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# Principles and Practices of the *Standards* in College Foreign Language Education

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# Chapter 10

## Teaching Culture: The *Standards* as an Optic on Curriculum Development

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This chapter offers an experiment designed to challenge the typical language-and-literature department and its claims to teaching culture, claims that are often vague about what they actually require to be taught and learned. This experiment extends the logic contained in a document rarely referred to in postsecondary academe, namely the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* (2006), originally published in 1996 with grants from the U. S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The framework in the *Standards* has provided common benchmarks for developing curricula that are well articulated across the K-12 levels and for teacher training, while remaining largely unnoticed in postsecondary contexts.

Yet the *Standards* overtly redefine the whole enterprise of language learning, particularly by describing language as a set of interlocking literacies, including pragmatic, social, and cultural domains that go beyond language alone. These literacies are also well suited, therefore, to aid in a rethinking of postsecondary curricula. Traditional foreign language (FL) classrooms at the postsecondary level have all too often defined culture as a set of facts: the names, dates, social roles, artifacts, historical memories, and/or similar pieces or patterns of knowledge that individuals within a culture need to know. The *Standards* suggest an opposing view: that culture may be profitably defined as a field of cultural practices, signifiers, and knowledge (with language in the narrower sense serving as only one set of elements in it) and that learning a culture means not only acquiring its knowledge base, but also the strategic competencies needed to function within it.

Defining culture as a pragmatic field structured like a language but functioning in more dimensions is not willful. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1991) uses the term *field* to refer to any site or region within which a group acts, communicates, and evolves its characteristic knowledge and identities. That site is also furnished with a tradition of institutions, group behaviors, pragmatic practices, discourses (verbal and otherwise), ideologies, and a characteristic knowledge base. Once populated and furnished, Bourdieu's field functions like a chessboard on which individuals act to produce, manage, or reproduce knowledge; signify affects and identities; negotiate meaning; and reinforce or challenge positions. The site thus sponsors a culture with a distinct set of native (or indigenous) resources and functions.

Bourdieu's model of a field challenges us to rethink *learning language* as *learning culture* on such a field because it suggests that culture must be understood not only in terms of the resources available to a native speaker (writer and reader) but also in terms of the history, traditions, and resources that affect how such speakers function in social systems, construct and assert their identities, and manage pressures from history and infrastructure. That is, citizens of such fields must be literate in the culture(s) of their site, not just their languages. They must, for instance, be able to handle the pragmatic details of an interview situation (dress, posture, tone of voice, manners) as well as the linguistic ones. The *Standards* contain within them a parallel to Bourdieu's analysis of the relation of history, semiotic systems, identity, and social-pragmatic competence, although they have, to this point, been read principally as descriptions of language to be taught, rather than as more encompassing socio-pragmatic challenges.

That is, most implementations of the *Standards* have read them as applying to language in the way that formal linguistics might, as defining domains in which language functions in the narrow sense. The experiment proposed here will be a rereading of the *Standards* to argue that they apply to a more encompassing model for learning, especially for teaching and learning culture as a set of semiotic systems revealed in the pragmatic choices made by members of a cultural community in a particular field of culture.

The present chapter will experiment in rereading the *Standards* to reclaim a definition of learning culture that is compatible with Bourdieu's insights. Such a rereading may be considered a falsification of the *Standards'* original intent, but I will claim instead that it is necessary, if we are to be able to construct a culture-based curriculum, rather than a language-based one. In what follows, I will construct an imaginary—but necessary—rereading of the *Standards* as referring to culture literacies and strategic sociocultural competence rather than to language.[1] Defining forms of cultural literacy as outcomes appropriate to specific curricula, in turn, will require us to abandon the traditional image of culture as a split between "big C" (high culture) and "litte c" (popular culture) and their attendant class reification, and to embrace the full range of sociolinguistics and other social sciences (especially sociology and anthropology, but also cultural geography, critical discourse analysis, and epistemological critiques of identity politics), beyond the formal linguistics of communication that has been an almost exclusive benchmark for curricular development to date. My experiment, therefore, challenges how the *Standards* have been read and implemented overall.

This rereading of the *Standards* will proceed in sequence with each discussion prefaced by a rewriting, and by examples of what each new standard might mean within local pragmatic constraints imposed by the institution that delivers it and the learners who progress through it. All curricula must function by implementing benchmarks locally, not in the abstract, and by setting benchmarks for levels in terms of local learner-centered, or learning-to-learn-centered criteria.

The rewriting of the *Standards* that I propose is not just an academic exercise or a falsification of an important curricular tool. Rather, this speculative exercise is, I believe, critical for our ability to critique current curricula for their limited visions of what learning language might mean, just as it points to what learning culture might imply in a typical undergraduate major. What emerges most clearly is that the typical undergraduate language curriculum takes a very narrow definition of linguistics/language behavior, often conflating how language functions as part of culture (*Standards 1–3*) with how culture manipulates those functions or with how individuals manage them (*Standards 4* and *5*, respectively)—functions of language exerted as a system occupied by individuals, conflated with those at play on the more abstract field of culture.

The *Standards* taken as a guide to teaching culture, in contrast, stress how acts of language parallel and are conflated with other systems of culture. If these systems are to be taught in a series of developmental levels in a curricular sequence, then that sequence must be defined with more careful attention to a specific target field in the C2. Teaching culture in the foreign language curriculum, as we shall see, can no longer mean simply taking up texts in various media and genres that represent second culture (C2), its history, and its current events and tastes. Texts need to be approached as elements in cultural networks that implicate not only language acts, but also a broader social-science view of culture, including anthropological and sociological systems, its sociology and social-semiotics, organized power structures (institutions, groups, policies), and the social-psychology and identity politics of individuals within it. Texts are not only sources of linguistic knowledge and cultural facts but are also representations of how culture is created and how it functions; they must be engaged not only for language and elements of content, but also as strategic interventions on the field of culture—as examples of how knowledge is produced, circulated, and managed.

Let us now turn to the experiment itself, namely rereading the *Standards* to think through how culture might be understood, theoretically and practically, to render it teachable, and to foster learning with assessable outcomes.

## Defining Culture as a Domain of Learning: Applying the *Standards*

The Five Cs of the *Standards* are framed to highlight language use and acquisition, but they also imply how learners need to function between cultures—between their culture of origin, (here referred to as a C1) and a culture or cultures in which they wish to participate (a C2, or C3). At the same time, the *Standards* cannot be seen as providing stable or inflexible benchmarks for appropriate language acquisition; they are neither a method nor a grading scale. Instead, they function something more like Bloom's taxonomy,[2] characterizing stages in a typical learning sequence with progressive demands to be met by learners as they move from beginning to advanced levels. Curricular development, therefore, must project how learners learn in a sequence of levels of instruction, each with characteristic goals and tasks furthering the overall goal (in this case) of fostering culture literacy.[3] The levels in the sequence will not be defined around the presumed difficulty levels of the material (books, tasks, and media) presented to learners, but rather in light of how individual learners evolve both culture-based knowledge and pragmatic competencies to navigate cultural sites (in age and socioculturally appropriate fashion).

In the most pragmatic terms, developing a culture curriculum requires that a curriculum designer realize that the traditional L2 curriculum is actually a subset of the desired C2 curriculum, because culture, from the perspective of an individual learner, is a domain of performances executed within a community using various symbolic systems. The learner of that culture needs to understand and practice not only verbal language but also languages or patterns of markers through which individuals recognize, occupy, claim, and assert their personal positions within the group; produce products and effects; and join within a space of ethics and affects. Learning culture in this framework thus explicitly includes learning language and the facts used within the disciplines of history, anthropology, sociology, or the like. Yet, such a curriculum must do more; it must focus on the more encompassing dimensions of culture literacy, requiring that learners be exposed to and practice in community-based practices on the field of culture chosen as the curriculum's target, as well as knowledge of the material conditions conditioning such interactions. The curriculum's goal must be understood as teaching the socially, historically, and politically conditioned performances enacted by individuals within the space of a given C2 community and its understanding of the world it occupies (its field).

The *Standards*' Five Cs—Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities—already make this connection, defining a literacy in language as a set of literacies in several domains of culture. Reading them as a key to culture rather than language alone, however, suggests that each of these domains can be construed more broadly as sites of culture in their own right—an option by no means at odds with the original intent of the *Standards*. Reaching a culture literacy, however, will by definition require more than language-based tasks on the part of the learner.

How the *Standards for foreign language learning in the 21st Century* might be understood as "Standards for the study of culture" requires us to address norms of cultural performance, not just communication, and the extended reading I am offering here may, in fact, be an unacknowledged dimension of the *Standards* project. Each *Standard* category highlights a domain of experience, information, and strategic competencies that learners need to engage (in the form of verbal expression and beyond). They define how L1 speakers confront a C2, acquiring perspectives on culture as the way that individuals are interpolated into definable, legible, social identities and manage a shared lifeworld. Culture makes the world comprehensible and manageable for a group of people who identify with one another; it is a field within which all epistemological production and consumption of meaning (concrete or abstract, conceptual or material) take place.

At the same time, the rereadings highlight logical and content relations that are implicit in the original language *Standards* but which emerge as critical in a curriculum necessarily structured around content beyond language. Learners of a C2 (rather than a more simply defined L2) need to learn how to communicate within a cultural field but also how to produce, assert, and manage multiple pragmatic, procedural, or strategic knowledge within that field, only some of which are language based. These learners must learn not only to acquire language from culture capsules, films, texts, or other artifacts representing a particular C2—an activity that is essentially passive when it comes to cultural literacy, even as it fosters identification and practice of language literacies—but they must also conceptualize various content domains as managed fields constituting culture, all of which require very specific forms of performance, some cognitive, social, or anthropological, as well as linguistic.

To make the case for such a rereading requires a note about a concept that is implicit in the original *Standards*. The well-known graphic representation of the *Standards* shows the Five Cs as interlocking domains within the field of language, however none of these domains places the same cognitive demands on learners. As the *Standards*' numbers increase (both in ordinals and in decimal places underneath the ordinals), they describe increasingly more complex acts of language use, requiring progressively more complex cultural logics. Overall, the linear numbered form of the *Standards*, when seen as applying to a comprehensive field of culture, actually outlines a kind of developmental learning sequence, inscribed in learning models such as Bloom's Taxonomy (1956). Such sequences stress that learners move from comprehension to production, or from recognition and replication to application, and then creation/origination, in ever-increasing degrees of logical and fact-management difficulty—a move from being acted upon to controlling interactions. On the field of culture, they stress how knowledge and agency might be enacted through language and other symbolic forms.

Construed logically, the *Standards* fall into three groups overall, with the first two—Communication and Cultures—representing very basic competencies of an individual language learner, centered around that learner's point of view, or what he or she understands and deals with on his or her own terms. The Connections standard represents a shift of frame from the learner's point of view to his or her contact with another cultural frame of reference, both as managed by particular communities (*Standard 3.1*), and in general, as the prototypical space of the other, as a formal domain (*Standard 3.2*). The final two standards—Comparisons and Communities—refer explicitly to cross-cultural frameworks and strategic competencies, stressing the learner's ability to discriminate and negotiate between, and thus to compare, two frames of reference, the C1 and a target C2. Thus they also point to strategies for performance and identity politics necessary to join a C2 public, both in its own context (*Standard 5.1*) and for the learners to assert their own purposes (*Standard 5.2*)—again, a hierarchy of difficulty in social self-assertion and control.

Let us now turn to the hypothetical "Standards for the study of culture" proposed here to continue this process of redefinition.

Standard 1 for Language and Culture

| **COMMUNICATION (original)**<br>**Communicate in Languages Other than English** | **COMMUNICATION (reread)**<br>**Perform Within the Pragmatic and Sociocultural Communication Norms of a Target Culture** |
|---|---|
| **Standard 1.1:** Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions. | **Standard 1.1:** Students engage in culturally specific and demographically appropriate acts of communication. |
| **Standard 1.2:** Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics. | **Standard 1.2:** Students understand and interpret a variety of communication acts in written and spoken forms in terms of the implications of available positions, forms, and norms for production/acting. |
| **Standard 1.3:** Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics. | **Standard 1.3:** Students learn to enact a variety of culturally appropriate acts to engage audiences/groups/communities with correct pragmatics. |

In the original, *Standard 1* speaks of communication, subsequently nuanced into three types of communication, namely Interpersonal, Interpretive, and Presentational. (See p. xxii for an overview of the Standards.) Yet within the field of culture, these three types of communication represent different logical problems, with a clear hierarchy of cognitive and social complexity, if not necessarily in language complexity. *Standard 1.1* characterizes communication in general, referring not just to interpersonal situations, but particularly to student-centered language use in everyday life frameworks. *Standard 1.2* adds the challenge of interpretation within communication situations, stressing the learners' comprehension of a diversity of language fields and an ability to assert some type of authority over the act of communication. *Standard 1.3* moves to nuanced situations for language production based on what is comprehended—that is, to written or spoken language-based performances aimed at an audience, and hence clearly bounded by a network of social and cultural expectation, a complex social performance rather than more personal performance. Thus *Standard 1.3* also differs from *1.1* in an important way: Whereas *1.1* speaks of how an individual contacts other individuals, *1.3* is focused on communication for specific purposes and hence to the authority of the communicator within a specific community. In this sense, what seem to be more or less equivalent domains of language use within a linguistic framework emerge as nuanced across a specific hierarchy of social production/performance, in which interpersonal expression is easier to control and negotiate than is communication aimed at a particular group, with its supporting institutions and values. Seen within the field of culture, then, communication is a complex social performance based on language as well as other systems of communication, including gestures, postures, clothing, and other sign systems or semiotic markers.

If one extrapolates from these definitions to construct a curriculum that focuses on acts of communication as part of cultural competence and literacy rather than on language, then the first decision that must be made is what community (-ties) a group of learners are supposed to be joining. That decision will identify appropriate social identities for the learners within the C2, and hence what negotiation of roles and content will figure prominently in learner-appropriate acts of communication; it will foreground what language markers will need to be practiced for those learners to be able to insert themselves into a C2 culture's communications. Are the learners trying to participate in the C2 as full members, after a certain period of study? Or are they being prepared to be students in that C2, professionals who need to participate principally in various disciplinary communities within the C2, or tourists or other kinds of general consumers of that culture? The answers to these questions generally correlate strongly with an institution's mission statement and the demographics of their students. If learners in that curriculum plan to study abroad, they first need pragmatic communication skills (everyday language, general knowledge about how communities are structured in the C2), and then they must acquire more specialized academic/professional communication skills (how to read and write academic prose, make the kinds of presentations expected of a C2 student, etc.). However, if those learners plan to undertake internships in specific C2 industries, they will require different sets of pragmatics and semiotics because their social and professional goals will require different acts of communication—not just different vocabularies, but entirely different patterns of interactions and the tools to assert very different social identities.

These decisions about what C2 domain a learner is likely to join, in turn, will condition the texts and artifacts brought into the curriculum as the contents of appropriate cultural knowledge supporting acts of communication. If a vast majority of the learners in a curriculum go abroad to study chemistry or engineering or to interact with engineers during internships, for example (as the University of Rhode Island's German students are very likely to do[4]), then class time should be spent explaining how German labs are organized to equip learners to deal with these learning goals. The curriculum designer must target which domains of culture are of primary importance to the students' identities as models for their communication, not just those that may interest them. Where the original *Standard 1.1* concentrates on learner-centered language use, the reread Standard 1.1 takes as its starting point the identification of a discrete locus as the target for cultural communications to be modeled and practiced throughout the curriculum as the bases for language development—this particular curriculum's entry into learning culture, including its language, its semiotics, nonverbal communication patterns, and other pragmatic systems.

Once those types of communication are specified, the learner can practice a basic repertoire of age and demographically-appropriate acts that mark him or her as a member of that community, often in analogy to those from the C1. Social pragmatics, rather than a stylized representation of the native speaker, will drive additional choices of language resources. The new Standard 1.2 probably represents an intermediate level of such a model cultural curriculum. To fulfill its requirements, learners must not only perform basic communication acts represented in the target domain of the C2 field but also be able to grasp what they imply as culturally situated acts of communication. Interpretation requires sensitivity to networks of social forms, and thus to a specific form of sociocultural literacy—to how a message is received, not just how an individual chooses to structure it. To fulfill the demands set by this standard, a curriculum must compel a learner to active engagement in recognizing, discriminating, and enacting sociocultural pragmatics as implicating individual identity within a C2.

The suggested new Standard 1.3 moves even further along this path (and probably toward advanced levels of curricula), adding to prior requirements that learners not only understand the social pragmatics of communication but also produce them to assert cultural identity. To negotiate identity, authority, and position within a culture, a learner must monitor acts of communication in more than one dimension, and to practice various cultural positions within the chosen site, ranging from authority/empowered to disempowered social roles, polite to colloquial speech, verbal to nonverbal norms for communication (tone of voice, body language, etc.). In other words, this standard refers to, what Pierre Bourdieu would identify, as the symbolic power of language (1991).

Overall, the new Standards 1.2 and 1.3 would be critical to a curriculum's attention to cross-cultural literacy, requiring (especially at the intermediate and advanced levels) attention to problems of language literacy (register, complex language use, politeness, etc.) but also to factors considered to be part of anthropological, sociological, or cultural networks. Linguists typically subsume such issues under the category of pragmatics, namely that which defines a communication community and conditions its judgments about who belongs, who is successful, and the like. Yet reframed as an appeal to how culture may be learned, Standards 1.2 and 1.3 would require learners to have systematic knowledge about communication norms and networks of the C2, not just of its language.

The reframed Communication standard thus projects a very specific vision of how to structure the learning of the communication patterns of culture in a curriculum, starting with a targeted community or set of communities that students who complete a 4-year undergraduate curriculum might be interested in joining. At the earliest levels, they will be presented with materials exemplifying the C2's cultural patterns, initially primarily for comprehension and explicit language acquisition. They will then move through the pragmatics of language- and culture-based identity politics (based on history and values) within the C2 community. In this way, Language becomes part of this culture field, not only an expression of it. Thus, students learn how to respond to a person in terms of his or her specific location and within specific groups.

An utterance can only be deemed correct if it accounts for the fact that speaking to a friend in general is characterized by different language and gestural practices than speaking to a friend in temple or church. Likewise, formal communication in a lab setting is different than in an office setting because of diverse interpersonal and institutional constraints and social interactions.

If the field of culture, rather than the field of language, is the main focus for a curriculum, then these issues mean more than mere nods to cultural consciousness-raising or a community's identity. A learner must master cultural logics, not just linguistic ones—how individuals act, feel, negotiate, and believe within their C2 communities, professions, and goals, not just how they speak. Learners first must learn to match acts of cultural communication to situations (as *Standard 1.1* would insist), then at intermediate levels compare how forms of communication are chosen and enacted (*1.2*), and then produce such acts, in appropriate language and with appropriate cultural content (*1.3*).

Standard 2 for Language and Culture

| **CULTURES (original)**<br>**Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures** | **CULTURES (reread)**<br>**Gain Knowledge and Understanding of Other Cultures' Characteristic Structures and Points of View (Other= Alternate Groups, Times, Cultures).** |
|---|---|
| **Standard 2.1:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied. | **Standard 2.1:** Students demonstrate an understanding *about the cultural situations* studied, relationship between the epistemological practices and perspectives of the culture, as situated in particular, comprehensible sites. (Implies: knowledge of the social and pragmatic roles attributed to performer, audience, etc.). |
| **Standard 2.2:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied. | **Standard 2.2:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the *genre* studied *within the context of "otherness."* (Implies: knowledge of the artifacts, codes, practices, etc., that can be considered meaningful, used to create patterns of meaning and of the communities, groups, and institutions that can claim authority). |

The *Standards* optic rests on the premise that language exists in more than one dimension. When it is reframed to speak of the field of a C2, standards other than Communication assume more urgency, because a C2 also implicates specific knowledge bases, not just forms of communication. A culture curriculum, therefore, must give just as much systematic attention to *Standard 2* as it does to the first, building up social and historic codes as systematically as language.

To be sure, *Standard 2* for language targets language as implicated in culture knowledge, beyond language as (self-)expression and joining communities. A hypothetical Standard 2.1 for the study of culture must do more to build a learner's culture literacy. Again, this reframing reveals a tacit hierarchy. The original

*Standard 2.1* focuses on comprehension and replication—the ability to identify, for example, when formal or informal speech is called for, and how to use that speech to get information—and thus on who does what and how within a C2. *Standard 2.2,* in contrast, refers to a more complex cognitive negotiation—a more complex culture literacy—asking how particular artifacts of culture fit into its mindset and context, and what forms of incidental knowledge they convey within their C2 community.

These *Standards* can again be rewritten to direct the focus of a curriculum to the field of culture itself rather than to the culture of a C2's language. Standard 2 for the study of culture stresses the social and epistemological functions correlated with roles available within a specific C2 community, and the interests that are associated with them, namely the material facts and situations of a culture that an individual who registers as a culturally literate community member can negotiate. The learner has to learn not only the difference between formal and informal speech, but also what domains of formal culture exist in the target C2. This historical-cultural map of the targeted C2 culture that has more information than just the tag "formal" or "informal" does in sociolinguistics because it will include, for instance, the dress code and cultural expectations associated with each domain.

Again, there is a tacit alignment of Standard 2.1 with beginning levels of instruction, when learners need practice in matching roles and knowledge to the C2 site that is their curriculum's goal. They need to understand what lab assistants do in a French lab, and if (and how) those acts may be structured differently than in the C1; they need to consider what kinds of information they must have at their fingertips to seem credible, and if (and how) that information is stored, retrieved, parsed, or controlled differently than it would be in a lab in the U. S.

A reframed Standard 2.2 requires more complex insight into how particular practices (social, knowledge-based) are implicated into a culture's perspectives. That is, the individual learner would come to comprehend culture not just as a web of performances (e.g., a lab as sponsoring particular acts that produce knowledge that can be judged in various ways). That learner must also see how such performances can be mobilized to meet, appeal to, and even influence audiences' expectations, using various content elements from the culture, marked with appropriate semiotic choices. This Standard 2.2 thus emerges as requiring a learner to negotiate both the content and the context of culture consciously, not just to perform within its norms.

Note that this reframed standard still requires learners to acquire facts from the C2 (and, in the case of a site like a lab, not the traditional facts about history and cultural monuments). Yet in a culture curriculum, the arrangement and valuation of those facts within the C2 need to be objects of explicit instruction, and the essence of cultural literacy, not just knowledge. In a curriculum designed for students who will become lab interns in France, for example, the history of French chemistry might be much more important than French political history as reference points for the chemistry community and its interactions. In other words, this standard reframes the study of culture in almost Foucauldian terms, stressing how material culture, history, and semiotic resources work in systems with their own information value. Understanding a C2, then, means understanding its patterns; a language-centered curriculum fosters that understanding through explicit instruction in language, whereas a culture-centered curriculum does so through explicit instruction in language and other C2 systems simultaneously.

Standard 3 for Language and Culture

| **CONNECTIONS (original)**<br>**Connect With Other Disciplines and Acquire Information** | **CONNECTIONS (reread)**<br>**Connect With Other Social Perspectives/Communities and Acquire Information** |
|---|---|
| **Standard 3.1:** Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other disciplines through the foreign language. | **Standard 3.1:** Students reinforce and further their knowledge of other cultures through materials (artifacts, codes, etc.) made for the C2, in terms of structured cultural interactions and strategies for knowledge production (Implies: not just facts, but cognizance of how the facts are put together distinctively). |
| **Standard 3.2:** Students acquire information and recognize the distinctive viewpoints that are only available through the foreign language and its cultures. | **Standard 3.2:** Students acquire information about and recognize the distinctive viewpoints about society and culture through materials (artifacts, codes, etc.) made for the C2, in terms of structured cultural interactions and strategies for knowledge production (Implies: ability to identify texts, etc., put together for C2 in terms of that culture's pragmatics). |
| | [**Standard 3.3:** Producing in different structured communication situations according to those conventions to instantiate self as a "speaking subject" within that culture.] |

The third foreign language standard is most often associated with content-based instruction—with classrooms that use learners' existing knowledge and interests to drive the language learning. The original *Standard 3.1* stresses that a successful learner must use the FL to learn specific content areas; *Standard 3.2* stresses differences between source (a learner's C1) and target (C2) contexts that render such content intelligible.

What is often overlooked in this standard is that it shifts perspective radically away from what is modeled in *Standards 1* and *2*. It does not model language in pragmatic use as communication (*Standard 1*), or what the language in use correlates with or reveals about that C2 (*Standard 2*). Instead, *Standard 3* stresses disciplines—specialized language communities that have their own rules and that manage their own domains of language differently than does the language of a culture on the street. Therefore, this set of standards targets pragmatic competence and effectiveness within a specialized community, not within the C2 in general. The most common example might be found in the existence of separate curricula for classes like Business German or Spanish for the medical professions, which explicitly acknowledge that language is used distinctively in these disciplines, with its own rules and structures for knowledge.

As a standard for studying culture, then, the Connections standard refers less to communication or the knowledge base of a culture, and more to questions of disciplinarity and the sociology of knowledge, especially in a transnational context. The new Standard 3.1 models the strategic competencies involved in importing knowledge from a C2 back into the C1; it points to what a learner wants to know or acquire from the C2 and what competencies that learner will need to bring that information into the C1. A learner has to understand, for example, what the boundaries between religion and politics are in a culture, or what marks gender identity, before data on what it means to be religious or to be a woman can make sense and be negotiated. That learner might need to know how the discipline of linguistics is configured in Germany before texts on linguistics written in German make sense within the C1.

The new Standard 3.2 again moves from comprehension to production, pointing to the need for active comparison between specific knowledge communities in the C1 and the C2, without relying on false generalizations or stereotypes from the C1 imposed uncritically on the C2. There is no Standard 3.3 in the original, but within the framework of a culture-centered curriculum, there might be, for example, a requirement to produce a performance of some sort that corresponds to the framework of the C2 (e.g., plan a business meeting or an exhibition as the C2 would, accounting for the differences in that performance and one designed for the learner's C1). According to this definition a learner aiming at a lab internship ought to be able not only to describe lab practice in the target culture as a distinctive site for knowledge production, but also to use professional data from those labs, understanding the conditions and implications of their production and circulation.

The reframed Standards 1, 2, and 3 (Communication, Culture, and Connections) outline basic strategic literacies involved when a learner from a C1 learns to engage a C2. They suggest what kinds of pragmatic performances are required of an individual (in terms of communication skills, cultural knowledge, and the logical abilities to move between two variants of any one discipline or closed community). The curriculum designed to foster such cultural literacies will stress an individual learner's ability to perform within a C2, to know its distinctive reference points, and to compare structures and situations of the C2 (especially specialized communities or disciplines) with respect to those from the C1.

Standards logics, however, do not deal only with how an individual functions interculturally. The fourth and fifth categories, in fact, speak explicitly to issues of abstract or professional reasoning and thus to different problems to be negotiated across culture boundaries.

Standard 4 and Standard 5 for language and culture:

| **COMPARISONS (original)**<br>**Develop Insight into the Nature of Language and Culture** | **COMPARISONS (reread)**<br>**Develop Insight Into the Nature of Semiotic Systems in Relation to Culture as Expression of Group Interests** |
|---|---|
| **Standard 4.1:** Students demonstrate understanding of the nature of language through comparisons of the language studied and their own. | **Standard 4.1:** Students demonstrate understanding of cultural semiotics by comparing the same cultural function in two cultures or as made for two different audiences. |
| **Standard 4.2:** Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own. | **Standard 4.2:** Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of C1 and C2 communities enacting culture. |
| **COMMUNITIES (original)**<br>**Participate in Multilingual Communities at Home and Around the World** | **COMMUNITIES (reread)**<br>**Participate in Communities Associated with Cultures** |
| **Standard 5.1:** Students use the language both within and beyond the school setting. | **Standard 5.1:** Students understand cultural groups, their semiotics, and their social functions both within and beyond the school setting (as a scholarly concept, for readers, in bookstores, as guilds, as agents of social knowledge, etc.). |
| **Standard 5.2:** Students show evidence of becoming life-long learners by using the language for personal enjoyment and enrichment. | **Standard 5.2:** Students show evidence of becoming life-long cultural agents by identifying how to engage a cultural locus / community of experts to enhance personal and professional enjoyment and enrichment. |

Despite the fact that these two standards prescribe different settings for language use, *Standards 4* and *5* are closely related to culture learning; both describe aspects of field-independent thinking about culture, rather than pointing to the pragmatics of individuals entering a C2 (field-dependent thinking). The original *Standard 4* focuses not just on knowledge derived from specific communities in the C2, as in *Standard 3*, but specifically on what it means to shift between cultures. It requires the learner to be able to compare language in the abstract. *Standard 4.1* thus requires that language function be considered in more than pragmatic terms—that the learner understand the nature of language rather than its uses alone. Its parallel Standard 4.2 performs similar work in asking a learner to compare not just the form but also the content of two cultures' language acts.

If reread for the study of culture, this standard would require learners to compare systems from the C1 and the C2 in a general cultural context, not only as referenced to an individual's performance. Standard 4.1 suggests that learners must learn to situate their acts of understanding vis-à-vis a specific audience and its power/value relations on knowledge. Standard 4.2 pinpoints the kinds of technical analysis practiced by experts, including analyses that factor in how scholarly or critical discourses compete or reinforce each other. Overall, Standard 4 speaks to the field of culture in Bourdieu's terms, defined as a literacy focused on abstract generalizations rather than on the management of concrete contexts. The learner, therefore, understands practices within a cultural field as acts that make communities work and enable individuals to act.

If, for example, a C2 curriculum is designed to help learners engage the culture of science and scientists, then they will have to understand not only how scientists function, but also how technical reports are written, how they are presented in the typical colloquia, how they are evaluated for journals, and how they are defined as the legendary "minimum publishable unit" for professional success. These analyses thus converge with analyses of abstract social power at play in a cultural field.

In Standard 4, a learner must confront and understand networks as abstracts; in Standard 5, in contrast, that learner must understand these abstracts as potentially linked to power on the field of culture. That reframed Standard 5 for languages, the Communities standard, focuses not on how systems characterize the field of culture in the abstract, but rather on the communities which uphold and function with them. The original *Standard 5* speaks first of language communities "within and outside the school setting" (*5.1*), and then of a learner's active world engagement (*5.2*). Transposed into benchmarks for a culture-based curriculum, this standard defines conditions for the possibility of identity politics or performativity, including how power is structured and localized (Standard 5.1) and deployed or deployable (Standard 5.2). These standards point, for example, toward another side of learning science by requiring the C2 learner to go out, locate, and engage real C2 communities, and then to practice negotiating positions within them. Thus, where a language-centered curriculum focuses on the linguistic resources required for an individual to deliver a standard speech in an appropriate register, a culture-centered one will also point to the power differentials involved in attendant Q&A sessions and social gatherings as the speechmaker tries to assert a role as expert.

Reframed Standards 4 and 5 thus move beyond the acts, words, signs, and other cultural systems at play, and into the realm of disciplines as particular fields within culture that sponsor distinct performances. What this implies can be clarified by reference to models for learning like Bloom's Taxonomy (or in any of its many successors after 1956). Learning happens not only in the cognitive domain but also in affective and psychomotor ones—as abstracts, as part of individual minds, and through the body. Moreover, that learning proceeds from comprehension—not only acquiring knowledge and attesting comprehension of that knowledge but also applying it to production namely, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of how systems work. These characteristic acts of knowledge are also acts of culture by means of language, not just language acts.

If an undergraduate major curriculum is defined around language alone, or by taking culture up as content elements ancillary to language, it can often lack explicit address to the upper levels of learning as defined by Bloom's, or to the complex culture negotiations expressed in Standards 4 and 5. Taking acts of culture rather than language as the center of such a curriculum will also help implicate the learner's affective and psychomotor domains of learning, not only their cognitive ones.

## The Curricular Implications: The Value of a Heuristic

The five reread standards outlined here make the case for the study of culture as a very different enterprise than the familiar language-based curriculum. To construct a curriculum that satisfies the demands outlined by these reread standards will clearly require a different planning strategy, focused not just on the bottom-up learning enshrined in many undergraduate language sequences (particularly in lower divisions) but also on large patterns in the field of culture that emerge in pragmatic negotiations and abstract systems alike.

The first decision required in a revised planning process, as already noted, must be what culture (cultural locus, group, institution, site) will be targeted as reachable, desirable, and feasible—or absolutely necessary—for learners to look toward as their target in the field of a C2. That decision speaks directly to what a particular student group will do with its language competence—from tourism (meeting people on an everyday level) and familiar forms of self-expression (what students do in the C2) to professional purposes (internships, professions) and employment (institutional behaviors). In this sense, all language learning will best be seen as language for special purposes, requiring learners to acquire distinctive patterns of competence or cultural literacy. How far an individual learner will progress toward that C2 competence will depend on where the learners start, the available resources and timeframe, the specific outcomes deemed desirable, and the kind of literacy possible for a specified student population to achieve (comprehension or production, everyday or expert).

After particular domain(s) of a C2 is (are) specified as targets for a curriculum, then appropriate texts must be chosen as models of the literacies to be taught, practiced, and learned. Some of those texts will be conventional readings (from books or from the web); others must model performances with the target culture's various sign systems, including clips from movies that simulate interpersonal interactions, newsreel footage documenting how individuals interact with events or institutions, literary texts modeling expressive language, newspapers for everyday registers of topical language, and scholarly texts for more complex registers of language on the same topics.

Depending on the C2 domain targeted, a culture curriculum may not even use much literature, or film, or music. A curriculum focusing on the culture of science, for example, will need to identify models not just for scientific language but also for how scientific communities operate—their languages, their uses of text, their social markers, and the like. In consequence, that curriculum need not necessarily even address the kind of colloquial language used in feature films, nor the extended bodies of prose represented in a novel; rather, it might use a scene in a laboratory from a film or novel including scientists as characters, representing that culture and the situations in which its scientific knowledge is produced and transacted. In terms of the *Standards* framework, a curriculum targeting the C2's science communities will heavily emphasize the Communities, Cultures, and Connections standards, rather than Comparisons—operating first and foremost within pragmatic frameworks in which scientists need to collaborate rather than theorize about how collaboration differs in the two cultures.

As an alternate example, if a culture curriculum is to be designed to prepare a group of students to study art in Paris, it must structure its tasks to meet the criteria set by the hypothetical culture standards just outlined. To fulfill the Communications standard, it must not only practice verbal communication but also other forms of communication particular to the art student environment in Paris. Those forms of communication might include the study of how teachers correct art students; the language of art criticism; editing symbols; abbreviations for colors, tools, and canvas; and grading scales. They must also include the semiotic systems that support the verbal communications within the art-teaching environment or that are used at this particular site to transfer information in culture-specific ways. For instance, it might be critical in that environment to know if physical dimensions are given in width-height order, or the reverse, to know how to count to 10 on fingers in the order used by Europeans, how loudly it is appropriate for superiors and inferiors to speak, or that paper sizes are given in terms like A4. The art community requires fluency in these systems of communication (semiotic, only incidentally verbal).

The Culture standard's optic on that curricular decision requires intensive study of the specific social formations, institutions, practices, and attitudes associated with the practice of art in the C2. What does a studio setup look like? What tools are available, and what are they called? What status do various media have? What products are known as "professional grade"? What acts of professional communication are needed—art tours or interviews? Exhibition catalogues or videos? Where does one buy art supplies? How do galleries, museums, and exhibition spaces work? What are copyright laws or tax laws associated with the ownership, purchase, or sale of art, each of which affects attitudes about connoisseurship? What are the periods associated with art history study?

The Connections standard will require learners in this model curriculum to practice deciphering not only the language of the C2, but also its artifacts. What does it mean if art criticism exists in mainstream newspapers, or only on the radio? What kinds of information are found in standard reference books? What kinds of production, performances, and interactions define an artist in the C2, and why? Can an artist launch a painting (sell it, advertise it) in the C2 using tactics other than persuasive speech or a gallery show? On the more abstract level, the Comparisons standard demands that a learner be able to provide explicit commentary on what is the same or different about being an artist in the C1 and the C2. The Communities standard requires practica—that a learner practice actually negotiating an artist's identity within the C2 context.

This curriculum also requires specific attention to text choice so that the chosen domains of culture are modeled for learners who need to see what acts of culture can be produced, comprehended, or circulated in engagements within a C2. Tasks fostering Communications standard learning require authentic models from the C2, for example, so that not just language choice, but also social conventions and sites are rendered comprehensible. The artist TV interview, for example, has a different form in Europe than it does on U.S. talk shows. What a catalogue of art supplies looks like in two cultures may be different; the formal description of a painting in any era has specific formulae that must be mastered. Greeting patrons may involve different kinds of social interactions that can be modeled by reference to scenes from movies or feature video stories of art openings. A learner confronts these models by looking not only for specific features of language for art purposes but also for the appropriate body language to use when approaching art clients, and/or the semiotics of art marketing.

The Culture standard requires a curriculum to focus on artifacts produced by and for the C2, and especially for the attitudes held by their users; the Connections standard requires that the learner differentiate art markets in the C2 from those in the C1. The Comparisons standard requires students to set up and present, not just comprehend, formal comparisons of artifacts, identities, acts of communication and self-expression, and user domains; the Communities standard implies that comprehension and knowledge be correlated with pragmatics of action, behavior and attitudes by individuals who wish to not only to know the C2 but also to function within it. Implementing such activities will thus require a curriculum designer to pay strict attention to multiple elements of a culture's literacy.

Assessment emerges here as a critical guarantor of such a curriculum's integrity. A learner in a culture curriculum as just sketched should never assume that full credit be granted for an utterance or performance in terms of grammatical correctness and/or content correctness alone. Tasks conforming to the Communications standard must, for instance, be assessed not just in terms of grammatical correctness but also as successful sociocultural negotiations—factoring in pragmatics, not just grammar, and including semiotic systems beyond language.

Culture and Connection standards set requirements that can only be met and assessed when learners figure out how and when to use reference books, not just if they know particular items of information. Culture standard tasks focus on content knowledge about the C2; Connections standard tasks, focus on performances about the C2, usually within the C1 context. Comparisons standard tasks factor in the sites on which activities occur, their cultural history and conditioning (habits and values, the negotiation of cultural bias, and hence issues of rhetorical organization and effectiveness). Communities standard tasks move learners toward critical and scholarly activities that will mark them as members of specialized communities, set off from the general public.

A curriculum can meet such goals only when it is structured comprehensively, starting with beginning levels and continuing into the upper division; such goals can be met only in a curriculum that starts with beginning levels and continues into upper divisions, not accepting any fundamental disjunction between lower- and upper-division learning.[5] This kind of curriculum will require new publicity about the implications of the foreign language major, once it is construed as more than a gateway to study abroad. Students will have to be assessed not only for language but also for competence in pragmatics and sociolinguistics, history, demographics, and domains of social practice; correct sentences, informational prose and reports in the form of culture capsules, and polite conversation must yield to the kinds of sophisticated performances that exist outside the sheltered environments of classrooms (including research and professional-level writing); personal expression must recede behind problem solving; and assessment needs to factor in the kinds of social power and position issues that are the preferred topics of today's upper-division curricula.

## Some Conclusions: From a Culture Curriculum to Cultural Studies

In this chapter I have outlined representative challenges inherent in developing a culture curriculum, while arguing that the language curricula as presently constituted must surrender their willful isolation within the typical postsecondary institution and redefine themselves as fostering interdisciplinary learning in the humanities—as the kind of cultural studies curriculum that does not yet exist.

To define what might fill this gap, the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages recommended, in May 2007, that the goal of language learning sequences must be made more ambitious, encompassing translingual and transcultural competence. Yet, in a recent set of reactions to that report published in *The Modern Language Journal*, Chad Wellmon summarizes the problem inherent in that recommendation, noting that even as we embrace cultural studies we have not redefined how language might be seen as key to cultural studies: "We have taken on culture as or object of analysis but have only now begun to consider what the *formal* and *functional* aspects of language might have to do with such a study" (Wellmon, 2008, pp. 293–294). He continues:

> Instead of embracing the amorphous imperatives of *interdisciplinarity* and simply promoting interdepartmental collaboration, the report begs questions of disciplinarity.... Foreign language departments organized around national literatures or a vague notion of cultural studies are not in a position to pursue translingual and transcultural competence as a pedagogical goal.... Ultimately, I wonder if the authors of this report are imagining a cultural/language studies field that would be a more radical cultural studies with a linguistic emphasis ... [which] would have to encourage constant attention to the particularities of how languages function and mean with respect to particular cultures. (p. 295)

Circumstance seems now to require that we take up culture, and hence a different logic, as the focus adequate for a newly conceived language curriculum. The rereading of the *Standards* presented here suggests that a language-based culture curriculum ought to teach not only language but also the space within which individuals exercise identity and agency, with respect to their target C2's distinctive use of artifacts and materiality, gesture, taste and power, politics and identity with their various faces. Such recommendations, however, also contain in them a covert threat, namely that the language teacher as traditionally defined may no longer have much credibility if that teacher cannot connect language learning to other specific content domains to construct an interdisciplinary and intercultural project of learning within the undergraduate curriculum of an institution.[6]

This statement might sound as if I were recommending that the foreign language curriculum converge with cultural studies as defined from a social science perspective:

> Arising amidst the turmoil of the 1960s, cultural studies is composed of elements of Marxism, new historicism, feminism, gender studies, anthropology, studies of race and ethnicity, film theory, sociology, urban studies, public policy studies, popular culture studies, and postcolonial studies: those fields that focus on social and cultural forces that either create community or cause division and alienation. (Guerin, Labor, Morgan, Reesman, & Willingham, 1999, p. 240)

Yet cultural studies have another dimension, derived from French structuralism, as Jonathan Culler underscores in discussing its "double ancestry" "culture as an expression of the people and culture as imposition on the people" (Culler, 1997, p. 44). That approach to cultural studies clearly converges with the study of language as part of the field of culture. Yet today's cultural studies has all too often been identified as synonymous with interdisciplinarity,[7] as Wellmon noted, or restricted to studying cultural artifacts as reflecting power relations—as products of the culture's value systems, reproducing its ideologies and marginalizing individuals. In rereading the *Standards for foreign language learning* in the 21st Century as "Standards for the study of culture," I have argued that the *Standards* can counter this trend as well, modeling how to accomplish a synthesis of linguistic and cultural studies proper.

Overall, that work has not been accomplished in present reading and implementations of *Standards*-based learning. Some linguistic approaches to curriculum development have begun to take on the challenge of structuring a curriculum around notions of culture, perhaps the most widely known of which is outlined by Claire Kramsch (2000). Yet Kramsch's model remains resolutely wedded to the domain of discourse analysis, stressing almost exclusively the role of the speaker/writer in joining culture through language rather than asking what specific demands a chosen domain within a C2 will force onto language. She does not move to reclaim the logics of culture that create such speakers/writers, nor how semiotics or domain-specific knowledges intertwine with speakers' identities or with language itself. Finally, she neglects the analyses of power that are the purview today of what is called critical discourse analysis, a politically engaged form of the sociolinguistics of texts in all genres and media, associated with names like Norman Fairclough (1992), Teun A. van Dijk (1997), and Ruth Wodak (1989).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is centrally concerned with issues of social power within groups, and with identity politics enacted through language.

However, as a linguistics-based model for analyzing culture, even CDA lacks attention to a feature that the present chapter has identified as critical within a culture curriculum, namely the role of local knowledge in specialized groups, as producing affects associated with individual identities. Beyond CDA, there are few contemporary linguistic approaches to culture that model specialized domains of knowledge as central to culture. One exception is Anna Wierzbicka (2003), who has discussed in several volumes how words open out a lifeworld, thus making linguistic analyses of critical usages into culture analyses, albeit focused on how language creates a space of meaning that may be politicized, not on individual identities.

The *Standards* project, however, has the potential to move us beyond these existing linguistic models, just as it has moved us past cultural studies, to show how "translinguistic and transcultural" language learning might be staged and practiced. Perhaps the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century* offer a more comprehensive model for teaching and learning than has to date been acknowledged, embedding language in the cultural field and not only within domains of linguistic performance.

## Notes

1. Note that I use the term *culture literacy* to apply to these multiple semiotic systems and how they work, not *cultural literacy*, which has been most frequently applied to being able to participate in one's C1. Arens (2008) offers one model for a possible curriculum reconceived in terms of one kind of culture literacy rather than language, taking genre as a reference point. Swaffar (2006) offers a parallel reconceptualization of a curriculum articulated across levels of communicative competence.
2. Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) has been realized in many forms. For an overview of early ones, see: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html> [accessed 30 September 2007].
3. See Byrnes (2005) for a brief overview of what this kind of literacy involves.
4. For information on the Rhode Island program, see Grandin (2000)].
5. For information on the Georgetown curricular reform as such an extended curricular sequence, see Byrnes (2005).
6. See the commentary by a dean on the position of language teaching that does *not* join the major curriculum: (Lariviere 2002).
7. This problem is documented all too clearly in volumes on the state of my own discipline, German studies, by Denham et al. (1997), McCarthy and Schneider (1996), Brandhauer et al. (2005), or Hohendahl (2003). More problematic is a widespread assumption: "Cultural studies can become merely an intellectual smorgasbord in which a critic blithely combines fascinating texts and objects in response to other texts and objects without adequately researching and explaining what makes a 'culture' in the first place" (Guerin et al, 1999, p. 244).

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