

AAUSC Issues in Language Program Direction

From Thought to Action: Exploring Beliefs and Outcomes in the Foreign Language Program

H. Jay Siskin
Editor

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Exploring Beliefs and Outcomes in the Foreign Language Program**
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Chapter 3

The Impact of Teachers' Beliefs on Implementing Curricular Changes

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The Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1996, 1999)¹ consists of 11 content standards subsumed under five broad goal areas that describe what K–16 (kindergarten through university) students should know and be able to do as a result of foreign language (FL) study. These goals state that students will:

- Communicate in languages other than English.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
- Connect with other disciplines and acquire information.
- Develop insight into the nature of language and culture.
- Participate in multilingual communities at home and abroad.

Although the standards document is not a curriculum guide per se, inferences that distinguish standards-based curricula from more traditional FL curricula can be drawn (see Table 1). The focus of a curriculum that is guided by the standards is on what students will be able to do rather than on what will be taught. The learning outcomes are based on a weave of curricular elements (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999, p. 33) in which the five goals identified previously are interlaced with seven curricular elements (i.e., the language system, cultural knowledge, communication strategies, critical thinking skills, learning strategies, other subject areas, and technology). To provide students with the rich curricular experiences suggested by the weave, content goes beyond the textbook to incorporate interdisciplinary topics as well as materials related to students' personal interests and prior knowledge.

In a curriculum that is guided by the standards, communication is conceptualized as a framework of communicative modes (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999, p. 37) in which three communicative domains—interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational—are defined. The framework highlights the interdependence between culture and communication and includes knowledge of the language system. Implications suggested by the framework are that students have many opportunities to interact with each other and the teacher in the language, to present information about the language and target cultures, and to interpret authentic texts (i.e., materials produced by members of a language/culture group for members of the same group) that are appropriate for students' level of proficiency. Instruction on the language system is embedded in and supports communication and incorporates sociolinguistic and sociocultural elements.

Table 1
 Concepts Behind Standards-Based and Traditional Foreign Language Curriculum

Standards-based	Traditional
Focus on what students will be able to do	Focus on what will be taught
Broad content suggested by five goal areas interlaced with seven curricular elements	Content defined by the textbook
Communication viewed as consisting of three interconnected modes—interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational	Communication viewed as four separate skills—speaking, listening, reading, and writing
View that culture and language are interdependent	View of culture as a separate fifth skill
Expanded view of the language system to include sociolinguistic and cultural elements	View of the language system limited to grammar, vocabulary, and sound system
View of learning the language system as a means of communicating, gaining cultural knowledge, and connecting with other disciplines	View of learning the language system as the goal of foreign language instruction
Competence in the language achieved by using the language to communicate in a wide range of activities	Competence in the language achieved by learning an ordered set of rules about the language system

Since the publication of the standards, virtually every state has realigned its FL frameworks, and numerous school districts within each state have redesigned their curricula to be consistent with the standards (Phillips, 1999, p. 2). Nonetheless, even though “many teachers and professors at all levels have wholeheartedly embraced [the standards] . . . there is less real change in materials and behavior than one might imagine” (Dorwick & Glass, 2003, pp. 592–593). To understand this paucity of change, it is instructive to turn to research on teacher beliefs. This body of literature suggests that there is an interactive relationship between teachers’ beliefs and teachers’ classroom practices (e.g., Burns, 1996; Johnson, 1994; Stipek, Givvin, Salmon, & MacGyvers, 2001) and that teachers’ beliefs influence the extent to which teachers are amenable to educational reforms (Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991; Niederhauser & Stoddart, 2001). Therefore, to effect the curricular innovations proposed by the standards, it is crucial to consider the beliefs that FL teachers hold about the constructs that underpin the standards.

Review of the Literature

The investigation of teachers' beliefs and the relationships between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices has become, over the last 30 years, an area of increasing interest in general education research. (For reviews of the literature, see Clark & Peterson, 1986; Fang, 1996; Richardson, 1996; and Thompson, 1992). This research parallels advances made in cognitive psychology and is predicated on the tenet that teaching is a professional activity entailing complex and demanding cognitive processes such as creativity and originality in thinking, problem solving, and reflection (Hativa & Goodyear, 2002). Teachers are perceived as "rational professionals, who, like other professionals such as physicians, make judgments and carry out decisions in an uncertain, complex environment" (Shavelson & Stern, 1981, p. 426).

Williams and Burden (1997) suggest that teachers' beliefs provide "an affective filter which screens, redefines, distorts, or reshapes subsequent thinking and information processing" and that "their beliefs about learning will affect everything that they do in the classroom" (pp. 56–57). The notion of an affective filter is grounded in Kelly's (1955) personal construct theory. This theory emphasizes the impact that past experiences have on people's interpretation of current situations and information as well as on people's understanding of future events.

Kelly began with the premise of "man-as-scientist" constantly seeking to make sense of the world. People carry out their own personal experiments, construct hypotheses, and actively seek to confirm or disconfirm them. In this way, they build up theories about the kind of place the world is and the kind of people that live in it. These personal theories, or *constructs*, are rather like templates that people place over their impressions of any new events or individuals with which they come into contact in order to establish some kind of reasonable "fit" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 27).

Foreign Language Teachers' Beliefs about the Standards

In the last several years, three survey studies have been conducted to identify teachers' beliefs about the standards. Bartz and Singer (1996) sent a questionnaire to three groups—all state education agency FL specialists, a 5% random sample of school administrators in Indiana, and a 10% random sample of K–12 Indiana FL teachers—about their perceptions of the role of national and state standards. Although the surveys sent to each group varied somewhat, each survey included five common statements, three of which are relevant to the study described in this article. First, all groups agreed that the standards' five goals define a desirable and attainable vision for FL education in the United States. For the second statement, all groups agreed that the standards sufficiently define the content necessary to achieve each goal. All three groups also agreed that national standards are important and should be used as the basis for curriculum development. Bartz and Singer

concluded that the results indicated an open-mindedness of the FL profession toward potential change. The authors cautioned, however, that

[t]he crucial question is not whether one is aware of the standards but rather whether one agrees with the vision, philosophy, content, and pedagogical implications that national standards set forth, and ultimately whether they will cause the students' acquisition of skills and proficiency to improve. (p. 159)

As part of the Nebraska Foreign Language Standards/Frameworks Project, Bruning, Flowerday, and Trayer (1999) administered the Conceptions of Foreign Language Teaching Scale to two groups: FL teachers who had participated in a graduate class and a random sample of Nebraska FL teachers who may or may not have participated in the 30-plus Frameworks Project activities. The teaching scale consists of 20 paired statements and was designed to measure the degree to which teachers view FL instruction in terms of traditional versus standards-based instruction. Respondents are asked to choose the statement from each pair that represents their own instructional practices. In each dyad, one statement reflects traditional instruction while the other reflects standards-based instruction. For example, respondents choose between using a textbook as a "backup" resource for classroom instruction or using a textbook as the primary resource for teaching. The results of the data analysis indicated that the beliefs of the teachers who had participated in the graduate course had shifted toward a standards-based teaching philosophy and that teachers who had participated in greater numbers of Frameworks activities had a tendency to embrace a standards-based philosophy as opposed to teachers who had participated in fewer or no activities. Bruning, Flowerday, and Trayer conclude that involvement in professional development activities may result in a change of beliefs about teaching and learning.

In a study that sought to determine the extent to which FL teachers' beliefs are consistent with major constructs underlying the standards, Allen (2002) mailed the Foreign Language Education Questionnaire (FLEQ) to a random sample of 1,200 FL teachers. The FLEQ consists of 32 statements loaded over five subscales: (1) student profile, (2) curricular elements, (3) textbook/language system, (4) language of instruction, and (5) grade level (see Table 6 for sample statements). Results of the data analysis found that respondents' beliefs were consistent with four of the five subscales. However, teachers were undecided about the third subscale, that is, the role of the textbook in the curriculum and the emphasis given to teaching the language system (i.e., the grammar, the vocabulary, and the pronunciation of the target language). Allen concluded that teachers may benefit from opportunities that help them redefine the content of their FL programs and from opportunities to experiment and interpret standards-based instructional models in the context of their own teaching environments.

One of the most valuable outcomes of survey studies, such as those described above is that the results point to areas that merit further investigation. The biggest shortcoming, however, is that they cannot take into account the respondents' personal experiences or the influence of contextual factors on the responses. Moreover, survey responses are not *necessarily* a true reflection of what the respondents

do in the classroom. Research conducted in FL classrooms with in-service teachers that examines the consistency between what teachers say or think they do and their actual classroom practices would provide valuable insight as schools and universities in the United States transition to the teaching paradigm suggested by the standards.

The case study described in the following pages investigated the relationship between a FL teacher's beliefs and her classroom practices, particularly in regard to the role of the textbook in the curriculum, the curricular weave, and the emphasis given to teaching the language system. The study focused on those areas because Allen's (2002) study with the FLEQ found that the respondents' beliefs about the textbook and the language system may be impediments to implementing standards-based instruction and because incorporating the curricular weave in FL instruction would impact how the teacher used the textbook.

Goals of the Study

This study sought to: (1) uncover one secondary French teacher's beliefs and classroom practices regarding the role of the textbook in the curriculum, the curricular weave, and the emphasis given to teaching the language system; (2) examine the relationship between the teacher's beliefs in those areas and her classroom practices, and (3) draw implications for effecting change in classroom FL instruction.

Methodology

Participant

A sense of trust and rapport between participant and researcher is of extreme importance in case studies; therefore, I decided to work with a teacher with whom I had already developed a professional relationship. I wanted an experienced teacher for the study because veteran teachers have had time to develop their own beliefs about teaching and learning within the context of their school and community. I chose to observe a French teacher because my FL is French and I thought that knowing the language of instruction would facilitate my understanding of what went on in the classroom. Julie,² a high school teacher with 29 years of teaching experience, agreed to participate in the study. She holds a bachelor's degree in French and, throughout her career, has taught only French. The year prior to the study, she had been given a sabbatical during which time she attended university French classes, participated in regional and national FL conferences, and organized a workshop on current assessment measures.

Table 2 provides statistics for the school in which the study was conducted. It is the only secondary school in a small town of fewer than 10,000 residents. The school enrolls barely 500 students in Grades 9–12. The student body is homogeneous with 95% of the students being white. This is comparable to the state's average of white students making up 94% of student enrollment in Grades 9–12. The proportion of students from low-income families is 22%, which is nearly equal to the state's average of 21% of students in Grades 9–12.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

School type	Grades	Other languages taught in the school	Locale	Enrollment (approximate)	Students per teacher	Ethnicity	% of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch ¹
public	9-12	Spanish	small town (population 9,123)	504	11.8	95% white	22%

¹Statistic most frequently used to indicate socioeconomic level.

Data Collection

The data for the study came from multiple sources: (1) the school’s FL curriculum guide; (2) nonparticipant observations (Krathwohl, 1993) of nine class sessions; (3) the administration of the FLEQ; and (4) four interviews, each of which lasted between 60 and 90 minutes.

Curriculum Guide

I examined the FL curriculum guide to see how the department defined curriculum and what was expected of the students. It consisted only of content and assessments; no specific programmatic outcomes were identified. The content was made up of lists of grammatical structures and vocabulary. The assessments included vocabulary quizzes, teachers’ observations, evaluations of students’ writing, role plays, and chapter tests. During the year prior to the study, Julie had developed standards and benchmarks; but they had not yet been incorporated in the curriculum guide. They were based on the Standards for Foreign Language Learning and included five categories, each with several subtopics: (1) interpretive communication (listening, reading), (2) interpersonal communication (conversations, questions, opinions, problem solving), (3) presentational communication (oral presentations, speeches, directions, recounting of events, forms of writing), (4) cultural practices (patterns of interaction, cultural activities, beliefs and attitudes), and (5) cultural products (objects and symbols, contributions, geography).

Classroom Observations

Table 3 summarizes the data collection procedure for the classroom observations. The class that I observed was a third-year French class composed of 14 juniors and seniors. It began at 7:55 a.m. and met on consecutive days for 65 minutes. Julie took 13 days to implement the chapter, but I did not observe the day that was devoted to an in-class writing assignment, the day students took the unit test, and two days when the class was shortened to less than a half hour because

of other events in the school. In all, I observed nine class sessions for a total of 567 minutes. I took extensive field notes during each of my observations, audiotaped six of the nine classes, and videotaped two other classes.

Table 3
Data Collection

Observation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Field notes	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Audiotaped	•	•	•	•			•		•
Videotaped						•		•	
Time	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65

Administration of the FLEQ

Prior to the first class observation, I administered the FLEQ³ (Allen, 2002) to elicit Julie's beliefs about major constructs underlying the standards. For purposes of the present study, only 12 statements taken from the curricular elements and the textbook/language system subscales were considered. Those statements can be found in Table 6.

Interviews

Before making the first classroom observation, I interviewed Julie to elicit background information about her own FL learning and teaching experiences. Among other questions, I asked her to describe her ideal FL learning environment, her teaching style, resources available to her, and her planning. The interview was audiotaped and lasted approximately 90 minutes. I conducted two additional interviews based on videotapes of the sixth and the eighth class observations. During those interviews, Julie was asked to pause the videotape at any time to comment on what she was thinking, explain the choices she had made for the classroom activities, or add commentary to what she saw on the videotape. Woods (1996), who used this stimulated recall method as one means of collecting data in his study of English as a second language (ESL) teachers' beliefs, explained that the goal is "to use the moment as a concrete point to elicit talk about the teaching in general" (p. 28). After all of the data had been collected and analyzed, I conducted a fourth interview with Julie. It lasted approximately 60 minutes and was audiotaped. During this interview, I asked her to expand on some of her previous comments and to address apparent discrepancies among her responses to the FLEQ, her classroom practices, and her comments in the prior interviews.

Data Analysis and Results

Classroom Observations

I transcribed the eight audio/videotaped classes, which, including my field notes from all nine classes, resulted in 104 pages of data. Drawing on data analysis

strategies suggested in Marshall and Rossman (1989) and Krathwohl (1993), I devised a coding system to gain a picture of Julie's overall instructional style. Using that system and the time intervals I had marked in my field notes, I categorized the observed teaching time in terms of:

- Type of activity based on learning goal (e.g., vocabulary acquisition, interpersonal communication, interpretive communication)
- Percentage of class time devoted to each activity type
- Pattern of encounter (i.e., teacher-fronted, pair work, individual work)

Table 4 illustrates the category of activities and the percentage of class time devoted to each category. Julie's teaching was thematic and contextualized. Overall she took 3% of the total instructional time to create and periodically reestablish the context. The basic format of her instruction followed the pattern of "recall students' prior knowledge, introduce the vocabulary, or more frequently, the new grammatical structure, and then engage the students in some sort of activity or exercise from the textbook or her files to apply the targeted structure." The largest proportion of class time (35%) was devoted to grammar; 11% was spent on vocabulary. Nearly one-third of the time (27%) was devoted to interpretive communication during which students read information from the textbook. No class time was devoted to presentational communication during the nine days that I observed. The time that students had in class for interpersonal communication with a partner was very limited (1%). In fact, students said very little; and when they did speak, it was typically, at most, a short sentence. Activities classified as "other" in Table 4 accounted for 12% of the total class time and included announcements, warm-up questions, time for previewing homework, time for working on homework, and instructions for the open-ended assessment.

Table 4
Proportion of Total Class Time by Activity Type

Category of activity	Percentage of total class time
Vocabulary	11
Assessment	6
Interpretive communication (cultural in context)	27
Interpersonal communication (oral only)	1
Presentational communication	0
Culture (other than interpretive communication)	4
Grammar	35
Establishing context	3
Pronunciation	1
Other	12

The students were engaged in teacher-fronted activities for a total of 72% of the observed class time. This time included establishing context, asking students questions about readings and homework, conducting comprehension checks, providing grammar explanations, and conducting whole-class oral practice of grammar and vocabulary. One percent of class time was spent doing activities where students worked together to achieve a specific goal, such as asking each other questions. Individual class time (14%) included listening comprehension, reading silently, working on grammar exercises from worksheets or the textbook, and completing assessments (see Table 5).

Table 5
Proportion of Total Class Time by Pattern of Encounter

Pattern	Teacher-fronted	Pair work	Individual work
Percentage	72%	1%	14%

Note: The time spent on the activity type labeled “other” in Table 4 is not considered here.

Responses on the FLEQ

Table 6 lists the 12 statements from the FLEQ that specifically address the textbook, the language system, and the standards’ curricular weave. Note, as indicated in the second column of the table, that some statements were written to be consistent with the standards while other statements contradict the concepts underlying the standards. The third column indicates whether Julie agreed (yes) or disagreed with the statement (no). As illustrated in the table, all but two of Julie’s responses were consistent with the standards. Unlike what is suggested by the standards document, Julie believed that the major curricular focus is on the textbook and that nearly all class time is devoted to teaching the language system.

Table 6
Statements Regarding the Textbook, the Curricular Weave, and the Language System

Statements	Consistent with the standards?	Julie’s responses ¹
The major curricular focus is on the textbook.	no	yes
Nearly all class time is devoted to teaching the language system.	no	yes
The primary focus of class time is on vocabulary and grammar.	no	no
The teacher’s role is to help students learn what is in the textbook.	no	no
Cultural instruction is second to that of vocabulary and grammar.	no	no

Table 6 (continued)

Statements	Consistent with the standards?	Julie's responses ¹
The focus of assessment is on students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.	no	no
Cultural learning objectives and assessments are just as systematic as language system objectives and assessments.	yes	yes
The foreign language teacher provides opportunities for interdisciplinary learning.	yes	yes
Some time is devoted to teaching students how to use specific communication strategies.	yes	yes
Foreign language programs include opportunities for students to access a variety of technologies.	yes	yes
The foreign language class is designed to promote the use of critical thinking.	yes	yes
Foreign language teachers plan instruction on how to use specific learning strategies.	yes	yes

¹ yes = agrees with the statement; no = disagrees with the statement.

Interviews

I transcribed the four audiotaped interviews, which resulted in 72 pages of data. Through iterative readings of the transcriptions, I utilized the process of content analysis (Krathwohl, 1993) to identify Julie's beliefs about the role of the textbook in the curriculum, the standards' curricular weave, and teaching the language system.

Beliefs about the Role of the Textbook in the Curriculum

Over the course of the interviews, it became apparent that Julie's textbook defines the curriculum. In planning her instruction, Julie explained that she starts with a chapter's content and decides what she will include based on the chapter's overall theme.

For example, in my French II book right now, one of the things that they've [the textbook authors] included, they think that the students should be introduced to and learn right now is the difference between *c'est* and *il est*. Well, they're already doing [several other grammar points]. It's too much. . . . Plus, it's not important to everything else they're teaching anyway. . . . It's thrown in there, it seems to me, and I'm not going to do it. You know, if it fits with the thematic unit I'm doing, then we're going to do it. But, if it's not fitting in, well then get [rid of it].

After identifying the specific content in the way described above, Julie then “builds on, adds to,” and “supplements” the material in the textbook. In addition to including grammar practice materials from sources other than the textbook, Julie said that she may add on to the content by including more vocabulary and “enrich” the cultural content with stories from her own experiences in France.

Just as the department’s FL curriculum guide does not explicitly state what students should know and be able to do at the completion of each level of language learning, Julie does not identify learning goals prior to beginning each chapter. Her remark that she “teaches with the end in mind” suggests that her instruction is guided by the final assessment and that she is aware, at least implicitly, of the need to identify specific learning objectives. During one of the interviews, she stated, “Another thing that I need to do is to see how my . . . outcomes, the things I’m expecting, how well it is aligning with my curriculum.”

Beliefs about the Standards’ Curricular Weave

During one of the interviews, Julie indicated that she believes the standards’ curricular weave represents “good teaching” and that she includes the weave’s elements in her classroom instruction. Although she admitted that she is not always “conscious of doing those things,” she easily provided examples that illustrated how she incorporated four of the elements. First, for technology, she uses videos and CDs and integrates Web sites into certain lessons (such as taking a virtual visit of a comic book museum in Belgium and perusing catalogs on the Christian Dior site). Her students use technology for certain projects (such as video and PowerPoint).

In regard to culture, Julie commented as follows:

Culture is such an important part of language. And I think that, you know, I do culture and I don’t even know that I’m doing culture sometimes. . . . So much of what you do is culture, but you wouldn’t say, oh this is culture. No, this is vocabulary. Well, no, it’s culture too. . . . So many things are intertwined that you really have to separate them out and see . . . this is that or the other.

The third element of the weave to which she referred in the interviews is critical thinking. Julie believes that “learning language is a critical process in itself Certainly, they’re developing . . . thinking skills that they never would have done before. So, I think in some ways, that’s just part of language learning.”

Finally, in regard to interdisciplinary learning, Julie commented that it is “an emphasis in education today.” She commented on how pleased she was that the students were making connections to things they were learning in other classes.

Teaching the Language System

Julie perceives a FL as

[a] connection or an extension of our own native language. [Yet] it’s a whole new system of communicating. Because there are things that

relate to your own [language]. I suppose it's like an artist who is perhaps a painter, but also a sculptor. This person can express himself in one medium and also another medium.

Julie believes that learning a FL in a classroom setting is about communication. Teaching the language system—grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation—is subordinate to communication. In her words, “The major focus is learning vocabulary, learning grammar. . . . [But] it's not just grammar for grammar's sake, and it's not vocabulary for vocabulary sake. . . . It has to be used to communicate. . . . It can't be just learning those things in isolation.”

Julie believes in providing her students not only with grammar exercises but also with communicative practice.

[T]he two have to go hand in hand. . . . They [students] have to have a sense of how language works, and how [they're] going to make it work so that [they're] saying it correctly, or at least so that someone can understand [them].

Relationship between Beliefs and Practices

There is a strong alignment between Julie's beliefs about the role of the textbook in the curriculum, as suggested by her responses to the FLEQ and her comments during the interviews, and the way she used the textbook in her instructional practices, based on my observations. For the first of the two statements on the FLEQ that dealt with the textbook, Julie agreed that the major curricular focus is on the textbook. She initially disagreed with the second of the two statements: that the teacher's role is to help students learn what is in the textbook. However, in the fourth interview, when asked to explain the apparent discrepancy in her two responses, she said that she does indeed perceive that to be her role. Those beliefs are supported by Julie's perception of the textbook as *the* curriculum, as revealed during the interviews; and they are consistent with my observations of how she used the textbook.

To a certain extent, Julie's beliefs about the standards' curricular weave were consistent with her classroom practices. Her responses on the FLEQ to the statements regarding the weave as well as her comments during the interviews were consonant with the principles that underpin the standards. In my observations of her teaching, I noted that she included four of the seven elements: the language system, cultural knowledge, other subject areas, and technology. Discrepancies seem to exist between her teaching and her beliefs about critical thinking skills, communication strategies, and learning strategies. I did not observe the inclusion of the latter two in her instruction. In regard to critical thinking, the highest level on Bloom's taxonomy⁴ (Bloom, 1956) at which I observed the students performing in class was application, with the possible exception of a letter the students wrote and exchanged with students in Julie's other French III class.

The relationship between Julie's beliefs about teaching the language system and her classroom practices is rather complex. She indicated on the FLEQ that she

believes that nearly all class time should be devoted to teaching the language system but that the primary focus should not be on vocabulary and grammar. During the fourth interview, she explained that this apparent contradiction was due to her interpretation of the second statement. She had read the statement to mean that the end goal of FL instruction is that students are able to identify lists of vocabulary and conjugate verbs. She clarified her beliefs by saying that instruction should focus on vocabulary and grammar but that instruction has to be contextualized and students have to use what they are learning to communicate. This clarification is consistent with her response on the FLEQ that indicated assessment should not focus on students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar, as well as with her assessment practices. Although Julie administered two grammar quizzes and students demonstrated their ability to form the past tense by writing 25 sentences about important events in their lives and a letter to students in another French class, the final chapter test focused on listening comprehension, reading, and discrete-point cultural information.

Julie's belief that language is for communication was prevalent during the interviews. She stressed that class time was to be used for practice in using the language to read, write, and speak. In the classes that I observed, nearly one-third of class time was devoted to reading. The open-ended assessments required students to write—at the sentence level for one and more extended discourse for the second. However, during the classes that I observed, students were given very little time to talk with each other in French and no time was devoted to student presentations in the language. As reported previously in Table 5, 72% of total class time was spent in teacher-fronted activities, whereas pair work accounted for only 1% of the time. During the fourth interview, Julie and I discussed the apparent discrepancy between her belief in language for communication and the little class time that was devoted to interpersonal and presentational communication. Julie maintained that overall her students do many partner activities, especially at the beginning levels and in her smaller classes. (The class that I observed was third-year French with 14 students.)

Discussion

This study found (1) a strong relationship between the teacher's beliefs about the role of the textbook in the curriculum and the way she used it in her instruction, (2) a tenuous relationship between her beliefs about the standards' curricular weave and the integration of it in her lessons, and (3) a weak relationship between her beliefs about the emphasis given to the language system and her teaching. In comparing these findings with the teacher's beliefs about the fundamental concepts underlying the standards (as expressed during the interviews), an inverse relationship between the teacher's explicit beliefs about the standards and her classroom practices becomes apparent. This phenomenon is illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7

Relationship of Expressed Beliefs with the Standards and with Classroom Practices

Beliefs about	Consistency of expressed beliefs with the standards	Consistency of expressed beliefs with practices
Role of textbook	-	+
Curricular weave	±	±
Emphasis on language system	+	-

Note: “-” = not consistent; “±” = tenuous consistency; “+” = consistent.

How might this inverse relationship be explained? Julie was familiar with the standards and enthusiastically embraced them. She made it clear during the interviews that she wanted to use them to guide her teaching. However, her implicit theories of classroom FL learning, developed as a result of her 29 years of teaching experience, were not consonant with the theoretical framework that underpins the standards. Julie had developed methods of teaching that matched her beliefs about how students learn a FL in a classroom setting. Her practices of relying on the textbook and emphasizing the language system fit with her personal theories of FL learning.

Although the textbook defined her curriculum, Julie chose what to focus on or what to ignore in each chapter. Her textbook is organized around a notional-functional approach⁵ that emphasizes communication, but she chose to focus primarily on the chapter's grammatical structure even though knowledge of the structure was not identified as a specific goal in the chapter's opening pages; nor was it included in the end assessment provided by the publishers. Dispersed throughout the chapter are five exercises that target the grammar; two call for discrete-point responses, and three are open-ended. Julie had her students do the two discrete-point exercises, and she supplemented them with 11 similar exercises taken from her files; she also used several in-class oral activities during which students used the structure in a controlled manner. However, she chose to do only one of the open-ended exercises even though the other two would have provided students with more communicative practice, something Julie had stressed during the interviews that she wanted for her students.

The textbook also played a major role in the choices Julie made about which elements of the standards' curricular weave to include. The theme of the chapter—the castles of the Loire Valley—and the readings included in the chapter facilitated the integration of history. The textbook's ancillaries—the videos, CDs, and overhead transparencies—made it easy for her to include technology. However, her teaching was textbook-bound and the curricular elements not found in the textbook or its accoutrements were not included in her teaching. The manner in which Julie used the textbook fit her theory of how students learn a FL, and she was unable to reconcile use of class time for more communicative practice and for content that went beyond the textbook with her beliefs about FL learning.

Julie's implicit theory of classroom FL learning was suggested in an analogy she made at one point in an interview. She compared teaching to a coaching experience and her role as the coach. As such, her job is to

identify the skills [she] wants the students to learn [in this case, the past tense of the verb *être*], put them through the practice exercises during class [worksheets and other activities on the past tense] so that when it comes time for the performance [the assessment requiring students to use the past tense] they are ready to perform and do it well.

She indicated that she believes students learn a FL through "practice and repetition. . . . You just do something and then keep coming back to it and coming back to it, different ways. Not do it the same way, but keep coming back to it."

That way of thinking mirrors the skill getting/skill using approach proposed by Rivers (1983) where students first acquire knowledge of the rules about how the language works and then use their newly acquired knowledge in pseudo-communication (p. 43) by doing exercises, drills, and other activities that allow them to practice the language rule. It is only when students have demonstrated their ability to produce the structure in controlled, discrete-point applications that they are ready to use their new skills in more open-ended activities.

The theories of language learning that underpin the standards for FL learning do not promote a skill getting/skill using approach. Rather, language learning is perceived to be a social process as much a cognitive process. Within this theoretical framework,

[t]he development of the learners' communicative abilities is seen to depend not so much on the time they spend rehearsing grammatical patterns as on the opportunities they are given to interpret, to express, and to negotiate meaning in real-life situations. (Savignon, 1997, p. xi)

Implications and Conclusion

Several implications for implementing change can be drawn from this study. First, the role of the textbook in any attempt to integrate educational innovations should not be underestimated. However, simply providing teachers with textbooks and other materials that incorporate the innovation does not necessarily ensure a change in classroom practices. Teachers pick and choose what to focus on, and their choices are guided by their beliefs about the process by which students learn the specific discipline. The variable of teacher choice on the extent to which programmatic change is implemented may be greater in schools and universities in which several instructors teach the same level of a course with the same textbook.

In the case study described here, the stimulus for change was not one that was imposed on the teacher from an external source. It was instigated internally by the teacher's critical reflection on her teaching, coupled with the desire to improve her teaching effectiveness. The teacher had learned about the standards through her participation in professional conferences, and they appealed to her. The remarks she made during the interviews suggested that she agreed with the vision

proposed by the standards document. However, agreement with the innovation, as Bartz and Singer (1996) suggested, is not sufficient to effect change. Ultimately, it is the teacher's beliefs about how students learn that influence her instruction and that determine if and how she will incorporate change. Change is more likely to occur when there is a match between the teacher's theories of learning and the theories that underpin the proposed change.

The results of this study illustrate the importance of identifying student learning outcomes for effecting change. Content as defined by a textbook or other sources cannot be the sole component of a curriculum. Covering the content is not the end goal; it is a means by which outcomes are achieved. There has to be a focus on what students will learn rather than on what teachers will teach. This point was made clear when Julie said that she included all elements of the curricular weave but she wasn't always conscious of doing it. Doing something different necessitates purposeful thought.

There is an underlying assumption in the literature (and in the standards document) that the key figures in implementing change are new teachers. During their university studies, preservice teachers need to learn contemporary theories of second language acquisition and the theories of classroom FL learning that underlie the standards. It is a well supported notion that teachers teach the way they were taught. Thus, in preparing new teachers to implement the standards in their classrooms, those teachers must experience standards-based instruction as learners. University faculty engaged in teaching language classes should model FL instruction that is grounded in contemporary research-supported theories of learning.

In the end, however, it is experienced teachers who will determine the extent to which curricular changes are implemented. Experienced teachers have more influence on novice teachers than formal education programs do (Brown & Borko, 1992; Stipek, Givvin, Salmon, & MacGyvers, 2001; Wubbels, 1992), and beginning teachers tend to adopt the beliefs of their more skilled colleagues (Kilgore, Ross, & Zbikowski, 1990). If teachers are expected to change the way they have been teaching and to begin to teach in ways that they never experienced, as neither a learner nor a teacher, they must examine their own implicit and explicit beliefs about how students learn, develop an understanding of the theories of learning upon which an innovation is founded, and challenge the discrepancies they discover. This process will require professional development opportunities that extend beyond the occasional workshop. Unless teachers' own theories of learning match the theories upon which the innovation is based, it is not likely that the teachers will implement the change in a manner that is consistent with the innovation's theoretical framework.

Notes

1. References throughout this article to the "standards" refer to the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century*. The first publication of the standards, *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century* (1996), focused on K-12 foreign language instruction. The expanded 1999 publication includes sections devoted to specific languages (Chinese, Classical Languages,

French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish). With the exception of Chinese, Classical Languages, and Russian, each language addresses the postsecondary level. The Classical Languages section refers to beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.

2. A pseudonym has been used.
3. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total FLEQ was found to be .87 (Allen, 2001). This is quite good, as Borg and Gall (1989, p. 258) suggest that .79 is the median value of reliability for attitude scales. Internal consistency estimates for each subscale ranged from .78 to .55. Lower reliability values for subscales are to be expected (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 255).
4. Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (1956) consists of six categories of student behaviors that represent intended outcomes of the educational process—knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The categories are ordered hierarchically from simple to complex so that the behaviors highest on the taxonomy (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) require the development and use of higher-order thinking skills such as critical thinking. The taxonomy is still widely used in education today, and it is included in the curricula of university education courses taken by preservice teachers.
5. See Markee (1997) for a detailed description of a notional-functional syllabus.

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