Language Learning
(American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages)

Available online at: http://www.actfl.org

Communication: Communicate in Languages Other Than English
Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions.

Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics.

Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

Cultures: Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures
Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied.

Standard 2.2: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Connections: Connect with Other Disciplines and Acquire Information
Standard 3.1: Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language.

Standard 3.2: Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures.

Comparisons: Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture
Standard 4.1: Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own.

Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Communities: Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home & Around the World
Standard 5.1: Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting.

Standard 5.2: Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment.