Beyond the Language-Content Divide: Advanced Collegiate Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

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Outline

- Overview & brainstorming activity
- Main foci in the research
- Gaps and future directions
- Audience reactions, insights, and questions
Overview

- Review of research on advanced-level FL teaching and learning in collegiate contexts
- Focus on the merging of language and literary-cultural content
- Framing Question: *What is the relationship between language, literature, and culture and how are they instantiated through FL curricula and instruction at the advanced undergraduate level?*
Brainstorming Activity

• What are the biggest challenges to merging language and literary-cultural content at the advanced level? Consider this question from the perspective of yourself, your students, and your department?

• Provide at least one example of how you would merge the study of language and literary-cultural content in advanced-level FL courses to overcome these challenges.
Overview

Three foci evident in the research:

1. *Conceptualization* of literature and culture and their role in the advanced-level curriculum.

2. Integration of language and literary-cultural content at the *course* level.

3. Merging of language and content at the *curricular* level.
Overview

- **Advanced** = learners whose language abilities allow them to enroll in courses beyond the introductory/intermediate classes that often form part of a university’s FL requirement

- These learners represent a range of FL abilities, some of which are consistent with Advanced levels as defined by ACTFL, others of which are not
Theoretical perspectives focused on merging literary study and analysis with language-oriented concepts related to SLA, pragmatics, or genre (Byrnes & Kord, 2002; Gramling & Warner, 2012; Scott, 2001)

Practical approaches ranging from integrating literature across the curriculum to implementing visual texts in instruction (Barnes-Karol, 2002; Etienne & Vanbaelen, 2006; Finn, 2003; Melin, 2010)
Conceptualizing Literature & Culture

CULTURE

- *Theoretical frameworks* including hermeneutics to the *Standards* (McGee, 2001; Reeser, 2003; Urlaub, 2012)

- *Practical approaches* such as cultural immersion and establishing links between film and culture (Péron, 2010; Sconduto, 2008; Stephens, 2001)
CONCLUSIONS

• Research on conceptualizing literature and culture promotes integration of language and literary-cultural content at the advanced undergraduate level

• The specific place of this content in a holistic collegiate FL curriculum has not been solidified
Integrating Language & Literary-Cultural Content at the Course Level

**LANGUAGE IN LITERARY-CULTURAL COURSES**

- Adapting CLT techniques typically used in lower-level language courses to advanced-level literary-cultural courses (Erickson, 2009; Kraemer, 2008; McLean & Savage, 2001; Nance, 2002, 2010; Russo, 2006; Thompson, 2008; Weber-Fève, 2009)

- Sensitizing students to how form and content mutually inform one another in FL texts (Berg & Martin-Berg, 2002; Eigler, 2009; Krueger, 2001)
Integrating Language & Literary-Cultural Content at the Course Level

**Literature & Culture in Language Courses**

- Developing students’ advanced writing capacities through interpretation and analysis of FL texts (Allen, 2009a; Bueno, 2009; Villanueva, 2005; Zinn, 2004)

- Using FL texts to present grammar in context, develop linguistic competencies, and encourage critical-thinking skills (Mojica-Díaz & Sánchez-López, 2010; Paesani, 2006b, 2009; Scott, 2004; Zyzik, 2008)
Integrating Language & Literary-Cultural Content at the Course Level

**LITERATURE & CULTURE IN LANGUAGE COURSES**

- Emphasizing language variation in texts to introduce students to varied speakers and settings not traditionally encountered in the classroom (Etienne & Sax, 2006; Paesani, 2006a)
CONCLUSIONS

- Overall, proposals were mainly focused on advanced language courses.

- Proposals focused on literature or culture courses were limited to introduction to literature or civilization.

- Empirical studies point to the need for explicit attention to advanced linguistic development in these courses.
  
Implementing Curricular Solutions

- **STANDARDS-BASED MODELS:** integrative approaches to merging language and literary-content
  - 3R model (Ketchem, 2006; McEwan, 2010)
  - heuristic rereading of the *Standards* (Arens, 2008, 2010a)

- **LITERACY-BASED MODELS:** literacy as a curricular goal and a pedagogical framework to facilitate interaction with a variety of oral and written target language texts (Mantero, 2006; Redmann, 2005a, 2005b; Swaffar, 2004; Swaffar & Arens, 2005)
Implementing Curricular Solutions

- **Genre-based Models (GUGD):** focused on the notions of literacy together with a genre-oriented, socio-cognitive approach to advanced FL learning; language as a symbolic or social resource available to the learners/users within a discourse community (Byrnes, 2008a; Byrnes, Maxim, & Norris, 2010; Crane, 2006; Maxim, 2005, 2009a; Rinner & Weigert, 2006)
Implementing Curricular Solutions

Conclusions

- Standards, literacy-based, and genre-based models provide an intellectual foundation for merging language and literary-cultural content across the curriculum.

- Provide responses to concerns regarding how a holistic, integrated curriculum, as proposed in the MLA Report might be realized.
Gaps and Future Directions

The specific place of integrated content in a holistic collegiate FL curriculum has not been solidified, in part due to differing conceptions of literature and culture

- Are literature and culture as objects of study conceived of differently by different program members?

- If so, how do these differing concepts of literature and culture affect advanced undergraduate FL instruction?
Most proposals for merging language into literary-cultural content courses are for “introduction to” culture/civilization, film, or literature courses.

- **Does explicit attention to linguistic development enhance learning of literary-cultural content?**

- **Do student and instructor perceptions change when explicit attention to linguistic development forms part of advanced literature and culture courses?**
Gaps and Future Directions

What it means to be a teacher of language versus a teacher of literary-cultural content may be distinct within and across faculty members.

- *What are best practices in teacher preparation for integrating language and literary-cultural content?*

- *What theoretical models are most suitable to frame such teacher preparation practices?*
Gaps and Future Directions

Few alternatives for curricular solutions exist in the research, which can impede finding program-appropriate solutions to overcoming bifurcation or improving articulation across levels.

- How can curricular solutions such as the Standards or literacy be applied to special student populations (e.g., heritage learners)?

- What curricular solutions are appropriate for programs using online or hybrid models of instruction?

- What is the impact of departmental or institutional culture on design and implementation of curricular solutions?
Gaps and Future Directions

The research reviewed reflects only a minor focus on empirical studies and among these, only two studies focused on merging content into advanced language courses.

- What is the impact of specific pedagogical approaches for integrating language and literary-cultural content?

- What is the relationship between particular curricular solutions and students’ linguistic development?

- How does the use of new technologies and digital media affect students’ access to literary-cultural content and influence their advanced FL learning?
Reactions? Insights? Questions?

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