

AAUSC Issues in Language Program Direction 2011

Educating the Future Foreign Language Professoriate for the 21st Century

Heather Willis Allen
Hiram H. Maxim
Editors



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Chapter 4

A Literacy-Based Approach to Foreign Language Teacher Development

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For decades, researchers in applied linguistics and foreign language (FL) pedagogy have discussed the traditional two-tiered structure of collegiate FL programs, characterized by fixed lines of demarcation between language study in lower-level courses and literary-cultural study in upper-level courses (e.g., Byrnes, 1998; Byrnes & Maxim, 2004; Hoffman & James, 1986; Kramsch, 1985; Scott & Tucker, 2002). Many have argued in favor of merging language and literary-cultural content across the undergraduate curriculum. This call for change was punctuated by the Report of the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages (2007), which urged “replacing the two-tiered language-literature structure with a broader, more coherent curriculum in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuous whole” (p. 3). The report proposed that this reform be accomplished through development of students’ translingual and transcultural competence (i.e., the ability to operate between languages and cultures); increased emphasis on cultural narratives present in FL texts such as poetry, prose, film, and journalism; and collaboration among all FL program participants, including tenured and tenure-track faculty, part-time instructors, and graduate students. Yet, as several scholars have pointed out, implications of the report’s proposed reforms for graduate student professional development, beyond two minor references to “substantive training in language teaching and the use of new technologies” (p. 7), are absent (e.g., Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010; Melin, 2009; Pfeiffer, 2008; Schechtman & Koser, 2008). Moreover, Melin (2009) argued that these brief statements “seem inadvertently to reinforce aspects of bifurcation” because they do not “make sufficient distinction between narrow ‘cookbook’ or ‘survival’ training and advanced professional development” (p. 13). This argument is consistent with previous claims that the long history of departmental bifurcation is a significant obstacle to effective FL teacher development for a number of reasons: teacher development tends to focus on lower-level courses; communicative language teaching (CLT), with its focus on oral language development, is the methodology *de rigeur*, but is often incompatible with upper-level courses in which written language is paramount; and FL instructors’ language competencies are often underdeveloped (Allen, 2010; Arens, 1993; Bernhardt, 2001; Byrnes, 2001; Geisler, 2008; Maxim, 2005; Pfeiffer, 2002; Wurst, 2008).¹ As such, implementing the large-scale curricular changes recommended in the report also requires a reenvisioning of FL teacher development. Without such change, the future professoriate will be ill-prepared to function within twenty-first-century FL programs.

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate two key questions: What is the connection between the reform of the two-tiered system and FL teacher development? and What types of teacher-development courses establish this connection? To respond to the first question, I explore the limitations of FL teacher development in the bifurcated system and identify key issues related to rethinking this development for the twenty-first century. In response to the second question, I present an alternative to FL teacher development that addresses the recommendations of the MLA Report. Specifically, I argue for literacy-based pedagogical development (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kern, 2000; New London Group, 1996; Swaffar & Arens, 2005) and provide an example of a literacy-based methods course, supported by data that illustrate its contribution to FL teacher development. Several scholars have argued in favor of literacy-based approaches to curriculum and instruction as a way to overcome the traditional language–literature divide in collegiate FL programs (e.g., Allen, 2010; Byrnes, 2001; Kern, 1995, 2002; Maxim, 2005). As Kern (2002, p. 21) claimed, *literacy*, with its focus on “creating and interpreting meaning through texts... may well offer the common ground necessary for the reconciliation of language and literature teaching” because it connects reading, writing, and other acts of communication in an integrative way. This chapter contributes to this ongoing discussion by applying the literacy model to FL teacher professionalization.

Limitations of Teacher Development in the Bifurcated System: Key Issues

The traditional teacher development paradigm in collegiate FL programs usually consists of a preservice teaching workshop and an in-service methods course, both led by the language program director (LPD). The workshop and course tend to focus on lower-level instruction to the exclusion of training in teaching upper-level courses, due in large part to the fact that most classes that graduate student and part-time instructors teach within the introductory and intermediate course sequence. This exclusive focus on lower-level instruction is often coupled with a reliance on CLT, a methodology that is incompatible with the types of text-based, analytical tasks expected of students at more advanced levels because of its tendency to focus on familiar and quotidian topics and to prioritize transactional, oral language use, with reading and writing functioning as secondary support skills (Byrnes, 2006).² Taken together, these characteristics contribute to departmental bifurcation, which in turn contributes to FL instructors’ underdeveloped content, language, and pedagogical knowledge as it pertains to upper-level teaching. Adding to these limitations, the purview of the LPD usually only extends to introductory and intermediate courses, which can impede expansion of FL teacher development or realization of holistic, integrated curricula and appropriate pedagogies for use across curricular levels.

In rethinking FL teacher development to overcome these limitations and respond to the calls for change in the MLA Report, several key issues emerge. These include (1) long-term and multifaceted pedagogical development; (2) program

articulation; (3) integration of teaching and scholarship; (4) breadth and depth of professionalization; and (5) increased emphasis on target language narratives (see also Byrnes, 2008). In the remainder of this section, I define each of these key issues and summarize suggestions from previous research on FL teacher development that serve as potential solutions.

To start, it is crucial to recognize that learning to teach takes time; one does not take a methods course or participate in professional development workshops and then enter the classroom as an expert. Not only must collegiate FL instructors develop effective pedagogical strategies, they must also fine-tune their knowledge of language, their understanding of the content they teach, and their ability to communicate about both with students. As such, a key issue with respect to rethinking teacher professionalization is *long-term and multifaceted pedagogical development* across multiple subjects and contexts. In addition to arguing in favor of more than one methods course to address this issue (e.g., Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010; Byrnes, 2001; Bernhardt, 2001), previous research has suggested the following strategies: increasing instructors' understanding of second language acquisition (SLA) as a non-linear process (Maxim, 2005); encouraging reflective teaching to foster thoughtful and evolving instructional practices (Kingtoner, 1995; Maxim, 2005); and integrating technology to facilitate understanding of pedagogical concepts (Arnold & Ducate, 2006). Given that FL instructors may not be interested or motivated to participate in additional professional development efforts, departments may wish to provide incentives for doing so. Many universities now offer a graduate teaching certificate that instructors may pursue in conjunction with their regular degree requirements. Other options include allowing students to complete a minor in FL methods and SLA or awarding certificates of recognition for completion of a certain number of workshop-style professional development activities.

A second key issue, and one that can impede or encourage long-term, multifaceted pedagogical development across subjects and contexts, is *program articulation*. Within the context of FL teacher development, articulation is understood as the link between pedagogy-oriented courses and workshops and language-content teaching at all levels of the curriculum. A lack of articulation in bifurcated programs, fueled by long-standing differing beliefs about the language and literature/culture components of the curriculum and a lack of communication among program members on each side, drives home the message that pedagogical development is relevant only for lower-level courses and that this level is markedly distinct from the upper level. Several scholars have suggested that to overcome problems of articulation, contact and communication between graduate student and part-time instructors and other faculty regarding issues of teaching must increase (e.g., Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010; Brandl, 2000; Byrnes, 2001; Maxim, 2005; Melin, 2009). Indeed, as the MLA Report highlighted, curricular transformation can only be "carried out through sustained collaboration among all members of the teaching corps" (2007, p. 6). This contact and communication may take several forms. For instance, graduate students might apprentice or team teach with faculty in upper-level courses and thereby contribute to course design, select appropriate content, observe and teach classes, and participate in

pedagogical decision making. Increased and ongoing dialogue between faculty in SLA or applied linguistics (i.e., the LPD) and faculty in literature and cultural studies can also contribute to improved articulation and begin the process of finding common ground on curricular and pedagogical issues. To increase buy-in on the part of tenured and tenure-track faculty with respect to program articulation, Allen and Paesani (2010) suggested soliciting their input about the content of the lower-level curriculum and the FL texts that might be implemented. They further suggested creating a secure access Internet site on which faculty and instructors may share syllabi, texts, and teaching materials and engage in collaborative thinking about linkages across courses. These kinds of communication efforts can potentially spur further, informal discussions about teaching outside of the contexts of pedagogy courses, workshops, apprenticeships, or faculty meetings.

Departmental bifurcation not only inhibits effective articulation, it also impedes *integration of teaching and scholarship* across professional development experiences. Indeed, as Byrnes (2001) argued, separating language and content “supports the very dichotomy between teaching and scholarship and between teachers and scholars that has for so long sustained the status quo in foreign language departments” (p. 514). Addressing FL instructors’ immediate and long-term needs as future teacher–scholars across multiple contexts can foster a more harmonious relationship between language and literature/culture by simultaneously underscoring the importance of teaching and maintaining the intellectual rigor of the entire FL program (Arens, 1993; Byrnes, 2001; Pfeiffer, 2002). While increased contact and communication among program members about pedagogical and curricular issues contribute to integrating teaching and scholarship, other strategies such as action research projects and reflective teaching, carried out in conjunction with peers or faculty mentors, can provide FL instructors a research-based understanding of teaching (Dhawan, 2001; Rankin & Becker, 2006). Arens (1993) and Murphy (1991) further suggested creating closer ties between undergraduate-level teaching and graduate-level coursework, thereby helping to link language instruction with the profession as a whole (e.g., teaching, scholarship, advising, administration).

Because graduate student and part-time instructors typically teach only introductory and intermediate courses, and often do not participate in curricular decision making related to textbook selection, syllabus design, or assessment, their professional development may lack *breadth and depth*. That is, it may not encompass the range of language uses, text types, learners, and decision making they will encounter as faculty members. In addition to advocating the involvement of FL instructors in curricular decision making through collaboration with the LPD or other faculty members, recent research also suggests deepening instructors’ subject matter knowledge and linguistic competencies (Byrnes, Crane, & Sprang, 2002; Maxim 2005; Wurst, 2008). This can be achieved by developing integrated curricula that merge language and content across levels, as suggested by the MLA Report, and by increasing opportunities for FL instructors to teach upper-level courses; both encourage simultaneous development of pedagogical, content, and linguistic abilities (Dickson, 1996; Maxim, 2005). Wurst (2008) further suggested that FL instructors learn to integrate technology into their teaching. Proficiency

in technology can encourage a more holistic approach to instruction that incorporates multimodal content and thus increases the breadth and depth of FL teacher development.

A final issue, and one that is closely related to breadth and depth of professionalization, is the role of *target language narratives*. As suggested by the MLA Report, one way to develop integrated FL curricula is to increase emphasis on cultural narratives present in FL texts such as poetry, prose, film, and journalism. It follows, therefore, that FL instructors should learn to teach such narratives and to integrate various text types across the curriculum. However, in bifurcated programs, such opportunities are not readily present, in part because graduate student and part-time instructors rarely teach outside of the context of introductory and intermediate courses and in part because target language narratives are not fully integrated across the curriculum. Suggestions for overcoming FL instructors' unfamiliarity with selecting and teaching various text types across levels include development of deep subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge beyond CLT and one methods course (Allen & Negueruela-Azarola, 2010; Huffman, 1998; VanValkenberg & Arnett, 2000; Wurst, 2008). These suggestions are consistent with those already proposed for promoting long-term, multifaceted pedagogical development and breadth of professionalization.

In what follows, I argue that exposure to literacy-oriented pedagogy can establish the necessary connection between the reform of the two-tiered system and FL teacher development in the twenty-first century, and thus help overcome issues related to long-term and multifaceted pedagogical development, program articulation, integration of teaching and scholarship, breadth and depth of professionalization, and increased emphasis on target language narratives. To support this argument, I present a literacy-based methods course that puts into practice several of the solutions prevalent in the research reviewed: implementation of more than one methods course; exploration of methods beyond CLT; instructor participation in curricular and pedagogical decision making; encouragement of reflective teaching; and further development of instructors' pedagogical, content, and linguistic knowledge.

Overcoming Limitations to Teacher Development Through Literacy

In recent years, literacy has played a predominant role in the professional literature on collegiate FL curriculum and instruction. For instance, the well-documented redesign of the German Program at Georgetown University is grounded in literacy-based principles (Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010), as is much of the research on developing integrated curricula that promote undergraduate students' advanced-level FL competencies (e.g., Allen, 2009; Byrnes & Maxim, 2004; Byrnes, Weger-Guntharp & Sprang, 2006). An important argument within this line of scholarship is that development of students' FL literacy and a focus on the related concepts of genre and discourse across the curriculum are essential to overcoming current limitations of the bifurcated system and to realizing the academic mission of FL programs (Allen & Paesani, 2010; Byrnes, 2001; Kern, 2000). Indeed, according to Kern (2003), literacy-based instruction

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

Literacy-based instruction, which draws heavily on the multiliteracies framework (e.g., Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; New London Group, 1996), extends the traditional definition of literacy—the ability to read and write—to encompass “dynamic, culturally and historically situated practices of using and interpreting diverse written and spoken texts to fulfill particular social purposes” (Kern, 2000, p. 6). Reading and writing are thus viewed as integrated modalities contributing to meaning construction, rather than as separate skills.³ Kern identified seven principles of literacy that link it closely with communication: *interpretation, collaboration, conventions, cultural knowledge, problem solving, reflection and self-reflection, and language use*. Conventions, cultural knowledge, and language use serve as the basic elements of instruction, whereas interpretation, collaboration, problem solving, and reflection are the learning processes students carry out. According to Kern, “this seven-point linkage between literacy and communication has important implications for language teaching, as it provides a bridge to span the gap that so often separates introductory ‘communicative’ language teaching and advanced ‘literary’ teaching” (p. 17). A literacy-based orientation therefore allows a broader view of FL curricula at both lower and upper levels. In the former, communication consists of more than interpersonal, oral exchanges but rather includes a variety of oral and written practices that represent the target culture; in the latter, the notions of reading and writing are expanded beyond the narrow focus of literary analysis to encompass communicative processes that encourage learners to interpret, create, and transform meaning. As such, the traditional lines of demarcation between “language skills” on one hand and “academic content” on the other are blurred (Kern, 2002).

Essential components of the multiliteracies framework are design of meaning and four learning activities referred to as curricular components: situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Kern, 2000; New London Group, 1996). *Design of meaning* involves establishing form-meaning connections through interpretation or creation of texts and is composed of three interrelated concepts: Available Designs, Designing, and the Redesigned. *Available Designs* include the “found and findable resources for meaning” that a learner brings to a text to build meaning such as “cultural, context and purpose-specific patterns and conventions” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009, p. 175). To interpret or create a text, a learner uses these Available Designs to engage in *Designing*, or the act of making meaning, in which meaning is shaped and transformed to establish new relationships among existing elements. The result of Designing is a new representation of Available Designs called the *Redesigned*. For example, to design the meaning of the oral text “Smoking or non?,” learners must have an understanding of *vocabulary* and *grammar, background knowledge, and stories* in the media and elsewhere regarding the presence of smoking sections

in American restaurants and recent nonsmoking laws that may have made this expression obsolete. Learners use these Available Designs to make meaning and to interpret the linguistic, social, and cultural content of the text. They then further use these Available Designs to engage in Designing: They might modify the text by changing its grammar, adding additional details, or rewriting the text to reflect recent changes in smoking laws. Each of these “transformations” is an example of the Redesigned.

The four curricular components—situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice—provide the pedagogical framework to help make learners aware of and gain access to Available Designs and to engage in acts of Designing.⁴ *Situated practice* activities, such as reader’s theater or reading journals, provide learners the opportunity to immerse themselves in spontaneous use of socially and culturally appropriate Available Designs without explicit reflection. Learners then build upon these Available Designs in *overt instruction* activities, which encourage learners to analyze specific forms and their function within texts so that they may use them to construct meaning in subsequent acts of Designing. Overt instruction activities might include creating a semantic map to explore connections between words and ideas or comparing the features of two different genres. *Critical framing* activities, such as critical summaries or comparisons, help learners direct conscious attention to the relationships between design of meaning and language use in social and cultural contexts. Finally, in *transformed practice* activities, learners engage in Designing by reformulating existing texts or creating new texts appropriate for different contexts of communication. Examples of transformed practice activities include rewriting a text from a different perspective or transforming a prose text into a dialogue.

Although literacy-based approaches are prevalent in research on FL curriculum and instruction, particularly as they relate to overcoming departmental bifurcation, little research exists linking the benefits of a literacy orientation to FL teacher development. For instance, how does a literacy orientation address issues of long-term and multifaceted pedagogical development, program articulation, integration of teaching and scholarship, breadth and depth of professionalization, and increased emphasis on target language narratives? What is the link between familiarity with literacy-based pedagogy and participation in curricular and pedagogical decision making, encouragement of reflective teaching, and development of pedagogical, content, and linguistic knowledge? According to Kern (1995), teaching collegiate FL instructors about literacy-based practices demonstrates that language learning is more than just focusing on discrete skills or forms; instead, it shows that language can be used to learn content, develop students’ cognitive abilities, and increase the intellectual substance of language courses. Indeed, because literacy-based approaches emphasize communication *and* development of learners’ ability to analyze, interpret, and transform texts, such approaches can increase the breadth and depth of FL teacher professionalization. By integrating a variety of text types and language uses, a literacy orientation can increase articulation between pedagogy courses or workshops and teaching at all curricular levels.

Literacy-based approaches to collegiate FL teacher development also contribute to the integration of teaching and scholarship:

By conceptualizing language learning as social semiosis and focusing on the practices that describe both primary and secondary discourses, a well-designed curriculum and its pedagogies offer one of the strongest counter-arguments to a reductionist expertise orientation vis-à-vis the work of FL departments. (Byrnes, 2001, p. 521)

Byrnes further argued that this “reductionist expertise orientation” can in part be overcome by encouraging FL instructors to think beyond the limitations of the textbook and to consider intellectually challenging notions related to teaching such as interlanguage development and the curriculum as a whole.

One way to increase the link between teaching and scholarship, according to Kern (1995), is to foreground the theoretical insights related to literacy that drive pedagogical development. Allen and Negueruela-Azarola (2010) echoed this claim, but also pointed out that some of the main questions emerging from their review of FL teacher development research are *how* to make connections between theoretical knowledge and practical experiences and *what* professional development activities can prepare students to teach language, literature, and culture at all levels of the curriculum. Kern (1995) suggested that this can be done through three activities:

- (1) sensitizing TAs to some of the important issues tied to literacy;
- (2) providing sample materials and demonstrating how literacy activities can be sequenced and integrated into the curriculum;
- (3) broadening TAs’ ideas about the significance of teaching language and literacy. (p. 83)

He further recommended that these activities form part of a literacy-oriented methods course covering topics such as the role of context, background knowledge, and text conventions in understanding language; the nature of FL writing; the link between literacy practices and sociocultural context; and the interconnectedness of the four traditional language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The methods course presented below puts many of these suggestions into practice and responds to the second question explored in this chapter: What types of methods courses establish the connection between the reform of the two-tiered system and FL teacher development?

A Literacy-Based Methods Course

The literacy-based methods course described in this section exemplifies how FL teacher development activities can not only respond to calls for change recommended in the MLA Report but also address the five key issues outlined above regarding FL teacher development. To carry out these goals, this course puts into practice several of the proposed solutions in the published research: (1) implementation of more than one methods course; (2) exploration of methods

beyond CLT; (3) instructor participation in curricular and pedagogical decision making; (4) encouragement of reflective teaching; and (5) further development of instructors' pedagogical, content, and linguistic knowledge. These solutions are implemented through a variety of literacy-based activities and assessments. Throughout the course, students carry out tasks organized around the seven principles of literacy (interpretation, collaboration, conventions, cultural knowledge, problem solving, reflection/self-reflection, language use), design of meaning (Available Designs, Designing, the Redesigned), and the four curricular components (situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, transformed practice). Furthermore, students apply these literacy-based concepts to the analysis and creation of pedagogical and research-based projects. Finally, this course responds to Allen and Negueruela-Azarola's (2010, p. 12) important observation that "a one-size-fits-all professional development model does not reflect the reality of [FL instructors] as diverse individuals with varied cultural and educational backgrounds and diverse needs" by individualizing certain course components. Illustrative data in the form of excerpts from student work and end-of-course survey responses serve to demonstrate the efficacy of this literacy-based approach to FL teacher development.

Programmatic Context

Before describing the course, it is important to situate this example of teacher development within the larger context of the Department of Classical and Modern Languages at Wayne State University, a large metropolitan research institution. The department offers B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in multiple languages and introductory courses in 16 languages. The introductory courses are taught by graduate student and part-time instructors, full-time lecturers, and, on occasion, tenured or tenure-track faculty members. Nine of the introductory language programs are supervised by LPDs. All graduate student and part-time instructors attend an LPD-led all-languages orientation at the start of each academic year. This orientation, as well as a methods course required of all graduate student instructors, have a CLT focus. Furthermore, certain LPDs offer ongoing professional development through workshops and meetings. Taken as a whole, the departmental approach to teacher development is eclectic and inconsistent across languages; however, some language areas are moving toward a more comprehensive, long-term, approach to instructors' professionalization.

The literacy-based methods course described below is one of six SLA and FL methods courses making up part of the M.A. in language learning (MALL).⁵ This program is targeted at in-service K–12 teachers, but is open to any student wishing to specialize in FL teaching and learning. In addition to taking 15 credits in SLA and methods, MALL program students must also complete 12 credits in their language of specialization (Arabic, Classics, French, German, Italian, or Spanish), six credits in a cognate area (e.g., education, linguistics, an additional foreign language), and a three-credit M.A. essay. The SLA and FL methods courses draw MALL program students as well as graduate students from other M.A. and Ph.D. programs in the department.

Course Description

When the MALL program was conceived in 1998, skills-based, CLT approaches to FL teaching and learning were prevalent across the profession. As a result, two courses were created to reflect this focus: Teaching Foreign Languages: Productive Skills, and Teaching Foreign Languages: Receptive Skills. The latter, Receptive Skills, is the focus of this chapter. Previous iterations of Receptive Skills included a broad overview of the teaching and learning of FL reading and listening with a specific focus on processing models (bottom-up, top-down, interactive) and the pedagogical approaches that resulted from them. In consultation with MALL program faculty, Receptive Skills was retooled in 2009 to focus on literacy-based approaches to oral and written texts and curricular issues related to literacy- and text-based instruction.⁶ Course objectives included developing students' ability to demonstrate conceptual knowledge of course content, relate concepts to instruction, apply concepts to class discussions and assignments, interpret and reflect critically on texts and teaching materials, and engage effectively in pedagogical discourse. These objectives were met through readings, discussions, and activities that modeled the four curricular components, engaged students in literacy-based learning processes, and required students to analyze texts, access available designs, and create pedagogical activities. Objectives were further met through a variety of assessments carried out over the course of the semester and refined through multiple drafts and peer and instructor feedback. Assessments, which reflected literacy-based concepts (principles of literacy, curricular components, design of meaning), required students to apply their knowledge to creation of pedagogical and research-based projects. These included (1) a statement detailing each students' instructional context, goals, and objectives; (2) a reading–listening journal in which students reflected on target language texts for potential use in their instructional context; (3) critical evaluation of reading and listening activities currently used in their instructional context; (4) development of literacy-oriented instructional sequences based on oral and written texts from their journal assignments; and (5) a research project that included leading class discussion on a scholarly article, creating an annotated bibliography, and writing a reflective statement linking the bibliography to literacy-based pedagogy and to the students' instructional context.

Course Participants

Because the Receptive Skills course draws students from a variety of graduate programs and does not have a prerequisite, the students who enrolled represented diverse backgrounds. Of the six students in the course, three were certified K–12 Spanish teachers, two were graduate student instructors in French, and one was a volunteer middle school Spanish tutor. Four of the six students were enrolled in the MALL program in Spanish, one in the French M.A. program, and one in the French Ph.D. program. All students had had previous exposure to CLT-oriented pedagogy, either through course work or workshops and other professional development activities. Five students had had previous coursework in SLA; three

had completed a general, CLT-oriented methods course and at least one other methods course in the MALL program. The two graduate student instructors had completed numerous CLT-oriented workshops prior to completing the course; the three K–12 teachers had completed teacher certification requirements and ongoing professional development activities; and the middle school tutor had received on-the-job training.⁷

Connecting Calls for Change and FL Teacher Development

The course design has several features that put into practice some of the proposed solutions to overcoming limitations of the traditional model of FL teacher development. First, Receptive Skills is an example of the *implementation of more than one methods course* beyond any previous theoretical or pedagogical coursework and, as such, contributed to students' long-term pedagogical development. Moreover, the course helped make this pedagogical development multifaceted, in part because it introduced students to literacy-based instruction as a way of *exploring methods beyond CLT*. Indeed, throughout the course we compared the two approaches and discussed benefits and limitations of their implementation in various instructional contexts.

Given the nature of class assessments, students were involved in *curricular and pedagogical decision making* throughout the course. The first assignment that students completed was a description of their instructional context, goals, and objectives. One purpose of this assignment was to tailor the course to students' diverse needs and backgrounds. Because student demographics varied, it was important to encourage them to reflect on their own teaching context and determine individualized literacy-oriented goals and objectives. Some students chose to focus on their current teaching context (e.g., high school, Level I Spanish), while others chose to focus on a future, desired teaching context (e.g., university, Introduction to French Literature). In addition to encouraging reflection, this critical framing activity also engaged students in the literacy-based learning processes of collaboration and interpretation. Students participated in peer and instructor feedback sessions and, as such, collaborated with the audience of their work as they made editorial decisions. Moreover, students engaged in interpretation as they thought through peer and instructor comments from the perspective of their own teaching context.

The context, goals, and objectives statement then served as the foundation for the remaining course assessments. For instance, for the reading–listening journal, students selected target language texts that were potentially appropriate for their context and reflected on whether and how they might integrate each text into their curriculum. One way they did this was to engage in the literacy-based learning process of problem solving by working out relationships between the textual elements they noticed and their instructional goals and objectives. This situated practice activity immersed students in target language narratives and *engaged them in curricular and pedagogical decision making*. The journal excerpt below shows how Luisa, a middle school Spanish tutor, thought through the decision-making process for using a Spanish-language version of *Ugly Betty* in her instructional context:⁸

After some reflection I am not convinced that middle school students have the cognitive maturity to be able to infer, guess, comprehend and/or interpret meaning from this medium because they may not have the background knowledge or maturity to go beyond what is implied. On the other hand, students may be able to interpret the humor which may be enough to entice interest, enjoyment, and additional desire to listen to different types of authentic L2.

Although Luisa waffled somewhat, her thought process shows the ability to link decision making to course concepts such as interpretation, authenticity, and background knowledge. Moreover, this excerpt illustrates Luisa's engagement in problem solving as she worked through potential links between the text and her student audience.

Students engaged in further decision making and interacted with target language narratives as they completed the two assignments, materials development and materials evaluation. For the materials development assignment, students selected two of the target language texts from their journal entries and developed a literacy-based lesson plan to implement in their instructional context. To carry out this transformed practice activity, students designed the lesson around the four curricular components to encourage their learners to engage in the act of Designing. To make pedagogically sound decisions regarding the lesson plan, students reflected on the linguistic and schematic resources (i.e., Available Designs) characterizing their selected texts and engaged in problem solving, interpretation, and collaboration to make the texts and accompanying activities accessible to their learners.

Likewise, for the materials evaluation assignment, students critiqued activities for oral and written texts from the textbook currently used in their instructional context and considered their appropriateness for a course reconfigured according to a literacy orientation. This overt instruction and critical framing activity required students to identify and analyze Available Designs in the texts; engage in interpretation, problem solving, and reflection to determine relationships between texts, activities, and their own developing concepts of literacy; and apply their conceptual understanding by suggesting alternative, literacy-based activities. Taken together, these processes encouraged principled pedagogical decision making. For example, Elena, a high school teacher, decided that the reading activity she evaluated was not appropriate for her Level 2 Spanish course because it did not promote critical thinking and was not literacy-oriented. To overcome these limitations, she modified the textbook activity to include critical framing in which students "write a one paragraph summary of the authors' attitudes and biases toward the subject of the article" and transformed practice in which they "rewrite the article in the form of a verbal interview."

Several course assessments, such as the statement of instructional context, goals, and objectives, the reading-listening journal, and the research project, encouraged students to *think reflectively*. For instance, Solange, a graduate instructor in French, showed a complex process of reflection in her journal entry for the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood." In justifying her text choice for use

in an Introduction to French Literature course, she related her own experience with the tale:

This is a fairy tale from 17th century which is my area of interest. By choosing something that interests me, I thought I will be able to give a better insight as well as deal with student questions with confidence knowing that I will not say something that is totally irrelevant. This will also aid me in animating the discussion in class according to the level of students.

Later in the entry, when reflecting on cultural differences between French and American versions of the tale, Solange wrote:

After reading this end, I was thinking wondering how different the American version is. The wolf is killed by a lumberjack and he cuts open the wolf to save the girl and the grand mother. This is a strong cultural difference. The French mentality of realism is obvious in that the author intent is moralistic while the American version tends towards a happy ending.

These excerpts demonstrate Solange's ability to relate the tale and its potential use in an Introduction to French Literature course to her own view of the world and to American and French cultural contexts.

The research project, a critical framing activity, required students to present one scholarly article to the class, create an annotated bibliography, and write a statement connecting their research to the literacy-based approach and their instructional context. Students therefore engaged in reflection (as well as in collaboration, interpretation, and problem solving) as they considered abstract concepts gleaned from their research and applied them to their instructional context. For example, Elena reflected on the implementation of extensive reading in Spanish 2:

Using literary texts would encourage my students to experience new genres of target language text, expand on their cultural knowledge, and improve their interpretation skills. Also, the length of these texts would allow my students to activate schematic knowledge and possibly make form-to-meaning connections with the material.

This excerpt demonstrates Elena's ability to effectively contextualize her reflection within the research she reviewed and also within literacy-based concepts, such as interpretation and schematic knowledge.

In addition to these formal assessments, advance organizer questions, which framed in-class discussions, asked students to reflect on the content of required readings as they prepared for class. Students were also asked to reflect on their own beliefs about teaching and learning and to complete a self-assessment of knowledge. Both activities were administered at the start and the end of the course. Not only did these activities encourage reflection and self-reflection, they gave students the opportunity to assess their progress and identify gaps in knowledge.

Course activities and assessments also *developed students' content knowledge and their pedagogical and linguistic competencies*. For instance, because students

were to seek out and then read or listen to FL texts, the reading–listening journal developed their linguistic and content knowledge. Although guidelines did not specify parameters regarding the linguistic features or content of these texts, students were required to explore specific genres—literature and film—for two of the entries. The reflective reading and listening practices students engaged in to create these entries further developed linguistic knowledge because students were to pinpoint language difficulties or challenges they encountered. Anita, a middle school Spanish teacher, described the process of discovering the meaning of unfamiliar Spanish words in a travel brochure and thereby increasing her lexical knowledge:

I encountered some words that I did not know. I was able to figure most out by using the surrounding context of the article—rereading the previous phrases/sentences as well as reading beyond the unknown word. I did use an on-line Spanish-English dictionary to figure out the meaning of four words. One was the noun “buceo”. It was in a list right before the Spanish word for “cycling”, so I thought that maybe the words were related. However, when I looked up the word, I discovered that it means “diving”. The other three words were “arrecifes (reefs)”, “esteros (creeks)” and “barandas (handrails)”. I had never used these words before, and the context left their meanings unclear to me.

The materials evaluation assignment provided opportunities to build students’ pedagogical knowledge. Specifically, they were required to identify and critique the pedagogical approach used in the selected textbook activity (e.g., process-oriented, CLT, form-focused); analyze the linguistic and schematic resources of the text around which the activity was designed; determine the appropriateness of the text and activity for their instructional context; and suggest alternative, literacy-based activities. In assessing an oral text’s appropriateness for her instructional context, Sandrine, a graduate instructor in French, demonstrated growing knowledge about text selection and literacy:

According to the criteria discussed in class, this text ... is long enough to establish a context and the idea of problems and solutions but not so long that it causes listener frustration. It is unfortunate that the cultural aspect of seeing a doctor in France is not more clearly portrayed, but it may be asking too much of a single listening activity to demonstrate the huge difference between seeing a doctor in France and in the United States.

Sandrine showed further development of pedagogical and conceptual knowledge in the research project. In commenting on a series of articles on listening instruction published in late 1980s, she made connections between the content of the articles and the more current literacy-based concepts discussed in class:

...the three authors agree with the principle of cultural knowledge and the socio-cultural dimension of literacy. In other words, it is possible to understand every individual word of an L2 listening text and still be unable to construct meaning if the cultural context is unknown. The authors also come to a similar conclusion as to

the cognitive dimension of literacy, a part of which deals with content schemata: L2 students can make use of their existing knowledge to establish relationships and make predictions about events in listening texts.

In both of these excerpts, Sandrine demonstrated developing conceptual knowledge and an ability to engage in the literacy-based learning processes of interpretation and reflection.

Finally, students developed content, pedagogical, and linguistic knowledge through class readings and discussions. Certain topics were particularly conducive to establishing links between teaching and scholarship. For example, a discussion of curricular issues regarding literacy-based practices at the close of the semester included reading the MLA Report and an article about the national standards (Magnan, 2008). Advance organizer questions then asked students to make connections between these research articles and literacy-based instruction: How might the literacy-based framework respond to the calls for change outlined in Magnan (2008) and the MLA Report? What alternative approaches to instruction might also respond to these calls for change? Can the literacy-based framework work equally well in secondary and postsecondary FL contexts? Students thus furthered their knowledge of literacy-based pedagogy and course concepts and engaged in processes of interpretation, problem solving, and reflection.

Determining Course Efficacy

Taken together, the illustrative examples extracted from course assessments, activities, and advance organizer questions suggest that the course succeeded in contributing to students' long-term and multifaceted pedagogical development by encouraging decision making, reflective teaching, and by increasing content, pedagogical, and linguistic knowledge. Furthermore, the course successfully engaged students in literacy-based learning activities that applied the principles of literacy, curricular components, and design of meaning. To provide a more complete picture of the efficacy of this literacy-based methods course, I turn now to survey data collected at the end of the semester whose purpose was to gauge to what degree course objectives were met. Questions were therefore written to reflect course objectives as stated in the syllabus. Students were asked to rate, on a three-point Likert scale, how well they felt they could do the following: understand course concepts; relate and apply course concepts to instruction; interpret texts and teaching materials; and reflect critically about teaching materials. Table 4.1 illustrates how well students felt they understood course concepts and were able to relate and apply these concepts to instruction.

These results show that although a large percentage of students felt they understood course concepts very well, fewer felt as confident in their ability to relate and apply these concepts to instruction. This may be due in part to the fact that more class time was devoted to discussing theoretical concepts of literacy than to developing instructional materials. In addition, drafting of the materials development assignment did not begin until less than a month before the end of the course.

Table 4.1. Ability to Understand, Relate, and Apply Course Concepts

	Course Concepts (n = 6)	
	Understand	Relate & Apply
Very well	79.2%	57.7%
Somewhat well	20.8%	41 %
Not well	0%	1.3%

That these data reveal somewhat variable ability to apply course concepts is supported by students' articulation of these concepts in course assessments. As the following excerpts illustrate, students demonstrated differing degrees of success in weaving literacy-based concepts into their statement of instructional context, goals, and objectives. For instance, Luisa wrote: "[The course] takes a *literacy-based approach* to language instruction in which learners are expected to read passages from the textbook and complete task specific worksheets designed to aid students' comprehension and *interpretation* of target language and culture."⁹ Although she was able to incorporate the term "literacy-based approach" and the concept of "interpretation" in her statement, Luisa never expanded on these ideas, showing a tenuous grasp of their meaning.

Solange showed a better-developed understanding of course concepts in her statement and expanded on notions of literacy by discussing its various dimensions (linguistic, cognitive, sociocultural) and by mentioning concepts related to design of meaning. For instance, she wrote:

...activities are aimed at developing [students'] skills and strategies by activating their "*Available Designs*" (Kern 2005) [sic]. The aim of [pre-reading activities] is to give them the necessary *background information* about the type of *genre* or text that will be used. The while-reading activities will help them put the text in perspective and compare the pre-existing or the background knowledge of a theme in their native language with the target language text itself. The post-reading will lead them to making their own *interpretations* about the text and also make *cross-cultural references* based on their understanding of French culture and history. The students will *interact* with each other working in a group to complete the activities.

Although Solange did not explicitly expand on the concept of Available Designs, nor did she make reference to Designing or the Redesigned, she did link design of meaning to notions such as schemata, genre, interpretation, cultural knowledge, and collaboration.

Sandrine demonstrated an even clearer understanding and application of course concepts; her statement was peppered with literacy-related notions such as linguistic knowledge, cultural context, genre, and collaboration. For example, in her list of objectives for engaging students in meaningful interaction with authentic texts, Sandrine included the following: "continue to develop linguistic knowledge of the target language (vocabulary, structures) in

order to engage with more complex texts” and “discuss with another student or group of students in order to interpret the text and determine the author’s intent, imagine a similar message presented in a present day text in one’s own country, or compare the message of the text with a similar message in a text of a different genre.”

Although their ability to relate and apply course concepts varied, overall, students felt they had developed their ability to interpret and reflect critically on texts and teaching materials, as illustrated in Table 4.2. Furthermore, when asked whether the course had prepared them to carry out certain tasks in their own instructional context, results were also positive (see Table 4.3). In general, students felt slightly better prepared to develop reading lessons and select texts than to develop listening lessons or make curricular decisions. The variability in these results may be due to the fact that more class time was devoted to discussing reading than listening and that discussions and readings regarding curricular issues related to literacy-based approaches took place during the last week of class.

The survey results and illustrative examples presented here suggest that the course was generally successful and that course objectives were met. Nonetheless, these data indicate that there is room for improvement. Specifically, an increased focus on application of course concepts through development of literacy-based teaching materials is essential. This result, however, is not surprising as development of

Table 4.2. Ability to Interpret and Reflect Critically About Texts and Teaching Materials

	Texts and Teaching Materials (n = 6)	
	Interpret	Reflect Critically
Agree	75%	83%
Neutral	25%	17%
Disagree	0%	0%

Table 4.3. Ability to Carry Out Pedagogical and Curricular Tasks

This class has prepared me to... (n = 6)	
Develop text-based reading lessons	83%
Develop text-based listening lessons	67%
Make informed choices about text selection	83%
Incorporate oral and written texts into my classroom	83%
Develop my students’ ability to interpret oral and written texts	67%
Integrate language and content in introductory courses	67%
Integrate language and content in advanced courses	67%

pedagogical expertise and conceptual knowledge are long-term endeavors (Allen, 2011; Rankin & Becker, 2006). Commenting on the results of their qualitative study on the link between reading SLA research and instructional practice, Rankin and Becker concluded that knowledge ... is not simply accumulated and then put into action. It is processed and filtered through layers of experience and belief, rendering the outcome far less predictable than a simple transmission model would suggest.

Knowledge about teaching and the classroom becomes instantiated only after it has been integrated into the teacher's personal framework—contextualized, as it were, into a matrix of classroom experience and other sources of pedagogical input. (p. 366)

Certainly, then, the literacy-based methods course outlined above can only be viewed as one component among many contributing to FL instructors' ongoing professional development.

Conclusion: Benefits and Limitations of Literacy-Based Teacher Development

The purpose of this chapter was to argue in favor of pedagogical training in literacy as a way to overcome current limitations of FL teacher development and to establish the necessary connection between this development and the reform of the two-tiered system. To support this argument, I outlined a literacy-based methods course that put into practice several of the solutions prevalent in previous research. These included implementation of more than one methods course; exploration of methods beyond CLT; participation in curricular and pedagogical decision making; encouragement of reflective teaching; and development of pedagogical, content, and linguistic knowledge. Survey results and illustrative examples from student work showed that, overall, the literacy-based methods course succeeded in meeting its goals and responding to these calls for change. The main area for improvement identified through this data was an increased focus on development of literacy-based teaching materials to more clearly establish links between course concepts and their practical application. Changes to future iterations of the course might include requiring several short materials development assessments across the semester rather than one final project. Another solution might be to implement microteaching sessions to practice and refine literacy-based instructional strategies.

Another challenge in the course, although not one reflected in the data, was the mixed audience consisting of collegiate-level instructors, K–12 instructors, and a volunteer tutor. Although course concepts were discussed with consideration of various instructional levels, some students had difficulty conceptualizing how the cognitively sophisticated aspects of literacy-based instruction translate to younger students. In future iterations of the course, students might be encouraged to conduct mini-investigations into the feasibility of literacy-based approaches in their instructional setting by comparing CLT- and literacy-oriented activities for similar text types. Providing them with hands-on experience implementing literacy-based pedagogy and evidence of its effectiveness can not only convince students that it is feasible across contexts, but can provide fodder for classroom discussion.

A final limitation of this project is the research design. Data were based solely on the five written assignments students completed and a postcourse questionnaire. To get a clearer picture of students' ability to engage in literacy-based practices, to understand, relate, and apply course concepts, and to interpret and reflect critically about teaching materials, additional data sources are necessary. For instance, future studies might collect survey data at the start of the class to gauge students' baseline conceptual knowledge and again at the end of the class to determine development over time. This quantitative evidence could then be compared with qualitative evidence from course assignments in which students apply conceptual knowledge. Future studies might also investigate how students put literacy-based concepts into practice after completing the methods course by means of follow-up interviews, class observations, or reflective reports.

In spite of these limitations, the literacy-based methods course presented here supports suggestions in previous research that changes to FL teacher development must include implementation of more than one methods course. Moreover, the course demonstrates that it is possible, indeed necessary, to consider issues of program articulation, integration of teaching and scholarship, breadth and depth of professionalization, and increased emphasis on target language narratives when planning FL teachers' long-term professional development. This, combined with continuing dialogue among FL program members and across the profession, will move us closer to successfully preparing instructors to participate in the reconfigured programs of the twenty-first century.

Notes

1. Throughout, the terms "FL instructors" or "FL teachers" refer not only to graduate student instructors, but also to part-time instructors. Both groups tend to teach within the introductory and intermediate language sequence and to be supervised and trained by a language program director.
2. Levine, Melin, Crane, Chavez, and Lovik (2008) argue against the claim that pedagogies used at introductory and intermediate versus advanced levels are incompatible. Citing an MLA study on successful college and university programs (Goldberg & Welles, 2001), they argue that level-specific differences are not as prevalent as one might claim, pointing out that only 23 percent of programs surveyed reported placing more emphasis on oral language development than on reading and writing. Maxim (2009) called into question Levine et al.'s (2008) stance, claiming that an emphasis on reading and writing at lower levels of instruction does not necessarily translate into a unified curriculum.
3. This feature of literacy-based instruction may suggest overlap with the framework of communicative modes that forms part of the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (2006). The two approaches, however, differ in several ways. First, central constructs of literacy-based approaches are genre and textuality; the *Standards* do not share this same focus. Indeed, whereas literacy-based approaches advocate basing FL curricula on literary and nonliterary texts, the *Standards* do not foreground texts and furthermore, do not stipulate a clear place for literature in the FL curriculum. Next, although

the 5 Cs of the *Standards* mirror some of the seven principles of literacy, in particular conventions, cultural knowledge, and language use, lacking from the *Standards* are the key learning processes of interpretation, problem solving, and reflection. Finally, both frameworks suggest curricular goals and content; however, only literacy-based approaches outline a pedagogical framework (i.e., the four curricular components) with which to implement them.

4. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) suggested reframing the four curricular components as pedagogical acts. They refer to these reconceptualized components of multiliteracies pedagogy as *experiencing*, *conceptualizing*, *analyzing*, and *applying*.
5. The six courses are Theories of Second Language Acquisition; Foreign Language Instruction (a required, general, CLT-oriented methods course); Foreign Language Testing; Teaching Foreign Languages: Receptive Skills (the focus of this chapter); Teaching Foreign Languages: Productive Skills; and Technology in the Foreign Language Classroom. The first three courses are required of MALL program participants; students choose two of the second three as electives.
6. A copy of the syllabus, including a description of all assessments referenced in this chapter, is available at <http://clas.wayne.edu/faculty/paesani>
7. All student names have been changed to protect their identity.
8. All excerpts are reproduced exactly as they appeared in students' work and therefore have not been edited for errors.
9. Relevant course concepts are indicated in italics (my emphasis).

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