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Defining a cross content, cross cultural curriculum for foreign language

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative website, forty-five states, including Tennessee, have adopted their proposed *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS) *for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*. Coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), these new standards represent a state-led effort to "define college and career readiness [and] lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century" (NGA Center, CCSSO 3). The Standards offer seven characteristics of a literate student who has mastery of the literacy standards in the CCSS:

-They demonstrate independence

-They build strong content knowledge

-They respond to the varying demands of audience task, purpose, and discipline

-They comprehend as well as critique

-They value evidence

-They use technology and digital media strategically and capably

-They come to understand other perspectives and cultures (7)

To cultivate these qualities, the Standards urge that teachers in all disciplines take responsibility for students' literacy development, emphasizing that their "expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language [are] applicable to a range of

subjects, including but not limited to ELA" (4). Orienting learning outcomes to these expressed by the CCSS, teachers in all disciplines now face the challenge of organizing their content to capitalize on each subject's natural contributions to contemporary literacy skills. In the case of foreign languages, strategic course organization guided by cross-content integration and an expanded orientation to intercultural as well as second language literacy outcomes may offer such a model.

Foreign or world language study, falling under the heading of unspecified technical subjects in the CCSS, shares a number of CCSS desired learner outcomes. In its most recent position statement, "Languages as a Core Component of Education for All Students", the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) describes how foreign language learning prepares students for real world demands, equips them with 21st century skills, and develops literacy, numeracy, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) area skills. Among the specific items mentioned in these three broader categories, we find examples both of benefits from literal knowledge of a second language as well as benefits from the cognitive skills developed through study of a second language. "Using a second language to access, discuss, and create content across all disciplines" presents practical, straight forward incentives for second language study, while "develop[ing] flexible and adaptable thinking" suggests that study of a second language demands processing

strategies with application across all disciplines. Numerous research[1] efforts corroborate the conclusion that second language study has potential as not merely a means to second language acquisition but as a means to increased ease of managing cognitive functions and increased creativity, among other critical higher order thinking skills.

However, there is another elusive and controversial aspect of language acquisition of considerable importance to meeting national standards for college and career readiness: culture, in all its myriad definitions and variable interpretations. Culture has consistently appeared as a required component of foreign language instruction[2] , though what constitutes authentic cultural experiences is rarely uniform across programs and curriculum. Beyond the obvious connection that world languages are developed by and used in a variety of world cultures, there has long been an argument that world languages position language learners to gain access to the global perspectives of native cultures. This concept is founded in anthropological linguistic work of the late 1800's, primarily that of Boas, Sapir, and Whorf, which essentially claims that systems of language condition the speakers' perception of reality (Kay 65-6). Though hotly contested, studies support at least a more tentative phrasing of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, that "there do appear to be incursions of linguistic categorization into apparently nonlinguistic processes of thinking, even

[1] See Barac and Bialystok for bilingualism and executive functioning; see Mark Leikin for bilingualism and creativity

[2] Tennessee's Department of Education cites the five Cs of the national standards: Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparisons and Communities

incursions that result in judgments that differ from those made on purely perceptual basis" (77). Acknowledging the role that language plays in culture and emphasizing the cultural content available through second language study opens the discipline to more generally applicable learning outcomes, such as exploring the sociolinguistic aspects of language use and change or how culture affects language and language use (Shulz 254). Erring on the verge Romantic idealism, the cultural aspects of second language study could play a leading role in intercultural education movements aimed to promote international collaboration and cooperation (Şahin 584).

Having examined many significant learning outcomes offered through second language study, return to the Common Core State Standards characteristics of a literate student in order to judge how effectively this discipline might address the contemporary demands of education. Simply gaining proficiency in communicating in a second language contributes to increased opportunities for independence as learners and in careers and necessarily requires accumulation of strong content knowledge. Cognitive skills particularly enhanced by second language study foster good comprehension strategies, use of evidence in forming responses, and adjusting responses depending on audience, task, and purpose. Standard language study alone addresses five of the seven characteristics proposed by the CCSS, but orienting language study with a cultural focus inarguably positions students to evaluate and critique alternative values and opinions as well as to deeply explore different perspectives and cultures. When assessing the potential of academic disciplines to

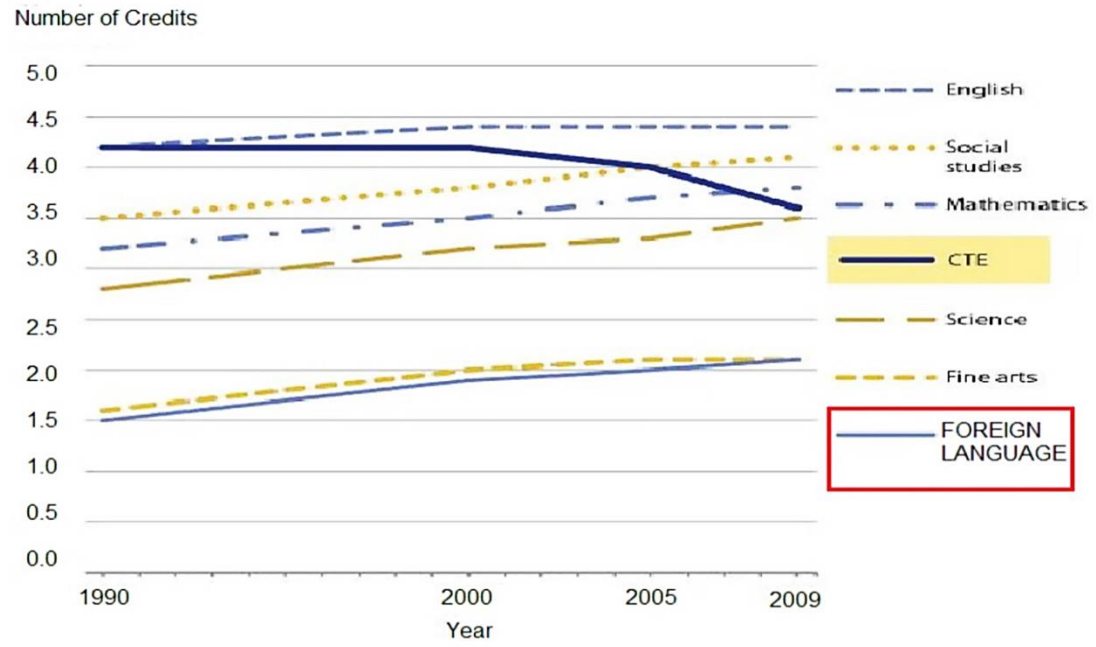
contribute to the broad sense of literacy[3] currently in high demand, it appears extremely shortsighted to discount the rich concentration of literacy outcomes offered by culturally focused second language study.

Fully aware of the general advantage of second language study, consider now the prevalence of foreign language programs in national schools. In the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) High School Transcript Study, we see that the percentage of high school graduates earning foreign language credits has increased from 70.6% in 1990 to 87.5% in 2009 (See Appendix A, p 49). A line graph from the NCES publication *Trends in CTE Coursetaking* illustrates this in a way that more clearly shows the gap between credits earned in the four core academic areas and foreign languages.

[3] For further discussion on the broad sense of literacy, see Mandell for a historical literacy perspective and Hirsch for pedagogical implications of cultural literacy

Figure 1:

Average number of credits earned in each subject area by public high school graduates, 1990 to 2009



NOTE: Tabular data for averagesand their standard errors are available in Table H125. CTE is defined in the glossary.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Transcript Study, 1990, 2000, 2005, and 2009. This figure was first published in the NCES Data Point *Trends in CTE Coursetaking*.

ADDITIONAL NOTE: Modifications to the original table include relabeling of the axis for visual clarity and emphasis on foreign language in the key. Original source information is accurate

While clearly pursued in the majority of national public schools and also more frequently pursued over the course of the last twenty years, statistics show us foreign language study does not hold a priority position in contemporary education. At a closer glance, the National Council of State Supervisors for Languages' (NCSSFL) Individual State Report for Tennessee reveals that though graduation requirements include two years of foreign language study (with an opt out option for students who

do not plan to attend university) and revised teacher certification requirements have been in effect as of 2013, the State Education Agency (SEA) publishes no reports related to state world language or global/international education. Optimistically, the NCSSFL includes Tennessee on a list of only seven states with any world language requirements at the elementary school level, though the lack of state issued reports makes any more specific assessment of Tennessee's foreign language curriculum difficult. Suffice it to say from this brief glance, improvements are gradual and current requirements are minimal.

Keeping in mind the CCSS focus on literacy and math, Tennessee's sparse attention to developing foreign language programs is predictable, and perhaps somewhat justified. However, the previous demonstration of the high correlation between desired CCSS outcomes and second language study outcomes supports the claim that, while marginalized as a content area, foreign languages offer a multitude of opportunities to reinforce literacy. The additional aspect of a cultural focus in second language study directly addresses the integrated nature of education suggested by the CCSS (4) and provides yet more opportunities for cultivating multidisciplinary skills and conceptual understanding. A critical question remains: how should foreign language curriculum be organized and adapted to best serve the needs of Tennessee's educational system? Judging by the national and state statistics available, but also keeping in mind the advantages for all grade levels possible through second language study, the ideal curriculum should situate content to highlight generalizable literacy

skills, maintain current efforts to promote second language acquisition, and also be flexible enough to extend in grades K-12. Following these guiding principles, I propose a foreign language curriculum with 1) a focus on intercultural competency and 2) organized parallel to social studies curriculum.

In the following segments, I intend to examine the potential of a foreign language program based on intercultural competency and parallel curriculum in an effort to expose its strengths in contrast to alternative foci and structures. Intercultural competency and the parallel curriculum structure will each be treated separately in a section devoted to examining other possible foci and structures respectively, measuring educational outcomes against the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages' CCSS aligned standards for foreign language where applicable. For the sake of uniformity, the comparisons will not rely on criteria relevant to a single grade level, though an ideal grade level will be proposed with discussion of relevant grade level standards and learning outcomes. Concluding remarks will synthesize my findings, evaluate my methodology, and suggest further possibilities concerning models for second language courses.

TEACHING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY

Terminology

In a curriculum, the idea of a cultural focus concerns two areas in particular: learning objectives to which all instruction is oriented and instructional content. When I suggest a cultural focus for second language study, I propose that intercultural

competency serve as the primary learning objective. Predictably, definitions of intercultural competency vary depending on context and purpose, but they share a general meaning of developing social skills and outlooks that facilitate appreciation of and integration with diverse cultures (Chang and Chuang 2-3). In well-constructed and well-staffed second language programs, some or many aspects of intercultural competency are most likely addressed, presumably as part of the required cultural instruction[4]. However, emphasis and execution of intercultural education vary as persistently as its definition, and fluency holds and has held precedence as a learning objective (Brown 15-19). As a point of reference for this claim, consider Rosetta Stone or comparable programs for self-instruction. The instruction offered through such programs involves repetition, often accompanying books with translations, and vocabulary contextualized by conversation. The desired outcome of Rosetta Stone is a degree of speaking fluency in a target language, and while classroom versions of language instruction certainly expand areas of fluency and possibly the degree of fluency, very rarely do they find time to comparably develop intercultural competency.

Following a primary objective of intercultural competency, culturally focused content necessarily consists to a large extent of target culture study. Just as intercultural competency corresponds to the typical second language objective of

[4] See footnote 2, Culture in the Tennessee Department of Education's Five C's of national standards for foreign language

fluency, target culture corresponds to target language study. While the two are certainly not mutually exclusive, the same problem of emphasis and degree of exploration arises. In second language courses oriented towards linguistic fluency, it follows that the content of the course primarily revolves around language study, whereas in second language courses oriented towards intercultural competency, specific learning outcomes for intercultural competency would provide much more definition for including meaningful and integrated cultural content. Unavoidably, the cultural content in a second language program emphasizing intercultural competency would provide opportunities for authentic, contextualized cultural study and concepts of cultural literacy (Webber 253). In programs emphasizing fluency, cultural content frequently becomes a two-dimensional means of providing opportunities for language practice, which overrides rather than complements cultural study.

Following these general introductions of the two main components of a cultural focus, I will now specify the roles and specific definitions of intercultural competency and target culture study in the context of my proposed curriculum. References to intercultural competency in this work do not eliminate second language acquisition as a primary learning objective, but rather specify an increased prominence for intercultural competency. Intercultural competency objectives hold a position of equal importance to fluency objectives, which may mean certain lessons cultivate language or cultural skills more exclusively while broader unit objectives consistently include major intercultural competency outcomes as well as major

fluency outcomes. As a whole, the curriculum is oriented foremost towards increasing student capacities for appreciating, understanding, and interacting with the full range of cultures associated with the target language, though focused on the culture in which the language originated for the sake of depth of exploration. The caveat to this primary outcome is that intercultural competency will be developed through neither cultural nor linguistic study alone, but through a very intentional and mindful integration of the two.

As previously mentioned, for the purposes of my proposed curriculum, target culture content will not usurp, but rather collaborate with target language content. In order to meet the outcomes prescribed by an emphasis on intercultural competency, the content should organize cultural experiences in a sequence that conceptually makes sense and provides linguistic challenges appropriate to increasing fluency. As with literacy courses, content should not necessarily be categorized by related learning opportunities; just as there are no set books for teaching word solving or analysis, there should be no set cultural experiences for teaching irregular verb conjugations or the subjunctive mood. Building content around cultural experiences, however, provides teachers with a clearer means of relating foreign language study to other disciplines, positioning them to reinforce broad concepts and school wide themes authentically, which is decidedly more difficult in a fluency oriented foreign language course in which foreign language can become rather technical and remote from the rest of a student's learning. By bringing cultural content to the forefront,

target language content becomes more relevant to the entire educational experience, a mutual advantage to language study and all other disciplines comprising the school, district, and state curricula.

Instructional Implications

In terms of instructional implications, I offer guidelines for the process of developing intercultural competency outcomes by scaffolding content such that the initial level of instruction supports the subsequent levels. Like listening or speaking, intercultural outcomes for a given proficiency level represent a stage on a continuum of ability. If the item 'compares and contrasts target culture social patterns to native culture social patterns' is an outcome, various levels of the outcome should be specified for different proficiency levels. Due to the overwhelming inconsistency between language programs in schools nationwide, designating proficiency levels by grade level is inadvisable, and I would suggest demarcations similar to those seen in the ACTFL CCSS aligned standards: novice, intermediate, and advanced. Further demarcations may prove useful, such as beginning novice and ending novice, to help pinpoint desired outcomes over the course of a school year and in the context of previous and impending years of study. Even between these sublevels, scaffolding instruction provides continuity and aims to thoroughly develop skills necessary for higher level outcomes before students encounter such demands. Using the example of comparing social patterns, a novice outcome might be 'students compare kinship relationships in the target culture and native culture', since many cultures reflect

different values concerning kinship through kinship terms and register of language used between different family members, which becomes relevant in language study as soon as teachers and students need to address one another. On the opposite extreme for this outcome, an advanced student may be capable of appropriately discussing culturally sensitive topics such as income, politics, or religion in the target culture versus the native culture. In contrast to my hypothetical example, teachers should closely examine cross-content concepts, developmentally appropriate skills, and standards in related disciplines when planning learning outcomes in order to contextualize them effectively.

The key instructional implication regarding a target culture focused content is integrating target language work and target culture work to provide balanced and authentic learning opportunities in both areas. Simply glancing at a foreign language textbook for any level demonstrates the current tendency to patch cultural content onto language content structured around vaguely cultural themes. Chapters have thematic titles, the infamous stereotypes section or perhaps friendship and family, which offer relevant vocabulary applied through grammatical exercises. At the end or perhaps as a sidebar on the vocabulary pages, you may find a brief cultural highlight awkwardly wedged into the lesson and only thinly attached to the rest of the language content. Returning to the hypothetical, target language content integrated with target culture content at a very basic level might look like practicing personal preference or expression of emotion statements to describe living during a traditional or historical

event experienced in the target culture. The alternative of atomized target language content—maybe an oral and written textbook exercise using action verbs to express personal preferences—and target culture content—possibly a reading exercise of interviews with French students explaining their preferences—, would miss opportunities to highlight the relevance of language study and neatly engage affect in language use. By assembling various core content units, teachers could customize several years' worth of culture focused content, scaffolding instruction to revisit themes from new angles every year as language development provides deeper ways of accessing cultural content and achieving intercultural competency outcomes.

Comparative Analysis for Curriculum Focus

In the following subsection, I compare the culture focus to a grammar focus and a communication focus—the two dominant alternative foci in contemporary and historical foreign language education (Omaggio Hadley 89-119) —in order to demonstrate the difference in learning outcomes each orientation seeks to achieve. I use a comparison between these learning outcomes and the ACTFL language standards aligned to Common Core State Standards to measure the effectiveness of these orientations in the current educational environment. As indicated in my previous discussion, intercultural competency outcomes vary drastically and often refer to business or higher education contexts rather than primary or secondary education. For the purposes of my comparisons, I refer to various outcomes from twenty specific components of intercultural competence outlined in Deardorff's

survey of international programs in higher education institutions (250-51). At the primary and secondary levels, "progress towards…" rather than "mastery of…" is the implicit introduction to each intercultural competency outcome, though standards in a fully developed curriculum would refer to specific levels of mastery appropriate for early education within each outcome.

Figure 2:

Intercultural Competency Outcomes aligned to the Five C's of National Language Standards

Intercultural Competency Outcomes (Deardorff)

Aligned to Five C's of National Standards (TN Department of Education)

<u>Communication</u>	-Cultural self-awareness and capacity for self-assessment	-Cognitive flexibility between etic and emic frames
-Skills to listen and observe	<u>Connections</u>	-Cross-cultural empathy
-Tolerating and engaging ambiguity	-Sociolinguistic competence	-Respect for other cultures
-Withholding judgment	-Curiosity and discovery	-Understanding other's worldviews
-Flexibility	-Understanding the role and impact of culture and the impact of situational, social, and historical contexts involved	<u>Communities</u>
<u>Culture</u>	<u>Comparisons</u>	-Learning through interaction
-Deep knowledge and understand of one's own culture and others	-Mindfulness	-General openness toward intercultural learning and to people from other cultures
-Culture-specific knowledge and understanding cultural traditions	-Skills to analyze, interpret, and relate	-Adaptability and adjustment to new cultural environment
-Understanding the value of cultural diversity	-Ethnorelative view	-Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles

NOTE: The categories are sourced from the national standards for foreign language (Tennessee Department of Education) and the specific outcomes from Deardorff (250-51). However, the alignment

of the outcomes to the Five C categories are interpreted for the purposes of this thesis and do not exist in either source material. Many outcomes may apply to more than one category but have been categorized to aid in the comparative analyses.

Comparison 1) Grammar Focus vs Intercultural Competency Focus

A traditional grammar focus, whatever its psychological and pedagogical foundation, emphasizes the structural elements of language (Brown 9-15). Rather than rely on implicit instruction of grammatical elements, a curriculum with a grammar focus devotes explicit instruction time to grammatical exercises, often including direct translation. In perhaps an extreme example of grammar focus methodology, the grammar-translation method consists of teaching deductive skills to solve grammatical structures and vocabulary and then assessing these skills through translation to and from the target language both in writing and in recitation (Omaggio Hadley 90). Even through more affectively or socially conscious methods, a grammar focused curriculum necessarily involves significant time spent "talking *about* the language [rather than]… talking *in* the language" (90). As Teruya emphasizes in his development of a systematic functional approach to teaching grammar, teaching grammar as a central "meaning-making resource" (Teruya 69) provides a vital foundation for language acquisition with plain use in reading, listening, writing, and speaking activities. A grammar focus even has potential to teach intercultural competency to some extent, since grammar regulates the need to communicate and express in a social context (69).

As indicated by Teruya's explanation of grammar, the primary outcomes for a grammar focus favor the passive aspects of language proficiency and are typically oriented towards fluency with limited connection to culture. For the purposes of comparison between outcomes, I propose extrapolating specific outcomes from Teruya's four characteristics of grammar:

i) Grammar is a meaning-making resource;
ii) Grammar is a central processing unit of a natural language and is lexicogrammar (grammar and lexis are a single continuous system);
iii) Grammar is a theory of construing human experience, enacting human roles and relations, and creating a semiotic reality in the form of a continuous flow of meaning;
iv) Grammar creates language logic by unifying different strands of meanings which are realized by different functions (69).

As opposed to parsing out grammatical outcomes form national or state standards, extending Teruya's four characteristics provides hypothetical outcomes for a grammar focused curriculum that treats grammar with Teruya's laudably holistic consideration. Likewise, using his characterization of grammar provides a more flexible idea of possible content in grammar focused curriculum. Rather than progressing along translations of historical texts as in Omaggio Hadley's grammar-translation scenario, Teruya's concept of grammar could conceivably be taught through games, a variety of visual representations, and visual or performing arts. The only blatant limitation on potential content for grammar focus curriculum is explicit instruction of grammar using grammatical terminology. Of course, this imposes a highly structured slant on accompanying content; singing a nursery rhyme or folk

song would not likely be a strictly phonological exercise, but a source for examining sentence structure, register of language used, or a specific morphological concept such as verb conjugation.

The following chart contains a summarized comparison of grammar focused outcomes and intercultural competency outcomes in relation to the ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, by which the CCSS aligned standards are framed. For a complete comparison with the ACTFL CCSS aligned standards, see Appendix B, p 51. Outcomes described as 'met' correspond to specific CCSS aligned standards. Outcomes described as 'partially satisfied' either correspond to only part of a specific CCSS aligned standards or are not articulated in my sources but are judged to be attainable given similar, articulated outcomes. Outcomes described as 'failed to be met' are not articulated in my sources and are not judged to be attainable in the scope of the focus given the articulated outcomes.

Figure 3:

Focus outcome comparisons, Grammar Focus vs Intercultural Competency Focus

World-Readiness Standard	Grammar Focus Outcomes	Intercultural Competency Focus Outcomes
COMMUNICATION: **Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple persons**	-Meets 4/6 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 2/6 outcomes	-Meets 6/6 outcomes
CULTURES: **Interact with cultural competence and understanding**	-Meets 2/6 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 1/6 outcomes -Fails to meet 3/6 outcomes	-Meets 6/6 outcomes
CONNECTIONS: **Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations**	-Meets 3/5 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 2/5 outcomes	-Meets 4/5 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 1/5 outcomes
COMPARISONS: **Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence**	-Meets 1/6 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 5/6 outcomes	-Meets 6/6 outcomes
COMMUNITIES: **Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world**	-Meets 1/3 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 1/3 outcomes -Fails to meet 1/3 outcomes	-Meets 3/3 outcomes

As the chart indicates, a grammar focus consistently falls short of the CCSS aligned foreign language standards to a greater extent than an intercultural

competency focus, most dramatically in the areas of cultures, comparisons, and communities. Whereas an intercultural competency focus uses language study as a point for teaching cultural awareness and cultural perception, a grammar focus cannot guarantee explicit instruction of these affective and interpersonal cultural skills. Noticing the strengths of the grammar focus in communication and connections, it follows that a grammar focus uses language study instead as a point for developing fluency and metacognitive linguistic abilities, losing sight of the highly in demand cultural competency outcomes. This likewise explains the weakness of the grammar focus in comparisons, which emphasizes connections from language to social and historical cultural content as opposed to general cognitive and functional perspectives on language. Considering the emphasis on passive skills in the grammar focus, a weakness in the communities category, reliant on interpersonal activity, matches expectations. While a grammar focus does not necessarily eliminate the possibility for highly interactive activities and significant output demands, it does not preclude them with the same surety as an intercultural competency focus.

Comparison 2) Communication Focus vs Intercultural Competency Focus

More prevalent than grammar focus, a communication focus is the contemporary standard in foreign language education[5]. In contexts which demand rapid language acquisition for survival, communication focus is certainly the most critical focus of an effective language program (Shulz, 252). However, in more

[5] See Typical Themes of Brown's Table 1.1, p 15; See Omaggio Hadley p 3-8, "From Grammatical Competence to Communicative Competence"

typical language programs, a communication focus also dedicates significant instructional time to interactive aspects of language, seeking to prepare students to understand content in the target language as well as produce original content. As stated in the College Board overview for the Advanced Placement French course, the primary objective in a communication focus is "to develop your language skills in multiple modes of communication, including two-way interactions in both writing and speaking, interpretation of audio, audiovisual, and print materials, and oral and written presentation of information". Presumably, instructional time is divided between activities that address various single and combined areas of language with a more or less equal emphasis on student interpretation and student presentation. Ideally, while explicit instruction features any one area of language, many related areas of language are implicitly reinforced and indeed developed.

Pachler, Barnes, and Field promote a complex and holistic conception of communicative competence which includes grammatical competence, socio-cultural competence, discourse competence, as well as strategic competence (157), which Omaggio Hadley refers to as the Canale and Swain model of communicative competence (Omaggio Hadley 6). Following this popular model, I propose the subsequent four outcomes for a communication focus, generalized from Omaggio Hadley's descriptions of the four component competences:

i) Mastery and accurate use of the vocabulary, rules of pronunciation, spelling, word formation, and sentence structure;

ii) Appropriate use of grammatical forms in relation to purpose, linguistic register, and cultural context;
iii) Applying knowledge of cohesive language devices to produce and interpret thoughts coherently and appropriately in various contexts;
iv) Use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to compensate for gaps in knowledge and negotiate meaning (6-7)

Again, I refer to extremely general outcomes for the communication focus to avoid a restricted representation of the myriad feasible curriculum forms featuring communication competency, which may all have nuanced outcomes within the broader outcomes listed above. However specific outcomes may vary depending on the methodological framing, content occupies a critical role in the communication focused curriculum. Content serves as the basis for interpretation activities and the thematic framework for both interpretative and presentational skill development. Therefore, content is the primary avenue for explicit cultural instruction, as evidenced by the recommended themes in the College Board's *AP French Language and Culture: Course and Exam Description*: global challenges, beauty and aesthetics, science and technology, families and communities, personal and public identities, and contemporary life (37). As the College Board indicates, content in a communication focused curriculum provides the essential means of connecting the course to other disciplines and foci, notably a cultural focus.

The following chart contains a summarized comparison of communication focused outcomes and intercultural competency outcomes in relation to ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages, the same that frame ACTFL's

CCSS aligned standards for foreign languages. For a complete comparison with the ACTFL CCSS aligned standards, see Appendix B, p 46. Outcomes described as met correspond to specific CCSS aligned standards. Outcomes described as partially satisfied either correspond to only part of a specific CCSS aligned standards or are not articulated in my sources but are judged to be attainable given similar, articulated outcomes. For this comparison, neither focus failed to meet any outcomes.

Figure 4:

Focus Outcome Comparisons, Communication Focus vs Intercultural Competency

World-Readiness Standard	**Communication Focus Outcomes**	**Intercultural Competency Focus Outcomes**
COMMUNICATION: **Communicate effectively in more than one language in order to function in a variety of situations and for multiple persons**	-Meets 6/6 outcomes	-Meets 6/6 outcomes
CULTURES: **Interact with cultural competence and understanding**	-Meets 1/6 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 5/6 outcomes	-Meets 6/6 outcomes
CONNECTIONS: **Connect with other disciplines and acquire information and diverse perspectives in order to use the language to function in academic and career-related situations**	-Meets 4/5 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 1/5 outcomes	-Meets 4/5 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 1/5 outcomes

COMPARISONS: **Develop insight into the nature of language and culture in order to interact with cultural competence**	-Meets 3/6 outcomes -Partially Satisfies 3/6 outcomes	-Meets 6/6 outcomes
COMMUNITIES: **Communicate and interact with cultural competence in order to participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world**	Meets 1/3 outcomes Partially Satisfies 2/3 outcomes	Meets 3/3 outcomes

Again, the intercultural competency focus consistently meets more outcomes than the alternative focus. As with the grammar focus, the comparison reveals cultures, comparisons, and communities as the weaknesses of the communication focus. Out of all three foci, communication appears to meet cultural standards least effectively, which corresponds with the intense fluency focus of the communication orientation. It bares mention that the communication focus did not fail to meet but rather partially satisfied the majority of cultural outcomes, which further proves the reliance on content for cultural instruction in the communication focus. The effectiveness with which a communication focus can address cultural outcomes is merely more variable than through an intercultural competency focus. Likewise, an intercultural competency focus guarantees explicit instruction of the culturally sensitive outlooks and intercultural interpersonal skills that contribute to the communities standards, while a communication focus can but does not necessarily develop such skills as persistently. Regarding the comparisons standards, communication focus outcomes fall short because they focus primarily on

connections between language and culture implicitly and only in the target language. Even with cultural content, a comparison between the target and native languages or cultures will focus on linguistic articulation of the similarities and differences; in an intercultural competency focus, comparison would be conceptually rather than expressively focused.

Interpretation of Comparative Analysis and Implications

Intercultural competency focus, which necessitates a target culture centered content, appears to offer an advantage in meeting current national standards for foreign language education. Based on the comparisons between alternative foci, it appears that the inherent attention to cross-culture comparisons serves as a unique strength of the intercultural competency focus. Furthermore, the quality of cultural exploration precipitates intercultural experiences. An additional strength, a conceptual rather than expressive comparison of sociolinguistic relationships and intercultural relationships, reinforces the content goals. While this analysis does not in any way demonstrate that alternative foci cannot provide conceptual understanding of comparative cultural exploration, it does indicate that other alternatives provide this type of learning as an exception rather than incorporate it as a fundamental aspect of the focus.

For the purposes of an elementary level curriculum, intercultural competency outcomes should reflect the social and cognitive development of the students. I reiterate that the outcomes in Figure 2 should be prefaced with “progress towards…”

rather than “mastery of…”, but I wholeheartedly recommend that curricula include and assess early stages of all of these outcomes. Nothing about the elementary aged student prevents him from developing communication skills in a second language, making meaningful comparisons between his native culture and the cultures studied, critically connecting content across disciplines, or establishing authentic intercultural relationships. In terms of content, folk tales and traditional songs of course serve elementary students better than excerpts from the works of Camus or Hugo. Age-appropriateness aside, at the early stage, activities will likely need to focus on meeting intercultural competency standards and speaking and listening fluency standards, rather than writing and reading standards. Visual representation and interpretation may serve as powerful supplementary communication tools which would permit ample attention to the intercultural competency outcomes the comparative analysis indicated most fully addresses contemporary second language educational demands.

DESIGNING PARALLEL CURRICULUM

Terminology

As contended previously, a focus on intercultural competency provides a discipline specific orientation that highlights generalizable literacy skills, but provides no insight on how to structure such content in order to most effectively bring such a curriculum about in the context of the tightly scheduled school year. The past several decades have seen interest and development in discipline integration increase, and the

concept of interdisciplinary content presents many appealing advantages to both subject areas involved, and, yet more critically, cognitive skills that supersede content boundaries. In Heidi Hayes Jacobs' *Interdisciplinary Curriculum: Design and Implementation*, she presents a continuum of six options for content design ranging from discipline based design to a complete, school wide program (14). On this continuum, parallel curriculum appears as the second least interdisciplinary option, the first step towards a complete program after discipline based design. In contrast to the preceding discipline based option, which expressly teaches disciplines as separate areas and avoids overstressing conceptual overlap, and the following multi-disciplinary option, which unites two disciplines for the purposes of exploring one particular overlapping concept, parallel curriculum reorganizes content between two subjects so that overlapping concepts appear in two disciplines simultaneously (14-16). Without drawing focus from isolated disciplines, this creates a foundation for connecting across disciplines and generates rather than overlooks opportunities for reinforcing main ideas with related examples in other disciplines.

I suggest that a parallel curriculum would best serve the needs of reaching intercultural competency outcomes. Considering time and teacher experience threaten cultural competency orientation most directly (Shulz, 255), an ideal curriculum structure for cultural content will help assuage these pitfalls. Parallel curriculum provides a guideline for conceptual content, which helps both disciplines involved limit their great range of potential material to provide more focused instruction. Even

though, as Jacobs points out, organizing parallel curriculum relies on the teachers making connections across disciplines in order to plan parallel content (15), this aspect of the parallel option "creates greater opportunities for teachers to collaborate in planning and exchanging ideas to provide stronger and more focused instructional programs" (Hopkins and Canady, 28). For a novice teacher, the infrastructure provided by a parallel curriculum as well as the necessary collaboration would leave more time to grapple with structuring lessons to meet cultural and linguistic outcomes. In fact, the collaborative process and the planning necessary to organize two disciplines such that the major learning concepts correspond would help foreign language teachers more readily recognize cultural overlap to serve as the basis for language study. As a final cursory advantage, in a parallel structure, teachers would not need to assess learning standards for the parallel discipline, in this instance, in addition to intercultural competency as well as language proficiency standards. With a parallel curriculum, intercultural competency oriented language study could enjoy a taste of interdisciplinary organization without sacrificing time assessing additional content standards.

However, Jacobs maintains that the parallel discipline option severely restricts the potential of interdisciplinary organization. She reminds that though instructors may spend more time making connections between disciplines amongst themselves in order to plan for instruction, "students are still studying concepts in isolation and must uncover for themselves the relationships among fields of knowledge" (15). As

my proposed format for teaching intercultural competency with language, I find this a substantial hindrance to the full effectiveness of the content, which relies on students understanding the interrelatedness of culture, society, and language. To this end, I promote an altered form of pure parallel curriculum which includes integrated lessons. In my vision of parallel curriculum+integrated lessons, content between the two parallel disciplines will coincide as with typical parallel curriculum, but rather than intentionally excluding instruction of the relationship between fields, teachers should organize explicit instruction time to allow students to explore connections between the two disciplines. For example, the foreign language teacher presenting a lesson on French exploration and early colonization should reinforce this cultural topic with integration of contemporary world explorers students studied in the parallel history course. For the language teacher, this would present the opportunity to incorporate national adjectives, enriching the relevant vocabulary, or to teach comparative structures or different conjunctions, enriching the grammatical topic. For the parallel social studies teacher, such inclusive efforts in the French course helpfully reinforce social studies content, and together the instructors might organize a social studies lesson highlighting exploration vocabulary with French or Latin roots that students recognize in part or whole from the French course.

I prefer this parallel+integrated model to a fully integrated course because it keeps the increased flexibility of the parallel curriculum option but allows for more meaningful integration when beneficial. With the challenge of rethinking foreign

language study to cultivate intercultural competency alongside fluency, I see little space for genuine integration efforts in addition. Even as a stand-alone unit or rotation course, I predict difficulty appropriately addressing intercultural competency, fluency, and the integrated discipline, resulting most likely in what Jacobs terms "the 'potpourri' approach" (17). By adjusting the goals of the foreign language curriculum to center strictly on either intercultural competency or fluency, I think a highly effective interdisciplinary unit could be constructed and meet many of the outcomes aspired to in the previous section. The efficiency of the parallel+integrated versus the fully integrated course options depends simply on the instructor's values in terms of learning orientation, and for the scope of this project I value intercultural competency and fluency over multidisciplinary integration with foreign language. Based on this emphasis, I rule out a fully integrated course in favor of the parallel+integrated model, which I compare in more detail to the integrated course and other alternative structures in the following subsection.

Comparative Analysis for Curriculum Model

In contrast to the previous discussion on learning outcomes and content, academic standards shed little light on the comparative effectiveness of one curriculum structure over another. In lieu of academic standards, elements that distinguish structure concern specific school factors (Jacobs 18-9) and the extent to which a structure provides opportunities for progress towards desired learning outcomes (Cornett 22). Drawing form both Jacobs and Cornett, I propose the

following criteria as the basis of comparisons between a parallel+integrated curriculum and alternatives:

i) Accommodates predicted time constraints
ii) Meets intercultural competency learning outcomes
iii) Uses integrated discipline content a) for shared topics only b) for shared content and literacy skills or c) for overlapping concepts and processing skills

To clarify, the first item refers to whether or not the structure could feasibly fit into typical class periods of about 50, 60, or 90 minutes. The second and third items are closely related; depending on the nature of the integration, intercultural competency learning outcomes may lose precedency or limit the exploration of a second discipline. The ideal curriculum structure exhibits easy overlay onto standard class periods and provides opportunities for teaching concepts and processing skills that overlap between the involved disciplines, promoting rather than jeopardizing intercultural competency outcomes. Based on the introductory explanation of parallel curriculum, the following figure illustrates its fulfillment of these three criteria:

Figure 5:

Measuring Parallel+Integrated Curriculum Structure against Standards Developed for Structure

	Time Constraints	Intercultural Competency Outcomes	Degree of integration
PARALLEL+ INTEGRATED STRUCTURE	• Parallel aspect relies on typical class period structure •Implementation flexibility for integrated lessons, either in regular periods or combined periods	•Parallel aspect prioritizes foreign language content's intercultural competency outcomes •Through integrated lessons, the parallel discipline helps reinforces intercultural competency outcomes through cross-discipline connections	•Parallel aspect integrates topics, content, and literacy skills •Integrated lessons increase potential for integration of cross-content literacy concepts and processing skills

Comparison 1) Discipline Based vs Parallel+Integrated Curriculum

Reflecting on the overwhelmingly fluency-oriented outcomes common to the foreign language discipline, it seems clear that the subject most commonly assumes a discipline based structure. Given the amount of foreign language specific desired outcomes, avoidance of integration attempts and their accompanying expanded standards makes common sense. In Pachler, Barnes, and Field's questionnaire for foreign language learning styles, preferences for the item "A MFL [Modern Foreign Language] course should be structured so that language presented…" omit entirely

any concept of connection between contents (47). Jacobs explains further that not only do foreign language courses trend towards discipline based curriculum, but the entire educational system does so, from teacher education as field specialists to state and national standards categorized by content area (Jacobs 14). For the average school, daily schedules revolve around a discipline based structure, but the Common Core initiative's emphasis on interdisciplinary instruction casts serious doubts on the effectiveness of this stalwart structure and it curtails opportunities to develop many of the previously outlined intercultural competency outcomes. Consider the following overview of the discipline based structure's performance against the criteria for curriculum structure:

Figure 6:

Measuring Discipline Based Curriculum Structure against Standards Developed for Structure

	Time Constraints	Intercultural Competency Outcomes	Degree of integration
DISCIPLINE BASED STRUCTURE	• Relies on typical class period structure	•Single discipline ensures instructional time for fluency and intercultural competency •Any outcome reinforcement from a second discipline goes unexplored	•No inherent pressure in the structure to integrate •Due to single content emphasis, integration is unlikely to go beyond topic or thematic connections

Like the parallel+integrated structure, the discipline based structure relies on the typical class period schedules already in place. Presuming schools organize their daily schedules to maximize instructional time, this gives discipline based structures an advantage, since they require little flexibility of existing programs and capitalize on the precious time available in the school day. As seen in Figure 5, however, parallel+integrated structures meet and exceed this qualification, since the added integrated lessons aspect is realizable in an unaltered typical schedule or with regularly scheduled double periods, depending on the unique needs of the program and specializations of the staff. Regarding time constraints, discipline based and parallel+integrated structures fulfill essentially the same needs for marginalized language programs to make few demands on the already carefully carved out time for core subject instruction.

In both the parallel and discipline based structures, the content focus remains on foreign language, regardless of any integrated second discipline. Assuming that this foreign language content is oriented towards the intercultural competency outcomes outlined in the previous section, this means neither structure introduces significant additional discipline outcomes which could potentially endanger progress towards intercultural competency outcomes. Regardless, the exclusive attention to foreign language outcomes, including intercultural competency, could foreseeably dilute the quality of instruction towards these very outcomes. As discussed, one advantage of intercultural competency orientation over alternative orientations is the

deeper cultivation of comparative processes and relative outlooks. Figure 5 suggests that the integrated lesson aspect of the parallel+integrated structure would reinforce these connecting skills through explicit application of comparative skills across disciplines. Though equally positioned to address intercultural competency outcomes, the option for integrated lessons building on the parallel alignment of two disciplines gives an edge to the parallel+discipline structure over the discipline based structure that overlooks these opportunities to enhance instruction of intercultural competency skills.

For the last criteria, discipline based structure falls drastically short of the optimal level. With no inherent pressure to integrate elements of another discipline, it fails to connect subject areas beyond the somewhat superficial level of shared themes and topics. Even if instances of shared topics between two disciplines are planned and not incidental, meaningful correspondence between the two content areas will be vague and haphazard from the student perspective. Imagine studying renewable resources in science and reading about recycling in a literacy course. In the science class, instruction would focus on processes and discrete facts, while in the literacy course, instruction would focus on reading comprehension processes and interpreting meaning. While both lessons could treat the topic thoroughly and engagingly, students may not discern the relationship between the two treatments of the same topic and connect the information learned in each course. Simply by sequencing these two lessons nearby, the principle of parallel structure, the connections between the

content becomes more accessible, better positioning teachers to promote highly relevant cross-content connections in explicit instruction. Adding an integrated lesson in which students read about, write about, and perform recycling habits as an example of sustainability efforts necessitates explicit instruction of the interdependent content elements as well as conceptual and procedural overlap relevant to the topic in both disciplines. The parallel+discipline structure clearly provides potential for a more effective level of integration than the discipline based structure, which finalizes its overall advantages over the discipline based structure in combination with its slight advantages on the two previous criteria.

Comparison 2) Interdisciplinary/Integrated Units vs Parallel Curriculum

On Jacobs' continuum of content design options, interdisciplinary units or courses precede the ultimate integrative experiences of a complete program and integrated day, which structure the entire school year or a consistent day of the week purely on evolving student interests and experiences (17-8). I omit a comparison between these radical integration options, choosing instead to examine the most realizable alternatives to my proposed parallel curriculum. Short of providing a highly individualized perspective on content, interdisciplinary units provide a comprehensive range of disciplinary perspectives from visual and performing arts to mathematics (16). This structure serves as a happy medium between full integration on a schoolwide level and the limited perspectives offered through a discipline based or parallel structure. To paraphrase Cornett's outlook on interdisciplinary units,

lessons include substantial content from multiple disciplines, best practices from all disciplines involved drive instruction, and big ideas connect subject area specifics to demonstrate the interrelated nature of all the educational disciplines (Cornett 22). Figure 7 provides an overview of the interdisciplinary units structure as compared to the established criteria for curriculum structures:

Figure 7:

Measuring Interdisciplinary Course/Units Structure against Standards Developed for Structure

	Time Constraints	Intercultural Competency Outcomes	Degree of integration
INTERDISCIPLINARY/ INTEGRATED UNITS/COURSES STRUCTURE	• Units can be incorporated into existing schedules with minimal adjustments •Full courses can be incorporated like any other course •May require unusual period blocks or co-teaching	•Representing the perspectives of numerous disciplines may inhibit progress in fluency and/or intercultural competence •Opportunities to make meaningful connections to all discipline areas	•Instructional topics bind related content from a variety of disciplines •Instruction focuses on overlapping literacy concepts and processing skills between disciplines

Of the three structures considered, the interdisciplinary units structure makes the most demands of typical school scheduling and resource allocation. Though entirely possible for both units and full courses to operate in the schedule like any other course, there will more likely be a need for irregular class lengths and, yet more disruptive, staff coordination. Certainly, this structure involves extensive co-planning between representatives of the disciplines involved, and the degree to which teachers should co-teach or at least be co-present in the integrated course or during the integrated unit will vary on the program. On the other hand, parallel+integrated structures unquestionably benefit from interdisciplinary input and planning on a general level and perhaps even in the course development, but the nature of the integrated lessons should not require habitual co-teaching or very irregular scheduling. As the full potential and possible variations of interdisciplinary units remain unclear and definitely as of yet not popularized, I hesitate to count this aspect of interdisciplinary units as a disadvantage and merely emphasize the organizational as well as ideological demands of this structure. Pending deeper exploration of this option, it poses more scheduling complexities than the parallel+integrated structure, likely indicating more widespread acceptance of the latter.

In terms of meeting intercultural competency outcomes, the interdisciplinary unit's structure boasts unique strengths as well as ponderous weaknesses. With a focus on all disciplinary perspectives, the interdisciplinary unit structure misses no opportunities for reinforcing the intercultural competency outcomes. Though the

teacher need not draw attention to every cross-content connection, strategic examination of the strongest and most relevant connections offers a truly holistic understanding of the outcomes unattainable in other structures. Unfortunately, even through effective and well-balanced integration, explicit instruction time becomes divided among an overwhelming number of outcomes, leaving a few inevitably neglected. If priority is given to fluency within the foreign language perspective, intercultural competency standards may fall by the wayside as efforts focus on cross-content connections between linguistic outcomes. Otherwise, fluency outcomes may need to be sacrificed in order to organize effective interdisciplinary content with intercultural competency outcomes. Given the foremost goal of my curriculum to teach language with an emphasis on intercultural competency equal to the emphasis on fluency, the parallel+integrated structure proves the more dependable option for meeting foreign language outcomes. With different priorities regarding foreign language learning outcomes, the interdisciplinary unit structure offers greater opportunities for deep connections between content and discipline perspectives.

The interdisciplinary unit structure also shines in the category of integration, in which it outperforms both the parallel+integration and discipline based structure. Solely by the nature of interdisciplinary work, the content represents related topics between the disciplines and instruction can immediately address the conceptual relationships and overlapping processes between the studied perspectives. Without the blinders imposed by isolated treatment of subject areas, instruction starts one step

ahead in terms of integration. In the parallel+integrated structure, a comparable starting point may be achieved through the integrated lessons, but global processing skills and conceptual comparisons only appear as frequently as the curriculum incorporates integrated lessons. Deference to either fluency content or intercultural competency, even if both are integrated with the parallel discipline, risks presenting overlapping concepts in a fragmented view. In the ideal situation where teachers avoid such atomization through careful planning and consistent integration of fluency and intercultural competency, such a high level of cross-content integration is not guaranteed as it is in the interdisciplinary unit structure. All the same, given the less demanding organization and greater ability to address intercultural competency outcomes as well as the potential for commendable integration through individual lessons, the parallel+integration structure appears to have the more suitable characteristics overall.

Interpretation of Comparative Analysis and Implications

While all three curriculum structures offer means of attaining the outcomes of an intercultural competency focus, they each support different elements of such a focus such that the appropriate structure must be decided by preferred emphasis within the intercultural competency focus. If ease of integrating the novel focus takes priority, the discipline based structure offers the best solution—relying on existing course format though without enhancing the interdisciplinary nature of the intercultural competency focus. If maximum attention goes towards highlighting

cross-discipline concepts and processes available through the intercultural competency focus, the interdisciplinary unit provides the most thorough platform for teaching transferable skills and concepts at the cost of unpredictable organization demands and streamlined outcomes specific to intercultural competency. The parallel curriculum supported by integrated lessons best corresponds to my priority: providing a curriculum structured to take advantage of the interdisciplinary aspects of intercultural competency without overcrowding language instruction time, at least for initial attempts of course delivery.

Left intentionally unspecified in the previous analyses, an ideal parallel subject remains undiscussed. Within the Common Core standards, history/social studies, science, and technical subjects are all geared towards developing English language arts and literacy (10). In this way, foreign languages, a technical subject, are already focused on the global literacy fundamental to both the math and English language main areas as well as specific English language arts literacy skills. Instead of picking either math or English language arts, which are inherently conceptually paralleled by the literacy orientation of the standards, I propose paralleling to a fellow secondary subject that offers content particularly prone to overlap with the most integral literacy concepts and cognitive processes of the intercultural competency focus outcomes. Remembering that the strengths of the intercultural competency outcomes relate primarily to their guarantee of cultural comparisons conditioned by conceptual rather than expressive understanding of sociolinguistic and intercultural

relationships, an argument could be made for science as the parallel discipline. Both content areas stress relative perspectives and systematic support of opinions, however I argue that social studies more directly crosses over with intercultural competency outcomes and content. In both social studies and second culture study, appreciation and understanding of diversity in world cultures dominates content outcomes.[6] Particularly for the purposes of organizing a parallel curriculum, the similarities between the content has strong appeal, and the contemporary as well as historical worldviews central to the social studies curriculum would help provide a unified, more chronological understanding of language as a discipline.

To help further guide consideration of parallel disciplines, I find it prudent to at last specify a grade level in order to hone in on the precise parallel portions of potential disciplines. Until this point, I intentionally avoid indicating a definite grade level, at times mentioning when standards refer to high school or higher education and providing an elementary school perspective when appropriate to compensate. In the CCSS, social studies content functions mainly as thematic framing for reading material, intended to support literacy objectives most relevant to the subject area for grades K-5(10). At the middle and high school levels, domain specific conventions and vocabulary gain precedence; ostensibly K-5 treatment of the discipline has provided instruction on the literacy processes and skills necessary to analyze texts and decode terms (60). I submit that the conceptual nature of study within broad themes at

[6] For social studies and historical literacy, see Mandell; for second culture outcomes, see Deardorff

the lower grades provides more productive opportunities for integration than the more specialized content emphasized later on. Intercultural competency outcomes and general language study corresponds more readily with the social studies skills necessary to extrapolate cultural perspectives from a folktale than with the skills necessary to evaluate the reliability of primary and secondary sources.

In terms of cognitive development, Piaget's theory supports the choice to implement this curriculum in the elementary grades, and points towards grades 2, 3, and 4 (ages 7-10) as ideal starting points (Huitt and Hummel). As indicated by Huitt and Hummel's summary of Piaget's theory, this age range marks the point at which the majority of students can perform concrete operations, including the ability to systematically manipulate concepts via concrete representations. This skill assists representing and producing second language as well as developing an understanding of the many facets of culture, including language. More specifically, surveying Fountas and Pinnell's guided reading levels, I find a critical difference between the literary features of second and third grade level texts: the third grade marks the point at which students begin to interpret "multiple points of view revealed through characters' behaviors and dialogue" (296). Since the basis of the proposed parallel between social studies and intercultural competency oriented language study rests largely on the concept of comparative understanding of multiple worldviews, I urge that 3rd grade mark the earliest such a program be implemented. Where feasible, I encourage second language study earlier than this to provide second language

background and familiarity, but the full range of intercultural competency outcomes should be drastically amended to fit developmentally appropriate expectations. Forcing connections without adequate foundation impedes the meaningful connections my proposed curriculum hopes to make, but 3rd grade seems to represent an important developmental stage that coincides with significant cognitive ability and literacy experience relevant to the objectives of the parallel curriculum and intercultural competency focus. Of course, later implementation of the curriculum in subsequent grade levels simply requires review of grade specific literacy outcomes to serve as relevant areas for meaningful conceptual connections across the disciplines, however, taking advantage of the emergence of concrete operational abilities and fundamental comparative skills at the 3rd grade level maximizes the effectiveness of each feature of my proposed curriculum.

CONCLUSIONS

After establishing the globalized concept of literacy at the forefront of contemporary educational goals, I posited that a foreign language course oriented towards intercultural competency and organized in a parallel curriculum could effectively meet these goals. In order to evaluate this proposal, I first compared learning outcomes of alternative foci against ACTFL's CCSS aligned standards and demonstrated that an intercultural competency focus more than adequately addresses these standards. In particular, the comparative analyses of foci demonstrated that an intercultural competency focus covers cultural, comparative, and community

standards that alternatives struggle to address. Having determined the preferable focus for the content, I next compared alternative curriculum structures to criteria developed from current integration research. These comparisons demonstrated that, given my emphasis on cultivating intercultural competency and fluency outcomes, a parallel curriculum supplemented by integrated lessons provides the most amenable balance of organizational effort, development of intercultural competency outcomes, and interdisciplinary instruction. Transitioning from the theoretical sphere to practical implications, I propose introducing the curriculum at the 3rd grade level and beyond running parallel to social studies, with desirable but optional early fluency oriented foreign language instruction in previous grades.

Based off of these findings, I believe such a curriculum could function in the school day just as any foreign language course does, with daily meetings for 60 or 90 minutes according to the preexisting schedule in individual schools. The design process should at minimum include reference to locally developed grade level social studies curricula, which uses CCSS social studies literacy standards to provide guidelines organizing units and give teachers the information necessary to generate target language and target culture content. Depending on the frequency of integrated lessons, masterful and meaningful lesson construction requires regular co-planning with social studies instructors, as well as literacy instructors and representatives of any other fields or disciplines integrated in the lesson. On a lesson by lesson basis, planning should include considerations for exceptional learners and English

Language Learners, generally involving accommodations for varying presentational and productive skills, chiefly writing and speaking. As far as specific material resources, I leave the choice to follow a foreign language textbook to teacher discretion, and encourage exploration of local and internet communities for authentic, accessible texts.

As apparent in the previous sections, no single body of theoretical research supports the exact combination of components I propose for this curriculum. In the comparative analyses for both learning outcomes and curriculum structures, I interpreted listed characteristics to determine how effectively an outcome or structure met the standards for each component. Other interpretations of the same characteristics certainly would vary, and different analyses could consequently yield results that differ from or refute my conclusions. For the structural comparisons in which I generated the criteria myself, my results reflect construed characteristics of each structure against construed criteria, obviously indicating a relatively subjective assessment of the structures. However, I found this method of interpreting potential effectiveness most appropriate as it allows for a very general, encompassing interpretation of each alternative outcome and structure and enabled me to judge effectiveness of the theoretical outcomes and structures rather than any one specific practiced version of the outcomes and structures. Where I may have biased my interpretations, I did so in seeking an unbiased foundation for interpretation, and hope that this method proves most useful.

In conclusion, I offer further possibilities for consideration which I feel my work does not sufficiently examine. Within the intercultural competency focus, priority may be given to different levels of fluency and intercultural competency outcomes, which in turn affects the ideal structure for an intercultural competency oriented language curriculum. Quite conceivably, a language program that hopes to teach fluency in a single or select few language functions will benefit more from a different curriculum structure that favors greater inclusion of many discipline perspectives. Additionally, varying priorities may point towards a different parallel content, such as science, fine arts, English language arts, math, or even physical education, as a superior source of cross-content connection opportunities. I feel this product provides strong indications that intercultural competency outcomes meet contemporary educational demands in natural and important ways that fluency outcomes cannot achieve alone, but beyond this concept, different program goals present an intriguing variation of possible intercultural competency oriented curricula.

APPENDIX A

Additional referenced charts

National Center for Education Statistics

Table H126. Percentage of public high school graduates who earned credits, by curricular area: 1990, 2000, 2005, and 2009

Curricular area	1990	2000	2005	2009
All curricular areas, total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Academic, any	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Core academics, any	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
English	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mathematics	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0
Science	99.6	99.7	99.8	99.9
Social studies	99.9	99.7	99.8	99.8
Fine arts	73.9	82.5	83.0	85.7
Foreign languages	70.6	82.3	84.8	87.5
Enrichment/other	99.5	98.9	99.8	99.6
Career/technical education (CTE), any	98.0	96.6	96.6	94.1
Non-occupational CTE, any	86.3	80.0	79.8	70.3
Family and consumer sciences education	45.5	36.5	41.1	33.8
General labor market preparation, any	78.7	71.6	69.1	59.4
Occupational education, any	88.2	89.0	87.0	84.9
Agriculture and natural resources	9.1	11.8	11.6	10.7
Business	51.7	48.1	39.8	32.5
Communications and design	18.4	25.5	30.2	29.6
Computer and information sciences	25.1	24.3	19.5	21.2
Construction and architecture	7.4	6.9	6.7	6.7
Consumer and culinary services	13.8	19.3	20.0	18.0
Engineering technologies	13.7	14.2	11.8	11.1
Health sciences	3.2	10.6	9.6	10.3
Manufacturing	22.4	16.5	16.4	12.9
Marketing	8.5	7.8	9.5	8.5
Public services	3.8	7.8	6.9	9.6
Repair and transportation	10.1	9.3	8.8	8.0

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, High School Transcript Study (HSTS), 1990, 2000, 2005, and 2009.

ADDITIONAL NOTE: Chart unaltered except for title type face.

APPENDIX B

Detailed Comparisons With the ACTFL CCSS Aligned Standards

Chart Key:

When standards are met, the relevant outcome appears	
When standards are partially met	i) a relevant outcome appears with the partial standard rephrased in italics or ii) a question mark indicates that a relevant outcome does not explicitly appear among the focus' outcomes, but has been judged possible given related outcomes and characteristics of the outcome
When standards are not met, an X appears	
In the column for intercultural competency, an asterisk indicates the given standard was labeled under a different category in Figure 2 than the category of the standard it applies to in the comparison. The labels in Figure 2 represent possible categorization, and many standards apply to more than one category, as seen in the comparison.	

Grammar Focus and Intercultural Competency Focus Comparison

National Standards for Learning Languages: Three Modes of Communication	ACTFL CCSS Aligned Standards	GRAMMAR FOCUS OUTCOMES	INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY FOCUS OUTCOMES
Interpretive (Reading, Listening, Viewing)	Standard 1.2: Interpretive Communication: Comprehend and interpret content and distinguishing features from authentic multimedia resources	Grammar is a meaning making resource: *Comprehend and interpret content and grammatical features from authentic multimedia resources*	Skills to listen and observe
	Standard 2.1 Cultures: Practices and Products: Examine, compare and reflect on products, practices, and/or perspectives of target culture(s)	Grammar is a theory of construing human experience	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions

	Standard 2.2 Cultures: Products and Perspectives: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied	Grammar is a theory of construing human experience	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions
	Standard 3.1 Connections: Reinforce Other Disciplines: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of content across disciplines and make cross-cultural connections	?	Understanding the role and the impact of situational, social, and historical contexts involved
	Standard 3.2 Connections: Acquiring New Information: Acquire information from other content areas using authentic sources	?	?

	Standard 4.1 Comparisons: Language: Evaluate similarities and differences in language use and idiomatic expressions between the target language and one's native language	?	Cognitive flexibility between etic and emic frames
	Standard 4.2 Comparisons: Cultures: Evaluate and reflect on similarities and differences in the perspectives of the target culture(s) and one's own culture(s) as found in products, practices, and/or perspectives of the target culture(s) and one's own culture	?	Understanding other's worldviews

	Standard 5.1 Communities: Beyond the School Setting: Analyze the features of target culture communities (e.g. geographic, historical, artistic, social and/or political) using authentic written and aural texts within the communities of the target language	Grammar is a theory of construing human experience	*Understanding the role and impact of culture and the impact of situational, social, and historical contexts involved
Presentational (Writing, Speaking, Visually Representing)	Standard 1.2 Interpretive Communication: Understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics	Grammar is the central processing unit where meanings are brought together as wordings	Skills to listen and observe
	Standard 1.3 Presentational Communication: Present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics, knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom	Grammar is a theory of construing human experience	*Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles

	Standard 2.1 Cultures: Practices and Products: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied	X	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions
	Standard 2.2 Cultures: Products and Perspectives: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied	X	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding of target culture's traditions
	Standard 3.1 Connections: Reinforce Other Disciplines: Reinforce and further knowledge of other disciplines through the target language	Grammar creates language logic	Curiosity and discovery

	Standard 3.2 Connections: Acquiring New Information: Acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the target language and its cultures	Grammar is a theory of construing human experience	Sociolinguistic competence
	Standard 4.1 Comparisons: Language: Demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and one's own	?	Skills to analyze, interpret, and relate
	Standard 4.2 Comparisons: Cultures: Demonstrate understanding of the nature of culture through comparisons of the culture studied and one's own	?	Cognitive flexibility between etic and emic frames

	Standard 5.1 Communities: Beyond the School Setting: Use the language both within and beyond the school setting	?	Learning through interaction
Interpersonal (Speaking & Listening; Reading & Writing)	Standard 1.1 Interpersonal Communication: Engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions	Grammar is a theory of construing human experience: *Provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions*	*Learning through interaction
	Standard 1.3 Presentational Communication: Present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics, knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom	Grammar is a central processing unit where meanings are brought together as wordings	*Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles
	Standard 2.1 Cultures: Practices and Products: Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal behavior in interpersonal communication	X	*Adaptability and adjustment to new cultural environment

	Standard 2.2 Cultures: Products and Perspectives: Compare and contrast artifacts, themes, ideas, and perspectives across cultures	?	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding cultural traditions
	Standard 3.2 Connections: Acquiring New Information: Use age-appropriate authentic sources to prepare for discussions	Grammar is a meaning-making resource	*Tolerating and engaging ambiguity
	Standard 4.1 Comparisons: Language: Demonstrate an awareness of formal and informal language expressions in other languages and one's own	Grammar is a theory of construing human experience: *Demonstrate awareness of formal and informal language expressions in other languages*	*Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles
	Standard 5.2 Communities: Lifelong Learning: Establish and/or maintain interpersonal relations with speakers of the target language	X	Learning through interaction

Proficiency Levels (Language)	Language System (Communication): Communicate with accuracy relative to the student level and the demands for manipulating language at that level	Grammar is a central processing unit where meanings are brought together as wordings	Tolerating and engaging ambiguity
	Comparisons: Broaden and apply understanding of how vocabulary and language systems work	Grammar creates language logic	Sociolinguistic competence

Communication Focus and Intercultural Competency Focus Comparison

National Standards for Learning Languages: Three Modes of Communication	**ACTFL CCSS Aligned Standards**	**COMMUNICATION FOCUS OUTCOMES**	**INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCY FOCUS OUTCOMES**
Interpretive (Reading, Listening, Viewing)	Standard 1.2: Interpretive Communication: Comprehend and interpret content and distinguishing features from authentic multimedia resources	Use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to negotiate meaning	Skills to listen and observe

	Standard 2.1 Cultures: Practices and Products: Examine, compare and reflect on products, practices, and/or perspectives of target culture(s)	?	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions
	Standard 2.2 Cultures: Products and Perspectives: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied	?	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions
	Standard 3.1 Connections: Reinforce Other Disciplines: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of content across disciplines and make cross-cultural connections	Appropriate use of grammatical forms in relation to purpose, linguistic register, and cultural context	Understanding the role and the impact of situational, social, and historical contexts involved
	Standard 3.2 Connections: Acquiring New Information: Acquire information from other content areas using authentic sources	Use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to negotiate meaning: *Acquire information from other content areas*	?

	Standard 4.1 Comparisons: Language: Evaluate similarities and differences in language use and idiomatic expressions between the target language and one's native language	Appropriate use of grammatical forms in relation to purpose, linguistic register, and cultural context	Cognitive flexibility between etic and emic frames
	Standard 4.2 Comparisons: Cultures: Evaluate and reflect on similarities and differences in the perspectives of the target culture(s) and one's own culture(s) as found in products, practices, and/or perspectives of the target culture(s) and one's own culture	?	Understanding other's worldviews

	Standard 5.1 Communities: Beyond the School Setting: Analyze the features of target culture communities (e.g. geographic, historical, artistic, social and/or political) using authentic written and aural texts within the communities of the target language	Appropriate use of grammatical forms in relation to purpose, linguistic register, and cultural context	*Understanding the role and impact of culture and the impact of situational, social, and historical contexts involved
Presentational (Writing, Speaking, Visually Representing)	Standard 1.2 Interpretive Communication: Understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics	Mastery and accurate use of language features	Skills to listen and observe
	Standard 1.3 Presentational Communication: Present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics, knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom	Appropriate use of grammatical forms in relation to purpose, linguistic register, and cultural context	*Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles

	Standard 2.1 Cultures: Practices and Products: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied	?	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions
	Standard 2.2 Cultures: Products and Perspectives: Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied	?	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding of target culture's traditions
	Standard 3.1 Connections: Reinforce Other Disciplines: Reinforce and further knowledge of other disciplines through the target language	Use of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to negotiate meaning	Curiosity and discovery
	Standard 3.2 Connections: Acquiring New Information: Acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the target language and its cultures	Appropriate use of grammatical forms in relation to purpose, linguistic register, and cultural context	Sociolinguistic competence

	Standard 4.1 Comparisons: Language: Demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and one's own	Applying knowledge of cohesive language devices to produce and interpret thoughts coherently: *Demonstrate understanding of language*	Skills to analyze, interpret, and relate
	Standard 4.2 Comparisons: Cultures: Demonstrate understanding of the nature of culture through comparisons of the culture studied and one's own	Applying knowledge of cohesive language devices to produce and interpret thoughts coherently: *Demonstrate understanding of culture*	Cognitive flexibility between etic and emic frames
	Standard 5.1 Communities: Beyond the School Setting: Use the language both within and beyond the school setting	?	Learning through interaction
Interpersonal (Speaking & Listening; Reading & Writing)	Standard 1.1 Interpersonal Communication: Engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions	Use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to negotiate meaning	*Learning through interaction

	Standard 1.3 Presentational Communication: Present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics, knowing how, when, and why to say what to whom	Appropriate use of grammatical forms in relation to purpose, linguistic register, and cultural context	*Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles
	Standard 2.1 Cultures: Practices and Products: Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal behavior in interpersonal communication	Use verbal and nonverbal communication to negotiate meaning	*Adaptability and adjustment to new cultural environment
	Standard 2.2 Cultures: Products and Perspectives: Compare and contrast artifacts, themes, ideas, and perspectives across cultures	?	Culture-specific knowledge and understanding cultural traditions
	Standard 3.2 Connections: Acquiring New Information: Use age-appropriate authentic sources to prepare for discussions	Mastery of accurate use of language features	*Tolerating and engaging ambiguity

	Standard 4.1 Comparisons: Language: Demonstrate an awareness of formal and informal language expressions in other languages and one's own	Appropriate use of grammatical forms in relation to purpose, linguistic register, and cultural context	*Ability to adapt to varying intercultural communication and learning styles
	Standard 5.2 Communities: Lifelong Learning: Establish and/or maintain interpersonal relations with speakers of the target language	?	Learning through interaction
Proficiency Levels (Language)	Language System: Communicate with accuracy relative to the student level and the demands for manipulating language at that level	Mastery and accurate use of language features	Tolerating and engaging ambiguity
	Comparisons: Broaden and apply understanding of how vocabulary and language systems work	Applying knowledge of cohesive language devices to produce and interpret thoughts coherently	Sociolinguistic competence

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