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# Editorial Introduction — The Many Views of Diversity: Understanding Multiple Realities

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## Introduction — Setting the Stage

The DVD resource kit upon which the articles in this issue of the *NECTFL Review* are based features the Annenberg Media/WGBH Video, “Valuing Diversity in Learners” as well as a compilation of papers written by K-12 teachers, post-secondary professors, and teacher educators, all focused around the topic of *Diversity*. The video and papers highlight the importance of understanding the diversity of learners in today’s classrooms. Of primary importance is to acknowledge that our schools are filled with a wide range of learners: linguistic, cultural, racial and ethnic, socioeconomic differences, different experiential backgrounds, special needs, gifted, heritage language learners, students who learn differently, and those with different cognitive abilities. How can teachers accommodate

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this wide array of learners? One objective of this issue of the *Review* is to provide answers to this important question. Throughout the video and papers, a broad examination is made of the many views of diversity. Today's teachers must be accomplished as well as highly qualified, having multiple teaching and learning approaches that respond to diversity. Teachers face the challenge of meeting the needs of all learners.

If we were to ask ten people how they define "diversity" chances are very good that we would get ten different answers. Why? The most logical answer is that for a long time race, ethnicity, and culture were usually most closely aligned with how one defined diversity. We tended to think in terms of ethnicity or racial characteristics as a way to describe or define diversity. Today, however, the term is broader and more far reaching. Diversity is viewed through many lenses and along with those views are accompanying realities. The theme for the 2007 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, "The Many Views of Diversity: Understanding Multiple Realities," grew out of a critical awareness of the need for examining diversity as it is explored from multiple perspectives, particularly in language learning environments. For our purposes, the DVD was designed to examine some of the many views of diversity as linguistic, cultural, ethnic, and cognitive. Indeed, there are far more questions about diversity than answers, and for some, the topic of discussing diversity can be emotional and often controversial. However, when issues of diversity are explored through multiple lenses and inferences and commonalities are discovered, perhaps we can better situate the discussion in such a way that it in fact offers opportunities rather than challenges — opportunities for seeing that the global society of which we are members requires that we all be interconnected and that language is oftentimes the vehicle through which that connection occurs.

The year 2005 was widely recognized in the language teaching profession as The Year of Languages and ACTFL focused the FL Education Series volume that year on this theme. Audrey Heining-Boynnton served as Editor and titled the publication *2005-2015, Realizing Our Vision* (2006). Myriam Met wrote one of the chapters for the publication and stated the following on page 55:

Many variables impact how well Americans learn foreign languages. They range from motivation to time on task to what is taught and how. It is the latter — what students learn and how we enable them to learn it — that not only impacts powerfully and directly the outcomes of language study, but also impacts the attitudes and motivations of those who currently study languages and those will study it in the future. Simply put, *good teaching matters*. [emphasis added]

This perspective about good teaching is likely to be widely accepted by those in the language teaching profession. And it is also a theme advocated by Gloria Ladson-Billings whose work on culturally relevant pedagogy is central to successful (i.e., "good") teaching. This initial chapter of the 2007 NECTFL Reports is grounded in these notions of good teaching being important and relating to the cultural backgrounds of our foreign language students as being central to the effective teaching of languages.

In order for language to be an effective vehicle for making connections between teachers and students alike, we as language educators and researchers must first identify these multiple realities and how they affect teaching and learning. For exam-

ple, what are the pedagogical implications of the changing demographics in U.S. schools? How should teacher education programs better prepare teachers for the multiple realities of learner diversity? How should we use technology to facilitate learner-centered instruction? First, we will examine the role and impact of demographics and its influence on diversity.

## Demographic Influences on Diversity

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2004), the number of children ages 5-17 who spoke a language other than English at home more than doubled between 1979-2004. Between 1979 and 2004, the number of school-age children who spoke a language other than English at home increased from 3.8 million to 9.9 million, or from 9-19 percent of all children in this age group. The percentage of racial/ethnic minority students enrolled in U.S. public schools dramatically increased between 1972 and 2004. Further, forty-three percent of public school students were considered to be part of a racial or ethnic minority group in 2004, an increase from 22 percent in 1972. In comparison, the percentage of public school students who were White decreased from 78 to 57 percent. The proportion of public school students who were Black or who were members of other racial minority groups increased less over this period than the proportion of students who were Hispanic: Black students made up 16 percent of public school enrollment in 2004, compared with 15 percent in 1972. Hispanic enrollment surpassed Black enrollment for the first time in 2002. Asian/Pacific Islander (4 percent) and Other minority groups (3 percent) made up 7 percent of public school enrollment in 2004, compared with 1 percent combined in 1972.

These statistics may be directly linked to a new language diversity in U.S. schools unlike any other time in our history. For example, Montgomery County, Maryland, and Arlington, Virginia, both within the metropolitan area of Washington, D.C., enroll students whose families speak more than three dozen languages. In parts of central California, more than one third of the total enrollment in public schools is from Southeast Asia.

As we consider the implications of demographic influences on diversity, there are certain realities that help frame the discussion. Valuing diversity in learners challenges us to understand multiple realities about teaching and learning. The following are three realities to consider when valuing and examining views of diversity:

## Views of Diversity and Understanding Multiple Realities

### Reality # 1. Demographics will influence pedagogical practices

Because every learner is unique in their cultural, personal, and experiential background, we must acknowledge that no single teaching method will work for every student. One size does *not* fit all! Students don't divest themselves of their cultural and linguistic background; they bring that with them to the classroom. Diverse learners have multiple pathways to knowing, multiple pathways to learning (Donato, 2004).

We must commit ourselves to teachers and students' understanding diversities and communicate acceptance and positive attitudes. Further, we must strive to enhance and accommodate diverse skills, interests, and abilities.

Every learner is unique, with his or her particular linguistic, cultural, and cognitive background. Our classrooms are comprised of individuals with a wide array of intelligences, learning styles, skills, interests, and talents. Research indicates that student achievement can be enhanced using multi-modal and multi-sensory instructional strategies and assessment practices (Gardner, H., 1983; Hall Haley, 2004; Hall Haley, 2001; Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J., 1998).

As foreign language teachers we must provide a curriculum that is not only standards-based but challenging, relevant, and integrative. We must approach teaching and learning from multiple perspectives — multimodal, multi-sensory, etc. We should regard ourselves as co-constructors of knowledge, rather than “knowers.” And in that same vein, we must allow learners to “show what they know” in varied assessments and evaluations.

The following are helpful strategies for ensuring that teaching and learning are receptive to the needs of *all* learners:

Gather information about the students in your class so that you are able to address their diverse needs. Use surveys, questionnaires, or informal interviews.

- Try to encourage students to approach a task using an intelligence that is different from his or her stronger intelligences or preferred learning styles.
- Reflect on your teaching to be certain that you are *not* always teaching to your strengths.
- Be aware of which kinds of learners pose the greatest challenge to you and why.
- Look for ways that learning differences positively affect learning in a foreign language classroom.
- Be aware that the needs of Heritage Language Learners sometimes differ from students studying a foreign language for the first time.
- Identify strategies that assist students who may be gifted and tend to finish ahead of others.
- Create ways to differentiate instruction and assessment that include aspects of learners’ background life experiences and cultural communities to ensure that you reach *all* learners.

The strategies listed above can assist teachers in looking introspectively at examining what and how we teach. How do teachers connect theory to practice? Here we briefly examine two noted researchers, Mary Ann Christison and Marjorie Hall Haley.

## **Addressing the Needs of Diverse Learners**

Mary Ann Christison has conducted field research that examined meeting the needs of all students in a learner-centered environment utilizing the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI). Her work offers a rationale for applying MI theory to foreign language teaching with students at both the primary and secondary level. She argues that “the more aware students become of their own intelligences and how they work, the more they will know how to use that intelligence to access the necessary information/ knowledge from a lesson” (1996). Christison posits that in teaching students how to learn, teachers foster better retention of the material. Her work

describes a plan wherein all students are taught how to best work within each of the eight intelligences, allowing them to function in any variety of situations. Further, by ensuring that information is encoded through various modes, Christison's use of MI theory in the classroom assists recall in a variety of situations. By teaching students how to process more varied input, Christison hoped to encourage better reaction to a wider range of cues in the target language (1999).

Christison's model does not call for full curricular reconfiguration, but rather urges teachers to work multiple intelligences into their preexisting class structure. "Embracing MI theory in our teaching does not mean that we must overhaul every course and change the existing curriculum. Rather, it provides a framework for enhancing instruction" (1999). She suggests that teachers incorporate MI-based strategies, going beyond the normal teaching of the subject, to actually instructing the students in how to best process information.

Her methods for applying MI theory to the classroom involve the teacher constantly evaluating the incorporation of every intelligence into the class, on both the macro level, throughout the semester, and the micro level, from topic to topic (1996). Teachers should analyze which intelligences are evoked in each lesson, and adjust whenever certain intelligences appear neglected. By continuous consideration of class design, the teachers can overcome their own predilections for certain teaching styles, and be sure to incorporate activities relating to every intelligence.

Marjorie Hall Haley, another researcher who has looked at learner-centered instruction and assessment that accommodates culturally, linguistically, and cognitively diverse (CLCD) learners analyzed the effects seen in students exposed to MI-based foreign and second language teaching. In Phases I and II of her ongoing research of this topic, she demonstrated that foreign and second language students in MI-based classes both outperform and display higher affect toward learning than peers in control classes.

To examine this topic, Hall Haley enlisted the help of primary and secondary language teachers from around the country, and from Australia, Germany, and Japan who were willing to teach one section of their foreign or second language course using an MI-based framework, and a second section using a more traditional, teacher-centered approach (2004). These educators collaborated with each other and with Hall Haley to develop ways to apply MI theory to their lessons. Every student was given an intelligence profile survey, to determine their relative strengths and weaknesses (Armstrong, 1993). This was intended to help raise students' awareness of their own learning preferences, as well as to foster teacher recognition of variation within the class.

Throughout the semester, students were asked to describe their feelings toward the class design, while teachers were asked to summarize their reaction to the use of MI-based methods as well. Student grades at the end of the semester were also analyzed, with respect to previous assessments of students' achievements, to determine if MI-based language teaching fostered improved performance over instructional strategies to which students were previously exposed. Informal interviews and weekly logs were also examined to see how both students and instructors felt about MI-based foreign and second language classes.

Hall Haley's data showed strong support for applying MI theory to the foreign and second language classroom. Data showed that "learner-centered instruction from the perspective of multiple intelligences ... demonstrated students' strengths and weaknesses can be affected by a teacher's pedagogical style" (2004). Students in the experimental classrooms in her study showed greater progress in learning the second language than students in the teacher-centered classes.

Also, students in the MI-based classrooms expressed more satisfaction with the class structure and more motivation to learn the second language than did their peers in the control groups. "Teachers attributed this positive reaction to the greater degree of flexibility, variety, and choice that MI strategies allowed students in their classrooms" (2004). In these studies, MI-based pedagogy is noticeably raising student engagement in the subject matter and enthusiasm about learning. Teachers also reported feelings of enhanced classroom management.

Hall Haley's findings are extremely important, as they give empirical evidence that MI theory can be effectively applied to enhance the structure of the foreign and second language classrooms with culturally, linguistically, and cognitively diverse learners. In comparisons with traditional, teacher-centered classrooms, both performance and student affect were higher in MI-based classes. However, there are a few limitations in Hall Haley's studies, as she personally acknowledges (Hall Haley 2001: 359; 2004:171-172).

First, there is little commonality between the students studied; rather it is a very diverse community. Her research relied on data gathered from a variety of teachers in various educational settings. The students studied ranged from kindergartners to twelfth graders, and were at various levels in their second language progress (they were in foreign language classes of levels I, II or III, or English as a Second Language (ESL) classes at level B1). The students were studying under any of 23 different instructors, and came from eight states and four countries.

Second, the method of applying MI theory to the classes was also variable. Though Hall Haley encouraged interaction between the teachers in the study, and offered advice on classroom design, the teachers ultimately decided their framework, offering limited control of external factors, which could affect student performance and affect. Also, the participating educators had varied experience with MI theory.

In all, there were numerous factors which could be controlled in future experiments before arriving at a conclusive assessment of the effectiveness of MI-based second language teaching (Hall Haley 2001: 359; 2004: 171-2). Hall Haley's work suggests that MI theory creates a highly efficient structure for foreign and second language classes; however more systematic studies should be carried out to confirm this belief.

## **Reality # 2. Teachers must be trained to work with Culturally, Linguistically, and Cognitively Diverse (CLCD) learners**

Teacher preparation plays a vital role in providing both pre and in-service educators with an understanding of cultural, linguistic, cognitive, and related variables and their effects on the teaching-learning process. Additionally, training must include methods of using assessment data to plan instruction and to select, adapt, and/or develop curricula to meet the needs of culturally, linguistically, and cognitively diverse students (CLCD) with special needs.

Higher education's teacher training programs are faced with the challenge of providing excellent teacher preparation. Federal legislation, No Child Left Behind, requires that all teachers be "highly qualified." In the United States, the teaching force is facing an increasing number of CLCD children, some of whom have multiple forms of special needs. This teaching force is *not* well equipped to help these children adjust to school and succeed. There are far too many teachers who do not share or know about their students' cultural or linguistic backgrounds and too few have had the professional preparation to work well with CLCD students with special needs.

*Special needs, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), or dyslexia* are terms that are frequently used to cover a very broad range of learning differences — these range from giftedness to disabilities. In brief, Levine describes learning differences in terms of problems relating to 1) attention, the most common kind of learning disability; 2) language, difficulty in interpreting and/or remembering verbal messages and instructions; 3) spatial orientation, poor reading and spelling skills because of difficulty with processing information visually and distinguishing similar-looking letters; 4) memory, difficulties with retrieval of presumably stored information because it is mis-stored and can't be found spontaneously; 5) fine motor control issues, which cause ideas to break down between the head and the paper; and 6) sequencing or difficulty organizing information and instructions into an appropriate order so that tasks can be successfully completed (Levine, 1984, 1-2).

Given changing demographics in the U.S., all educators must face the reality of culturally, linguistically, and cognitively diverse students in today's classrooms. School districts which never before had to instruct these students are now finding they must address and meet this need. Frequently, the number of CLCD, gifted, and special education-trained personnel is limited. We must include training components relevant to this need in all teacher training programs.

It is safe to say that there is an abundant need to diversify the education profession at practitioner, administrative, and personnel preparation levels in order to better serve CLCD students. Furthermore, there is an urgency to rethink pre and in-service training programs for general and special educators who teach CLCD students. As clearly evidenced in the changing demographics, this population will continue to grow and teachers must be adequately trained to meet the needs of these students.

This training should include the vital role of technology as a means to facilitate learner-centered instruction in the foreign language classroom.

### **Reality # 3. Foreign language teaching needs to embrace globalization through technology**

Integrating technology successfully begins with explicitly defining the pedagogical role for that technology (Ragan, 1999). Every individual teacher must choose why, how, and when to use technology. This choice is often influenced by access, ease of comfort in using technology and knowledge of *how* to use existing resources. Access to information technology (IT) differs among and within countries, states, and school districts. The digital divide is clearly visible. According to Cummins (2000), "I believe that IT also has considerable potential to promote language learning in a transformative way when it is aligned with a pedagogy oriented towards promoting collabora-

tive relations of power in the classroom and beyond.” Although technology can facilitate collaborative relations of power in social learning groups, scaffolding lessons and professional guidance offered by a qualified teacher are still necessary.

Garrett (1991) cautions us that using the computer does not replace methodology, since the computer is nothing more than a tool. According to Garrett (1991), the more critical issue is the quality of the software material available, and the ways teachers use the material to achieve the desired learning outcomes. “... Teachers must learn to use the new technology to allow students to interact more effectively with the same ‘old’ material. The change must be carefully and thoughtfully crafted, for we cannot continue to ask teachers to use the ‘newest’ devices if we continue using pedagogical practices that are no different from those previously used” (Moore, 1999).

Computer technologies can play a crucial role in facilitating the objectives of L2 instruction in at least four ways. Whether the learner is located in the classroom, computer laboratory, home office, or any other location for learning, computer technologies can facilitate L2 [foreign/second] language instruction by providing:

- diverse structure-focused activities with learner-specific evaluation and feedback;
- complex multimedia input to the learner;
- a variety of forms of dynamic monitored interaction with that input;
- diverse environments for interpersonal communication, both dynamic (synchronous) and delayed (asynchronous). (Fast, 1998)

Instructors and researchers agree that the use of any technology in the classroom must be integrated into the curriculum as a tool to support and enhance the learning experience rather than serve as the driving curricular force (Armstrong & Yetter-Vassot, 1994; Bedford, 1991; Garrett, 1992; Hughes & Hewson, 1998; Kearsley, 1998; LeLoup & Ponterio, 1996; Patrikis, 1995; Phillips, 1998). Kearsley (1998) warns against the seductiveness of integrating technology as a quick fix to more serious problems.

Byrnes (1996) notes that technology such as the Internet “inherently shifts the emphasis from teaching to student learning” thus creating new roles for both learners and teachers, and forcing us to rethink the process of learning. Patrikis (1995) points out that computer-based learning individualizes the learning process and gives students more control over both what and how they learn.

Will the computer replace the teacher? Probably not. Will teachers change the way they teach because of computers? Probably. Because of the growing use and popularity of new technologies, teachers find themselves being urged to keep up. More and more states and school districts are implementing a technology competence requirement as part of students’ standards of learning. Similarly, schools of education are requiring educational technology courses in teacher licensure programs. Thus, the role of the teacher has been and will continue to be redefined in part by new technology.

One direct influence of technology has been seen in teachers moving whole class to small group instruction, as well as a shift from students all learning the same things to learning different things. This affords teachers the opportunity to move from verbal thinking, to the integration of visual and verbal thinking. According to Cummins (2000), “...our task as educators in general, and as language educators in particular,

should be to assess the potential of Information Technology (IT) to improve the human condition. As educators, we are committed to drawing out the potential of the students we teach; as language educators, we strive to increase students' capacity to use language to fulfill their personal goals and contribute to their societies."

For the past decade, national and state standards have been emphasized in teaching at the K-12 instructional level. Built around the 5 Cs of Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities, both the ACTFL national foreign language standards and state foreign language standards have emphasized systematic instruction and assessment linked to sets of expectations about what students should know and be able to do as a result of their language study. The 5 Cs are, of course, interconnected and together constitute an overview of expected outcomes of language study. In this chapter, our argument is built on the idea that the culture competency, as defined in the ACTFL and most state foreign language standards, can appropriately be linked to the work of critical pedagogy as advocated by Gloria Ladson-Billings. Dr. Ladson-Billings is a recent president of the American Educational Research Association, whose work on what she calls *culturally relevant pedagogy* is widely recognized in research, multicultural education, and teacher education.

Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that including aspects of learners' background life experiences and cultural communities just makes sense. In this article, she wrote:

Culturally relevant pedagogy rests on three criteria or propositions: (a) student must experience academic success; (b) student must develop and/or maintain cultural competence; and (c) student must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order.

It is important to recognize that Ladson-Billings is not creating a new way of thinking about teaching, as she herself acknowledges. Instead, she is asking that teachers include a focus on both cultural competency and social consciousness on the part of our students as areas of emphasis in our teaching, including teaching foreign languages. In our profession, this goal is readily attainable because we already have identified *cultural competency* as one of our priorities.

In the national foreign language standards, for example, the focus on cultures sets an expectation that our students will *gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures* and two related standards are stated as follows:

Standard 2:1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the *practices and perspectives* of the culture studied.

Standard 2:2: Student demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the *products and the perspectives* of the culture studied.

In Ohio, where one of the co-authors works, these two standards were incorporated into the state standards as follows:

Students demonstrate an understanding of the insights gained into another culture through the examination of its *practices* (behaviors), *products* (tangibles such as monuments. Food and literature, and intangibles such as laws and music), and *perspectives* (attitudes, values, and world views). (Ohio Academic Content Standards for K-12, Foreign Language, p 12) [*Emphasis added*]

The *culture competency* focus in foreign language standards is linked to the *communities competency* focus, which emphasizes the need to facilitate opportunities for foreign language students to participate in multilingual communities and cultures at home and abroad. The point is that Ladson-Billings' *culturally relevant pedagogy* is therefore already instantiated in the work that language professionals do in classrooms and field experiences on a regular basis. In the case of our profession, however, it may be helpful to re-focus our attention on students' home and community backgrounds as a key tool for our work. In other words, when heritage learners enroll in foreign language classes, how do we incorporate their identities and life experiences in their studies and interactions with their teacher and peers in the language class?

## **Cultural Capital**

Another concept that foreign language teachers need to become familiar with is cultural capital. This term was coined by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977) who described cultural capital to explain how people with high social status pass it on to their offspring. He argued that this "hereditary transmission of power and privileges" contributes to class distinctions that help some groups of individuals and hinder others. He argued that a lack of *cultural capital* keeps people from fitting in higher socioeconomic classes.

In terms of the foreign language standards presented previously, a person's cultural capital may include the neighborhood in which people live (even the name of one's community often describes one's cultural capital), positions held, one's club or organization memberships, college or university degrees, even a person's place of worship. Tangible signs of cultural capital typically include a person's physical appearance, speech patterns, choice of clothes. And, of course, in some cases these traits are not changeable, while in other cases they depend on one's resources. As foreign language teachers, it becomes important for us to communicate complex concepts such as cultural capital to our students as we examine the cultural *practices, perspectives, and products* intentionally built into our national and state program standards.

Everyone deals with cultural capital in our lives, and education both affects and is affected by cultural capital. As language professionals, it is important for us to recognize that schools are a key element in cultural capital since a student's status within a school often reflects the cultural capital that is valued in that setting. Teachers often set different expectations for students who are perceived to have higher cultural capital, even though the practice might have unintended negative as well as intended positive consequences (Hancock, 2001).

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is not an isolated sociological term. In fact, it is well connected to the work of other noteworthy scholars such as DuBois's notion of double consciousness and Said's notion of Orientalism. As language educators, we should be familiar with these works as they offer a socio-political perspective of student diversity.

## **Socio-political consciousness**

Foreign language teachers often include opportunities for students to meet individuals from other cultures, sometimes including people whose political views differ

from those of the students. The intent is to stretch our students' higher order thinking skills and to help them become more "critical" in the sense of reasoning and judging different points of view. Ladson-Billings (1995 and 1999) takes this notion a step further and encourages teachers to help students think critically by exploring various perspectives and then developing their own goals for impacting their own and other local communities. Gutstein (2006) also does an excellent job demonstrating how he has done this in his teaching in a Chicago public school setting, using middle school mathematics as the subject matter. In much of her work, Ladson-Billings argues convincingly that it is not sufficient for students to develop individual academic achievement and cultural competency successes, but, instead, teachers need to educate students develop a "broader sociopolitical consciousness" that fosters critiquing cultural norms and values as well as the institutions that produce these norms and values, particularly when they produce and maintain social inequities. Her work incorporates outcomes similar to those advocated by Freire (1995), Foucault (1980), and Bourdieu (1977). An example of this type of focus on cultural consciousness can be readily seen in the following example: One teacher worked over a month long-period with a group of African American high school students on what they termed "community problem solving." The students worked on a kind of social action curriculum in which the students tried to solve problems in their own community so the task was to use their studies, including the teacher as a resource, to identify local community "problems" and try to design concrete local solutions.

The link between the work of Ladson-Billings and the development of lessons that address community problem solving is evident in the above examples. But, how can these types of activities that promote social action and critical thinking be utilized in the language learning profession? One possible way is to create a bi-directional flow between second language acquisition research and the teaching practice.

Call for bi-directional flow—teaching to research and research to teaching

This chapter assumes that an important goal of all foreign language study is for students to become autonomous life-long learners. The steps in achieving this goal include teachers becoming familiar with the students' prior knowledge and regularly incorporating that component in their instructional practice. The steps also include the need for research to guide instructional practices as well as be guided by classroom and school context in which foreign languages are taught. While the notion of a bi-directional flow between research, often conducted in higher education, and instructional practices, including foreign language teaching at the K-12 level, is indeed a valid one, teachers and researchers need to work collaboratively to achieve mutual outcomes. This goal is particularly important in an academic field like foreign languages because the focus may not be as heavy on achievement testing as is the case, for example, in school subjects such as mathematics, science, technology (so called STEM subjects) or reading. These areas seem particularly impacted in contemporary American society because of mandates and requirements for accountability such as *No Child Left Behind*. In other words, foreign language students may have the good fortune not to be "tested, tested, and re-tested" as much as STEM subjects. Therefore, foreign language programs should continue to explore research-based (but not necessarily achievement test-based) answers to professional questions such as the fol-

lowing: Why is there a consistently high attrition rate between beginning and intermediate language courses in many school districts? What can language teachers do to increase the number of students who continue in language study beyond the required years? How can language teachers incorporate the students' cultural background into language study? What can be done in our profession to increase the number of students of color in language programs? How can language study be connected with other disciplines such as social studies and literacy study? The list of research questions is almost infinite, but can teachers be motivated to involve themselves in research-based answers while they still teach five or six language classes a day. Nieto (2003) has edited an interesting volume on the subject of what keeps teachers going. Gutstein's (2006) book describes in a convincing manner how a middle school teacher can incorporate on-going research with students by incorporating student's communities and life experiences in instruction. His example is researching and teaching mathematics. Both books are highly recommended reading.

## **Academic Achievement**

One focus of this chapter is culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and the myriad ways that it connects with foreign language instruction. Clearly, there is widespread agreement that an outcome of all teaching is academic achievement, and CRP is no exception. The goal for teachers who wish to emphasize a CRP approach is to motivate students to "choose" to become serious about their studies. And the 5 Cs approach in our profession provides an excellent opportunity to help students focus on academic achievement. And, finally, teacher expectations have long been recognized as being a very important influence on students' academic achievement.

CRP has the potential to become much more integrated in the teaching of foreign languages if PK-12 teachers are willing to employ the principles of this approach. In her work called the *Dreamkeepers*, Ladson-Billings describes excellent examples of teachers, both Caucasian and African American, who made the decision to learn about their students' communities and families and build their instructional program on what they learned. This book is a veritable resource for any teacher who wants to apply CRP principles in their work as teachers, irrespective of the subject-matter being taught. The teachers in this book share their insights about how they found ways to value their students' skills and abilities with the goal of channeling their students in academically important ways.

The 5 Cs are an invaluable source for foreign language teachers to help students see the interrelationships between COMMUNICATION, CULTURES, COMPARISONS, CONNECTIONS, and COMMUNITIES. Starting with the overall goal of "communication" in foreign language classes, teachers should seek ways to use both their students home languages (including dialects and non-standard English) so student feel validated and valued in this important area of their lives. Teachers have the opportunity as well to teach their students to make "connections" and "comparisons" in their language study. Gutstein and Ladson-Billings have described specific ways in which "communities," particularly the students home "communities" can become central in language study. It is clear that foreign language teaching provides

opportunities to explore novel ways to incorporate the 5 Cs and CRP to impact student achievement.

Teacher expectations, particularly ones that motivate students to work hard to reach for high academic achievement, are needed in any discipline, including foreign language instruction. When one couples teacher expectations with CRP and the 5 Cs, the end result can only be beneficial to foreign language students.

## Conclusion

This chapter began with a simple but deep question: How can teachers address the array of learners in their classrooms? This is a complex question because the array of students, of course, includes students who come from different socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, and ethnicities. In addition, there are differing levels of ability, different learning styles, and even different purposes for studying world languages. Simply stated, teaching is a very complex set of interactions, but the outcome is the likely to be the same — lifelong language learners who can continue to benefit from their language study long after they finish formal instruction.

The argument of this chapter is that the array of students in our classes produces opportunities, rather than obstacles or challenges. In looking towards the future of foreign language teaching, the authors have identified three “realities” that they envision as areas of needed emphasis as the language teaching profession moves forward during the coming decades. A broad definition of diversity to include multiple lenses through which to view our work as language professional in PK-16 and beyond will be needed, a definition that focuses on cultural, linguistic, and cognitive (CLCD) diversity based on an important underlying assumption that all students can learn foreign and second languages. The profession would need to embrace an African proverb from Zambia, “Start where you are but don’t stay there.”

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## INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE STAGE

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Produced by WGBH Boston in association with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. 2004.